



2006
Outstanding Program Awards
Application

Program Title: The Ohio School Construction Partnering Program

Check one: Individual State Award Partnership or State/Private Entity

NASCA Member State: OHIO

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Executive Summary

Throughout his term in office, Governor Bob Taft has supported the Rebuilding Ohio's Schools program; a plan to address the facility needs of all Ohio public school districts and to ensure fairness and equity across the state.

Ohio's school facilities effort is a partnership between the state, through the Ohio School Facilities Commission, and the local school district in both funding and management. This arrangement brings statewide expertise in assessment, educational facility planning, construction management, and knowledge of the contractor market to each school district. From start to finish, a team process model prevails which incorporates the decision-making power of these two entities as co-owners of the project. The team partners with the private sector to carry out the facility project.

As anyone familiar with construction knows, disputes on a construction project can be costly, time-consuming and even involve litigation. **The Ohio School Construction Partnering Program** brings the school district, OSFC, design professionals, and the construction management firm together at the beginning of the project.

- It is a project length commitment among multiple organizations
- It is a cooperative approach to managing a project
- It is a process of team building that builds trust, cooperation, dedication and commitment into the project

Program Description

The OSFC manages a construction portfolio consisting of 417 completed buildings, 142 buildings in the design phase and 116 buildings under construction at the end of 2005. The Partnering program was developed in an effort to short-circuit potential conflicts during the building process.

The OSFC encourages the formation of a cohesive, mutually beneficial partnering arrangement among all Contractors, the School District Board, the Commission, the Architect and the Construction Manager. The agreement identifies common

goals and objectives, develops a problem solution and dispute resolution strategy, and an implementation plan. Such an arrangement draws on the strengths, skills, and knowledge of each of the entities in an effort to achieve a quality project, within budget, and on schedule.

The partnering arrangement builds cooperative relationships and avoids or minimizes disputes and nurtures a more collaborative ethic characterized by trust, cooperation and teamwork. It is intended that this arrangement be a voluntary, non-binding, but formally structured arrangement among the entities, leading to an attitude that fosters risk sharing.

With the help of professional facilitators, the partnering team establishes working relations and communication channels and defines roles, schedules, and objectives – all the components needed for a successful project.

The Ohio School Construction Partnering Program tasks include:

- Confirm Project Goals
- Identify Obstacles and Concerns
- Identify Opportunities and Assets
- Create Action Plans to Address Obstacles
- Align Parties to Establish Efficient Project Communications
- Establish Dispute Resolution

Regular progress and coordination meetings continue for the duration of the construction, allowing disputes to be raised immediately and resolved quickly. Each step of the construction project requires regular interaction, communication, decision-making, and approvals on the part of the members of the partnering team and the organizations they represent.

Calculation of Savings

Partnering sets the tone and mindset for the project; it helps to clear up misperceptions and misunderstandings at the beginning. It establishes relationship among the principal project participants. Without partnering, OSFC project managers believe they would spend their time dealing with issues that have already happened; instead of being able to manage in a manner to mitigate issues before them arise.

The Ohio School Construction Partnering Program has proven very effective for resolving claims arising from state-assisted school construction projects. With over \$4 billion in design, construction, or completed projects since 1997, the potential for disputes on school construction projects has been great. Studies indicated that prior to 1999, more than 50 percent of Ohio public school construction projects involved adjudication. However, since the implementation of the **Construction Partnering Program**, the number of unresolved claims has

been extremely low, suggesting that the dispute resolution methods established through partnering, coupled with regular meetings and on-going communication, have been effective.

Quantitative benefits realized by service recipients

At the end of 2005, the Rebuilding Ohio's Schools program was one of the largest construction programs (public or private) in the state, spending at the rate of \$2 million a day, 365 days a year. More than \$4.2 billion has been spent on construction and renovation over the past eight years and 417 buildings have been completed — 75 of them in 2005 alone.

Applicability of use by other state, local and/or federal government

The Ohio School Construction Partnering Program can be useful for projects that may be particularly difficult or complex and have multiple owners. The design of the Partnering Program allows co-owners to collaboratively plan and make decisions. Since a facilitator is brought in as the partners begin the program, issues or disputes are identified early and a dispute resolution process is put into place.