



**CONNECTICUT**

**MAKE IT HERE**

# **DAS School Construction Grants Program**

**Grants and Plan Review Teams**

# **DAS School Construction Grant Program Process**

- Pre-Filing
- Application
- Priority/Non-Priority List
- Plan Approval
- Grant Award
- Post-Grant



**CONNECTICUT**

# The Teams



```
graph LR; OGA[Office of Grants Administration (OGA)] --> PR[Plan Review]
```

Office of Grants  
Administration  
(OGA)

Plan  
Review



CONNECTICUT

# Office of Grants Administration

## Team Members

- Director: Ella Sun
- Education Consultant: Michelle Dixon
- Grants & Contracts Specialist: Heather Petit
- Education Services Assistant: Tom Reault
- Accounting Specialist: Robert Ficeto
- Accountant: Taimur Ejaz



**CONNECTICUT**

# Roles and Responsibilities-Grants (OGA)

## Application Reviews

- Priority (annual)
- Non-priority (monthly)
- HVAC (special program, anticipated to have 3 rounds, round 2 awards just announced on 5/13/24)

## Determine Application Outcome

- Grant commitment letters & Denial Letters
- FY2024 - about 160 grant commitment letters were issued to date

## Grant Setup

- Set up each grant in financial system

## Progress Payments & Final Payments

- Review and Approve payments
- FY2024 - reviewed & processed \$372M worth of payments to date
- Currently, 23 pending payment requests worth a total of \$105M



CONNECTICUT

# Roles and Responsibilities–Grants (OGA)

## Grant Management

- Process security roles in Core-CT for LEAs
- Review & process project cost increase requests (DAS-1049S)
- Misc. requests that require the DAS Commissioner's approval (i.e. emergency status requests)
- Process final audit payments/refunds once projects are audited
- Calculate school construction reimbursement rates annually for LEAs (DAS-1060)



CONNECTICUT

# More info-Grants (OGA)

- Website:  
[https://portal.ct.gov/das/grants?language=en\\_US](https://portal.ct.gov/das/grants?language=en_US)
- Contact us at:  
[das.grantsadministration@ct.gov](mailto:das.grantsadministration@ct.gov)



CONNECTICUT

# School Construction Plan Review

## Team Members

- Director: Nicholas Ross
- Administrator: Angela Gelineau
- Architect: Andrea Boyle
- Architect: Bob Celmer
- Architect: Barbara Fabiani
- Architect: Kermit Thompson



CONNECTICUT

# Roles and Responsibilities–Plan Review

## Approval of Site

- Site acquisitions seeking reimbursement
- School construction projects seeking reimbursement on a new site

## Design Conference (PCR)

- Prepare all required forms and construction documents
- Finalize proposed work eligible for reimbursement
- Confirm review and approval by Local Officials

## Final Plan Review and Approval

- DAS approval per CGS Section 10-291
- References statutory public bidding requirements
- Lists change order submittal requirements

## Change Order Review

- Significant backup required
- Eligibility based on original project scope and DAS written policy



CONNECTICUT

# Assistance and Questions

## Plan Review

- **Eligibility of Construction Costs**
  - Per Project Type
  - Design Aspects
  - Change Orders
- **Approval to Go to Bid**
  - Documentation Required
  - Scheduling of PCR



**CONNECTICUT**

# More info–Plan Review

- Website:

[https://portal.ct.gov/das/grants/plan-review?language=en\\_US](https://portal.ct.gov/das/grants/plan-review?language=en_US)

- Contact us\*:

[DAS.planreviewschools@ct.gov](mailto:DAS.planreviewschools@ct.gov)

\*After grant commitment



CONNECTICUT

# **Roles and Responsibilities**

## **Outside of Grants & Plan Review**

- Local Needs Assessment
- Project Parameters
- Vendor Selection
- Procurement and Bid Process
- DAS School Construction Audit



**CONNECTICUT**

**Questions or  
Comments?**



**CONNECTICUT**

# 2024 School Construction Legislative Update

## 3 Main School Construction Bills:

- PA 24-74, An Act Concerning School Resources
  - *Signed 5-30-24*
- PA 24-93, *An Act Concerning Various and Assorted Revisions to the Education Statutes*
  - *Signed 6-4-24*
- PA 24-151, *An Act Authorizing and Adjusting Bonds of the State and Concerning . . . School Building Projects*
  - *Awaiting signature*



CONNECTICUT

# PA 24-74, An Act Concerning School Resources

- **Section 6 – Modifications to Indoor Air Quality Working Group established in P.A. 22-118**
  - Expands recommendations to include guidance on HVAC inspections and evaluations required in § 10-220(d)(3)
  - Adds members and updates names of certain organizations from which members are selected
  - Extends and expands the reporting requirements and timeline of working group – first report due 1/1/25, last report due 1/1/31
- **Section 7 – Amends HVAC inspection requirements in § 10-220(d)**
  - Creates new 5-year inspection period – 7/1/26 through 6/30/31 – during which each district must have all its schools inspected, 20% each year, and then every five years thereafter
  - Allows Commissioner to grant a waiver under limited circumstances
- **Section 8 – Updates to HVAC Grant Program (§ 10-265r)**
  - Makes endowed academies and state charter schools eligible for grants
  - Delays provision that would prohibit granting awards unless district has complied with inspection requirements in § 10-220(d) from 7/1/24 to 7/1/26
  - Requires DAS to reconsider certain previously rejected grant applications in FYs 25 and 26



