

*U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*  
**CHILDREN'S HEALTH PROTECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Voluntary Guidelines for Siting School Facilities Task Group**

**Task Group Charge, Roles and Responsibilities**

**Purpose**

EPA requests that the CHPAC assist EPA in fulfilling its Congressional mandate to issue voluntary guidelines for the siting of school facilities. In particular, the Task Group is charged with making recommendations on the contents of a school siting guideline draft document that would then be made available for wide public comment. EPA seeks to create a draft guideline document that reflects a diverse range of perspectives and has benefited from substantive interactions across stakeholder groups to identify and, where possible address, the complex issues inherent in school site selection decisions.

**Potential Issues to Address**

The CHPAC School Siting Guideline Task Group will review, and propose recommended revisions to, a draft set of voluntary guidelines for use by state, tribal, and community policy- and decision-makers in evaluating and selecting sites to be used for school facilities. The Task Group will use as its starting point for discussion the July 15, 2009 EPA staff draft, which provides guidance on the current thinking within EPA about the breadth, scope, and approach. The Task Group will forward its recommendations for revising the EPA staff draft to CHPAC for consideration at its October 2009 meeting.

The draft guidelines must be consistent with the statutory language<sup>1</sup> mandating their development. The draft guidelines should comprehensively address the full range of issues and considerations inherent in the school site selection process with the goal of helping communities, states, and tribes improve their school site selection procedures.

**Charge Questions**

While EPA is interested in receiving specific recommendations regarding all aspects of the EPA staff draft, EPA is particularly interested in the Task Group's thoughts with respect to the following questions:

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<sup>1</sup> SEC. 502. MODEL GUIDELINES FOR SITING OF SCHOOL FACILITIES.

Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this section, the Administrator, in consultation with the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall issue voluntary school site selection guidelines that account for--

- (1) the special vulnerability of children to hazardous substances or pollution exposures in any case in which the potential for contamination at a potential school site exists;
- (2) modes of transportation available to students and staff;
- (3) the efficient use of energy; and
- (4) the potential use of a school at the site as an emergency shelter.

- Are separate guideline recommendations for states/tribes, and local education agencies/communities logical and helpful?
- Are the guideline recommendations for state, tribal, and local policy- and decision- makers appropriate in scope and substance?
- Do the guideline recommendations for communities provide information of sufficient detail to help ensure meaningful and productive involvement of community members in the school siting or school renovation process?
- In evaluating a particular candidate site, how much and what type of guidance should EPA provide communities with respect to what constitutes a “nearby” source[s] of potential contamination and how to evaluate the potential risks?
- What does the Task Group recommend the agency say about sites that have been cleaned up under Federal, state or tribal response programs? How does the task group suggest we improve educational agencies capacity to ensure safe siting of a school on a site that requires active management of engineering and institutional controls? Should EPA define what constitutes demonstrable capacity to ensure active management of engineering controls and institutional controls? If so, how should that capacity be defined?
- Is the draft Appendix—*Table of Potential Hazards to Identify During the Site Evaluation Process* helpful information? How could it be improved?

The Task Group is encouraged to offer specific language revisions as it deems appropriate.

### **Task Group Membership:**

The Chair of the CHPAC identified current members interested in participating on the siting Task Group. CHPAC Task Group members were selected based on their expressed interest in participating and through a collaborative process between EPA staff and the CHPAC chair. Additional individuals who are not CHPAC members have also been invited to join the Task Group to create a committee that represents a broad range of interests and perspectives on issues relevant to development of school siting guidelines. The non-CHPAC members were identified and invited to participate through a collaborative process between EPA staff and the CHPAC chair. The objective was to create a Task Group that includes experience and expertise that reflects an understanding of the issues and processes involved in local land use planning, school decision-making, environmental evaluation of sites, and community issues. representation from the following interests:

- Local education agencies or their representative organizations;
- Local health and environmental agencies;

- State and tribal agencies representing clean-up programs, health departments, environmental agencies, education departments, and other relevant state or tribal policy units;
- Organizations with a community focus representing environmental justice, environment, community planning, smart growth, energy, and emergency preparedness issues and concerns;
- Teacher, school health and other organizations with a school-siting focus;
- Public health, community health, and other health related organizations;
- Federal agencies, including EPA, HHS/CDC and DoED

EPA expects that each Task Group member will represent a broad range of interests and will communicate actively with their constituencies and other organizations.

Task Group members who are unable to participate in a meeting may designate another person from the organization they represent to stand in for them.

### **EPA Role**

EPA will form a resource group including staff from EPA programs, the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services to provide the Task Group with background, policy, and technical information and any other information to help the Task Group learn and dialogue efficiently and productively. The CHPAC will provide recommendations to EPA. EPA will retain decision-making authority on the draft and final school siting guidelines.

### **Task Group Chair**

The Task Group chair was selected by EPA in consultation with the chair of the full CHPAC and is a current member of the CHPAC.

### **Task Group Timing, Process, and Product**

The Task Group will hold an initial in-person meeting on July 20, and thereafter will meet by conference call. The Task Group will draft a recommendation to bring to the CHPAC for their October meeting. The Task Group may be convened after the EPA has received further public comments and to prepare the CHPAC to make recommendations to EPA to finalize the guidelines.

EPA will pay travel expenses for the July 20, 2009 meeting as needed for out of town task group members, consistent with the procedures already in place. Additional in-person meetings may be scheduled, depending on need and availability of resources.

The Task Group will generate ideas, consider options, suggest priorities, and provide draft recommendations to the full plenary of the CHPAC for approval and delivery to the Agency. Only Task Group members or their designees will take part in Task Group

deliberations. Members of the EPA-formed resource group will attend meetings of the Task Group.

### **Meeting Support**

Meeting support, including professional facilitation, will be provided by EPA through its current CHPAC support contract. Documents, supporting research, and background information may be e-mailed to Task Group participants.

### **Responsibilities of Task Group Members**

Members agree to:

- Attend all regularly scheduled meetings. If a Task Group member cannot attend a meeting, s/he will notify the facilitator of the person designated to take his/her place. If a member is not able to attend a meeting, s/he may communicate views through another member or the facilitator.
- Take on writing, analytic and other tasks to further the Task Group purpose.
- Review materials in advance of meetings, and arrive at each meeting prepared to discuss the issues on the agenda.
- Communicate concerns, interests, and ideas openly and make the reasons for any disagreements clear.
- Follow the CHPAC operating principles and operating ground rules.