

## Dear byDESIGN reader,

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## Color Me Ready to Learn: How to Use Color in Schools

Color and lighting play a large role in the way we feel on a daily basis. Feeling comfortable in our environment is the first step to learning and growing.

Lighting is the first consideration when determining the use of color in learning environments. Full spectrum lighting and daylight are essential for mood, staying alert, and visualizing true colors. Dim lighting can make a space feel institutional and monotone and make learning more difficult.

The second consideration for color in the classroom is the age group. Younger children tend to prefer bright and primary colors with warm tones, while teens and young adults gravitate toward current trendy colors and cool hues. No matter which color palette is selected, over saturation is just as poor of a choice as under saturation. A room full of bright colors is over stimulating to any age group. For example, the color red can signify a warning if used in excess. A palette of neutral tones with accents in bright hues provides well-balanced stimulation for learning environments. However, in some areas stimulation and enthusiasm are the goals. Adding a bit more saturation to the colors in certain areas of a school, such as gymnasiums, locker rooms, and the main lobby can promote school spirit and team cohesion.

Finally, schools are generally large buildings that can be overwhelming to new students and visitors. Color is a good way to establish way-finding. By painting the corridors in different wings of the building different colors, a new student or visitor can be more easily directed.



## Q&A with Alan Pole, Educational Liaison



Alan Pole is an educational liaison at BCK-IBI Group. He joined the firm in 2009 after retiring as the BOCES District Superintendent for the Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego BOCES after 18 years in this role. Prior to this, Alan spent 16 years at the Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES in several key positions, including Personnel Director, Assistant Superintendent, and Deputy Superintendent. Since his retirement, he has joined the Syracuse based consulting firm of Castallo and Silky, where he has been involved in several school district merger studies and shared services studies. He also assists boards of education with superintendent searches. Alan was recently recognized by the New York State Council of School Superintendents with the Distinguished Service Award. He currently resides in Manlius with his wife, Maryalice, a retired school nurse.

**Tell us about your family.** I have three children (Stephen, Kevin, and Lindsay), and five grandchildren, including a set of twins. Maryalice and I, as well as all three of our kids, are proud graduates of Niagara University.

**Your family pet?** None at the moment. We had a high spirited yellow lab named Ginger for 14 years while the kids were growing up; she loved nothing more than escaping from the house and running all over the neighborhood getting into trouble.

**Hobbies?** I have always loved sports. I am a big sports fan, especially of Syracuse University and Ohio State where I taught summer courses. We bought a boat last year! I have enjoyed it very much with my wife and our children and grandchildren. One of life's greatest pleasures is watching the grandchildren jump off the back of the boat.

Alan is a tremendous resource to our K-12 clients. He says, "I am fortunate to have worked with many wonderful people during my 38-year career in education, and I continue to enjoy my work as a consultant in retirement very much. Helping to mentor future school leaders has been particularly rewarding."

Contact him at 607-427-9681 with any questions regarding your district's capital improvement projects or for any assistance.

## Capital Project Process

Many school districts throughout New York State are planning, or beginning to discuss, capital projects to keep up with facility needs. Undertaking a capital project is a complex process that can be confusing for educators and the public. There are three main phases: Planning, Design, and Construction. Each phase has its own set of unique complexities, jargon, and steps. Over the next three issues of byDESIGN, we will be focusing on each phase in order to provide a comfortable working knowledge of each. Our team of professionals is available to present this series to individual districts on an as-needed basis. For more information, or to schedule a session for your team, please [click here](#) to contact [Steve Thesier](#).

### Focus on the Planning Phase

The Planning Phase for capital projects is not necessarily complicated, but there are some key components to help make it successful.

- 1. Identifying the Needs** — It is important to understand what your facility needs are. Some items to take into consideration when determining your needs are code compliance, age and building condition, useful life, educational program needs, and energy efficiency. As part of this phase you'll have to identify the stakeholders, which can include the Board of Education, administration, facilities committee, financial advisor, and architect and engineer. This group should come together to prioritize items to determine what is critical and what can wait. Some of the tools that can assist with the prioritization effort are the district's building condition survey, five-year plan and walk through.
- 2. Establishing Referendum Amount** — In the current economic climate, pursuing a significant capital project with a large tax impact can be very challenging. Keeping the community tax impact as low as possible should be an item of consideration. Funding for your project can come from many different sources, including a Capital Reserve Fund, debt service, and state building aid. Ultimately you need to decide what the community will support.
- 3. Finalizing the Details** — There are a few important technical steps that need to be followed for each project. Completing the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) process and contacting the State Historic Preservation Office are two of these items. This part of the process can be easy or challenging depending on the scope of work of the project. At this stage, you should also evaluate the district's aid ratio and try to stay within the maximum cost allowance.
- 4. Legal Requirements** — The district's Bond Counsel needs to establish the referendum language which defines the project and costs. Then, the Board of Education needs to pass a resolution accepting the referendum that will be presented in a vote to the public. Legal notice of the referendum must be placed a minimum of 45 days in advance of the actual referendum date.
- 5. Inform Your Community** — It is critically important to develop a communication plan that clearly addresses the funding mechanism and scope of work to the public. Communication methods can include public information meetings, newsletters, and talks with local community groups.



## 2013 Making Strides

The BCK-IBI Group "Treasured Chests" team participated in the 2013 Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk on October 19.



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