

Common Issues in the Review of Smart Schools Investment Plans

In order to help us speed the review and evaluation of your Smart Schools Investment Plan (SSIP), prior to final examination by the Review Board, we have put together a list of things we **MUST** see in an SSIP – as well as a list of things that will require us to send an SSIP back to the district for revision. We hope you find this helpful. In addition, please be sure to review the FAQs located on the Smartschools website: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/mgtserv/smart_schools/, which are updated frequently as we develop the program.

Characteristics of an Approvable Smart Schools Investment Plan

- SSIP Overview
 - Question 5 requires an upload of any presentation or documentation of your SSIP that was presented to and approved by the Board and posted on the district website for 30 days. **This should not be the 3 year District Technology Plan.**
- Project Categories
 - All required fields are filled out completely, addressing each and every aspect of all applicable questions. Many questions ask for details covering several areas, which all must be addressed to be considered complete.
 - The district has included the project number and completed related questions for all projects in School Connectivity, Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms, Transportable Classrooms and High-Tech Security. If a district has funds in any of these sections, they **must** have a project number. The only exception is for minor installation costs of classroom technology equipment performed by an outside vendor, which should be included and detailed under the School Connectivity category, under Other expenditures.
 - The final question in each section, which requests details of expenditures, is filled out completely and includes specific details, such as the make and model of items purchased, exact projected cost and other relevant information. These expenditures are broken down by eligible expenditure area and specific item. The total of expenditures in each category should equal the budgeted amount in each category, unless there are exigent circumstances that preclude obtaining the information. If so, contact our Office (Smartschools@nysed.gov) to discuss the issue before submitting your SSIP.
 - Responses regarding the nonpublic schools are accurate and include detailed information regarding the plan to purchase and loan devices to the nonpublic schools. There is now a fill-in table in the Classroom Technology category that provides the step-by-step calculation to determine the amount required to be loaned to the nonpublic schools located within your district. Other required information includes the specific devices being purchased for their use and the plan and schedule for annual requests of loans. Note that the submission of requests from the nonpublic schools to the public school cannot be required before June 1 of the school year prior to the actual loan request.

Issues that will result in a Smart Schools Investment Plan being returned for revision:

- Missing project numbers and unanswered related questions in School Connectivity, Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms, Transportable Classrooms and High-Tech Security sections. The first step in any capital project is to contact the Office of Facilities Planning (OFP) and file an SSBA-specific Letter of Intent (LOI.) You will not be able to submit an SSIP for review until that step has been taken and you have received a project number and a determination of whether your plan qualifies for a streamlined or full project review by OFP.
- Expenditures that include the cost of ineligible items, such as:
 - licenses
 - software
 - extended warranties
 - product or equipment leases
 - professional development
 - administrative costs

Smart Schools funds cannot be used to support these or any other operating expenses related to any SSBA project, as the State must sell tax-exempt capital bonds for these expenditures. Such costs must be supported with other local funds.

- Incomplete or unanswered fields throughout the entire SSIP.
- Omitting any elements related to the nonpublic schools and the purchase of their loanable devices.
- Inconsistencies between written responses to questions and budget or expenditure items. Be sure that all narratives match the planned expenditures, particularly when resubmitting plans.