

While having the right spaces— both in count and size- ensures a functional school, much of what enables the full implementation of curriculum, programming and services to ensure the district’s desired student experience is rooted in the affordances within these spaces. Affordances include furnishings, fixtures and equipment as well as the unique properties of each one selected that contribute to the overall agility of the space.

Whether attempting to get ahead in the long-range facilities planning process or leveraging standards development and inventorying of furniture as part of ongoing curriculum and programmatic review processes, doing so will be beneficial for these ends as well as assist with budget planning and forecasting.

## DETERMINING FURNITURE STANDARDS

Before inventorying existing furnishings, it is helpful to create District Furniture Standards. This approach allows Districts to begin with current and desired programming and services and list what furnishings are needed to maximize each offering. This process should involve a careful review of learning targets, lessons and activities to ensure that all the various kinds of furnishings and the varied uses of them for different instructional and assessment methodologies have been considered. A review of literature around the mind-body connection and any evidence-based research that provides specificity for furnishing should also be included in this step of the process. Key areas to explore include: Safety, Flexibility, Ergonomics, Durability, Accessibility and Age-Appropriateness.

Once Districts have completed an internal review of the areas described above, it can be beneficial to invite multiple furniture dealers to come and showcase select products—both some that would be universal to all learning spaces such as student seating as well as more niche products- to hear what they have to say about the product, rationale for its design and other specifications. This can serve as both an interview of sorts for future purchasing but also as a terrific way to ensure a completeness to the standards developed.

Finally, Districts should discuss and determine the best way to express these standards. For some, a listing of criteria in a spreadsheet that allows for a simple count is what is desired. For others, creating a rubric that allows for multiple data points to be entered for existing furniture makes more sense than just knowing a count (and location) of existing furniture and its condition. For instance, using a rubric could allow for different categories such as:

- Size of Furnishing(s)<sup>`</sup>
- Condition of Furnishing(s)
- Material of Furnishing(s)
- Color of Furnishing(s)
- Age of Furnishing(s)/Year Acquired
- Accessibility
- Durability<sup>^</sup>
- Flexibility
- Ergonomics
- Safety
- Developmental Range
- Other standards that are program specific

<sup>`</sup>Seat/stool height, desk/table dimensions

<sup>^</sup>This may include materials or warranty minimums that may speak to total cost of ownership

Having more description in the standards-setting process may allow for more complete and useful inventory data usage in the future.

## PILOTING THE USAGE OF DEVELOPED STANDARDS

Once all this information has been gathered, the district may choose to use existing asset-management software or create spreadsheets, use apps available, or determine another way to catalogue these standards. It is recommended to start small by taking one programmatic/service area that has developed standards and the way the district has chosen to proceed to catalogue the information and try it in 8-10 classrooms. Applying the standards to inventory existing furniture will provide insight into how complete the standards development process has been to date and how the inventorying process works. Once feedback from this pilot exercise has been incorporated into the standards development process and the final standards completed, it is time to inventory all existing furniture.

## INVENTORYING FURNITURE

Whether long-range facilities planning or completing a 10-year capital improvement plan, having a complete picture of the district's furniture based on expressed curricular needs allows for better financial forecasting and potential project budgeting. Given furniture's relatively low price per item, it may also be a great chance to pilot implementation of different furnishings to jump-start curricular/programmatic changes and provide funding partners a way to contribute in manageable and meaningful ways to commence a project.

## PRA FURNITURE SERVICES

We recognize the powerful role that thoughtfully designed educational environments play in teaching, learning, collaboration, and student well-being. PRA is proud to have a highly collaborative team committed to delivering creative, functional, and durable furniture solutions aligned with today's educational best practices. We work closely with school districts, furniture partners and construction management teams to ensure each phase of the project is executed seamlessly and aligns with your vision, timeline, and budget. There are three methods of delivery we offer for our furniture services:

- **CONSULTING:** PRA supports your selected furniture dealer by providing general layout for scope/budget and coordination with interior architectural finishes and elements with furniture, including electrical needs.
- **ARCHITECT/DEALER PARTNER:** PRA provides a next level of support by assisting in the selection of a furniture dealer partner from creation of an RFQ (request for qualifications) to interviews and project kick off meeting coordination. This service continues as a partnership with the selected dealer on furniture selection, specification of finishes, review of orders and coordination of installation.
- **BIDDING:** PRA provides a turn-key solution using established project goals and desired space usage, to select furniture. Once this step is complete, it is sent to several dealers for bids with PRA preparing bid summaries, reviewing final purchase orders, coordinating installation of furniture and any necessary follow ups.

We would love to discuss these options with you to offer the best solution for your district. It would be our privilege to partner to help bring these new spaces to life and support your vision for student-centered, future-ready schools.



### FOR MORE RESOURCES:

*The pros at PRA welcome the chance to help you.*

Contact Nicholas Kent, Partner - Education Studio, at [nkent@prarch.com](mailto:nkent@prarch.com) or 414-410-2968.

