Request for Applications: Healthy School Facilities Network

Overview. The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) seeks applicants to participate in a new Healthy School Facilities (HSF) Network which will **build and enhance the capacity of states to provide healthy school facilities**. Our goal for the Network is to help participating state boards of education form collaborative teams of state and local experts to analyze state-level data and programming, convene stakeholders, and take targeted, concrete actions toward creating healthy school facilities free from environmental harms (e.g., lead in drinking water, asbestos, poor ventilation) which have detrimental effects on student health and learning.

A 2021 NASBE landscape analysis of state-level programs for testing lead in school drinking water found states encounter challenges in the areas of outreach and coordination, transparent communication, data collection and management, and technical and financial support. With the right consensus building, planning, strategy co-design, and implementation support, states can address these challenges and ensure that each and every student learns in a building able to meet their basic needs and contribute to academic success and that staff can operate in a safe workplace.

Supporting State Efforts. The HSF Network will help states increase access to healthy school facilities over a 9-month period (September 2022 – June 2023) by:

- Building a shared understanding of the role physical learning environments have on student health and academic success;
- Convening state teams for cross-state collaboration, information sharing, and briefings by national experts, researchers, and federal officials;
- Facilitating enhanced communication between federal, state, and local partners to address state specific challenges and leverage federal funds for facility improvements;
- Offering guidance on the alignment between the state’s current/ongoing school facilities improvement efforts, state strategic plan, and federal funding opportunities;
- Providing technical assistance, research, and supporting action plan development;
- Elevating examples of state leadership and success in publications, during public webinars and national conversations.

State Network Grant. Each participating state will receive a $10,000 grant to support staff work time and to convene in-state stakeholder meetings. This grant will support stakeholder engagement to create buy-in as well as spur conversations around enhancing the state’s school facility improvement efforts.

Requirements for Participation. Network states will be expected to:

- **Commitment:** Demonstrate commitment from state board of education leadership to engage in meaningful reflection and collaboration.
- **Assemble a team:** Recruit and maintain a state team of 4-8 representatives from state government and stakeholder groups outlined in the Team Members section below.
- **Convenings:** Have at least four team members attend one in-person convening on **October 26-27** in Phoenix, Arizona (travel and lodging expenses will be covered) and three virtual convenings on **January 27, March 24, and May 19, 2023**, at 12:00pm to 2:00pm ET to engage with national experts and other state teams for cross-state learning and collaboration.
• **Results-oriented**: Work to improve policies, programs, and/or processes governing school facility quality.

• **Promote state successes**: Share their state’s learning, progress, and success with national audiences, as appropriate.

• **Reporting**: Submit a brief impact report at the conclusion of the network in June 2023 (a report template will be provided).

**Team Members.** Each participating state team in the HSF Network must include 4-8 members. States are encouraged to include at least one team member representing disadvantaged or marginalized communities. States should consider having team members from different sectors, perspectives, and roles, including representatives from:

- State board of education (required);
- State department of education;
- State department of health;
- State department of environmental services;
- State legislature;
- School district leadership and/or district professional associations (e.g., state school superintendents association; find a list of state associations [here](#));
- Water works association;
- School or childcare facility;
- College or university researcher;
- Child health expert or advocate (e.g., American Academy of Pediatrics state chapters [here](#)); and/or
- Additional stakeholders (e.g., civil rights organizations, union affiliates, parent associations).

*Note*: Network states must have a state board of education member or state board of education staff member involved as a team member. This person is expected to serve as the main point of contact for the Network's activities and should be a reliable communicator.

**Team Member Characteristics.** States are encouraged to engage individuals as team members who will support consensus-building and work toward incremental improvements and lasting system-wide change. Characteristics of effective teammates include:

- **Mission-driven**: Committed to a shared mission of providing all students and school staff with safe and healthy school facilities to learn and work in.

- **Respected collaborator**: Has a reputation for engaging in successful collaborative efforts across departments, with communities, and across diversity of knowledge and role.

- **Knowledgeable**: Has worked in policy development, program implementation, research, or messaging and community outreach pertaining to school facilities and/or student health.

- **Connected**: Has a proven track record of developing relationships with state or local leaders in your state that result in desired policy and/or initiative outcomes.

- **Availability**: Has the time to be an engaged member of the team and attend HSF convenings.

- **Capacity**: Is in a role that directly or indirectly engages in, or has authority over, healthy school facilities.

This project is managed by Megan Blanco, NASBE’s director of safe and healthy schools. She can be reached at [megan.blanco@nasbe.org](mailto:megan.blanco@nasbe.org).

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DIRECTIONS
Please respond to the questions below to apply for your state to join the Healthy School Facilities Network. Applications are due by end of day, Friday, September 16, and should be submitted to Megan Blanco, NASBE’s director of safe and healthy schools, at megan.blanco@nasbe.org. If you have questions or would like to discuss the details of HSF over a call or by email, please contact Megan. Applicants will receive notice of their application outcome by September 21.

CONTACT INFORMATION (for person submitting application)
Name: 
Title: 
Affiliation: 
Email address: 
Alternate email address: 
Phone number: 

ASSURANCES
1) Has your state board chair/president agreed to the board participating in the Network?
   □ Yes    □ No

2) Do you commit to having at least 4 members of the state’s team attend each of the 4 Network convenings?
   □ Yes    □ No

3) Do you understand you will receive one half of the State Network Grant in October 2022 and the second half in February 2023 upon satisfactory progress (i.e., engagement and state team participation in convenings)?
   □ Yes    □ No

OPEN RESPONSES
1) Team members.
   Please provide the names, job titles, and affiliations of the individuals who have agreed to participate as a member of your state team or who are being considered for the role. (Note: State teams do not need to be finalized prior to submission. A list of potential team members is sufficient.)

2) Statement of Interest. (max 300 words)
   Describe your state board’s interest in participating in the Healthy School Facilities Network and how your state’s involvement in this Network connects to the state board’s strategic plan, vision, and/or mission statement.

3) Capacity and State Landscape. (max 500 words)
   Describe existing or developing healthy school facility policies, programs, or initiatives that your team would like to build on, including but not limited to efforts to address lead removal in school drinking water, leveraging American Rescue Plan funds to repair and update school facilities, improving school building air quality to stop the spread of COVID-19, creation of materials to train school personnel on maintaining school facilities, or inform the public about the state of school facilities (e.g., interactive dashboards, district and school profiles, an annual report posted online).
Please be as specific as possible, including legislation, non-regulatory guidance, interagency partnerships, engagement with stakeholders, or evidence demonstrating commitment to making school buildings healthy for students as exhibited by leadership at the state level. Feel free to include hyperlinks or attachments as appropriate.

4) **Resource Narrative. (max 300 words)**

Describe how your state anticipates leveraging the HSF Network and what activities you will engage in with the $10,000 State Network Grant to increase access to healthy school facilities. (Note: Clearly defined activities do not need to be finalized prior to submission and any proposed activities adjusted.)