CONNECTICUT

# **PA 24-93, AAC... Revisions to the Education Statutes**

- Sec. 18 – Requires districts to use principles of universal design for any playgrounds designed on or after 7/1/25



**CONNECTICUT**

# **PA 24-151, An Act Authorizing ... School Building Projects**

- **Sec. 151 – Priority List Grant Commitments**
  - Authorizes 11 school construction state grant commitments totaling \$486.4 million
  - Reauthorizes 3 projects with an additional state grant commitment of \$73.9 million
- Includes various exemptions, waivers and modifications for specific projects



**CONNECTICUT**

# PA 24-151

## Changes to Priority List Applications:

- **Local Share**

- Beginning with applications submitted on and after July 1, 2026, the bill requires that the local share include an additional 10% in accordance with guidance developed by DAS.

- **Requires Priority List applications to include:**

- (1) an attestation from the local fire marshal that the school building project plans comply with the requirements of the State Fire Marshal; and
- (2) an attestation from the municipal health department that the project plans comply with the requirements of DPH



**CONNECTICUT**

# PA 24-151

- **Secs. 152 – 154 – Priority List Changes**
  - Requires DAS to include (1) who conducted enrollment projections and their cost and (2) an estimate and itemization of each project's ineligible costs
  - Removes Priority List categories
- **Projects Redirected for Public Use**
  - Allows school boards to redirect a school building that received a grant to any public use (rather than just a school use) during the amortization period without triggering the repayment requirement



**CONNECTICUT**

# PA 24-151

- **Secs. 155 & 156 – Reimbursement Rate Increase for Certain Early Childhood Projects**
  - Establishes a new 15 percentage point bonus for buildings used exclusively for early childhood care and education
  - Current law gives a 5 percentage point rate increase for new or expansion elementary school building projects that include space for a school readiness program
  - Increases from 10 to 15 percentage points, the reimbursement rate bonus for certain elementary school projects relating to (1) full-day kindergarten or preschool in priority school districts or priority schools or (2) reducing class sizes under the Early Reading Success program
  - Indicates that no reimbursement rate shall be greater than 100%



**CONNECTICUT**

# PA 24-151

- **Sec. 157 – Inclusive Municipalities**
  - Requires school boards to submit a written determination issued by the Department of Housing to DAS to be deemed an "inclusive municipality"
- **Sec. 158 – Endowed Academies**
  - Eliminates requirement for endowed academies' governing boards to include representation from the local school boards
- **Sec. 159 – Makes technical changes – SDE to DAS**



**CONNECTICUT**

# PA 24-151

## Secs. 162 & 163 – Project Audits:

### • Notice of Project Completion

- The law requires districts to submit a notice of project completion for a school building project within one year of the Board of Ed approving the project.
- If they don't, current law allows DAS move the project to audit 3 years after the Certificate of Occupancy is issued.
- This bill shortens this time period, allowing DAS to move the project to audit 1 year after the Certificate of Occupancy is issued.
- This change will help move projects to the audit phase more quickly.

### • Audit Timeline

- Under current law, if DAS does not complete an audit within five years after receiving a notice of project completion, then it must conduct a limited scope audit (e.g., a review of total reported expenditures and adherence to authorized space specifications).
- The bill requires DAS to conduct the limited scope audit two years after making the final project payment.



# CONNECTICUT

# PA 24-151

## Sec. 163 – Contracting Requirements

- Allows districts to be reimbursed when they use certain cooperative purchasing contracts;
- Eliminates prohibition on construction managers bidding on project elements;
- Requires that consultant awards be made from a pool of at least three of the most responsible qualified proposers;
- Requires construction managers to report on ineligible costs and meet quarterly with school boards



CONNECTICUT

# PA 24-151

- **Sec. 167 – Single-User Toilets**
  - Beginning 7/1/25, requires Priority List projects to include single-user toilet and bathing rooms for all students and school personnel
- **Sec. 168 – School Building Committees**
  - Requires school building committees to include the school board chair or their designee
- **Secs. 169-170 – HVAC / IAQ**
  - Mirror provisions in previous bill regarding HVAC / IAQ grant program
  - Also earmarks up to \$15 million of an existing bond authorization for grants to purchase equipment and materials for constructing and installing individual classroom air purifiers



**CONNECTICUT**

# PA 24-151

- Solar Initiatives

- Sec. 176 – Starting 7/1/25, districts must have a solar feasibility assessment performed prior to submitting a priority list application and Commissioner can reject an application that does not include such assessment
- Sec. 160 – Allows certain state funds related to energy to be used by districts toward their local share (rate design standards for electric utilities, DEEP's microgrid and resilience grant and loan program, renewable energy tariffs, conservation and load management programs, and the Green Bank's Clean Energy Fund)



CONNECTICUT

**Thank you!**