

The Educators' Guide to
Successful Space Planning



I. Introduction



Long term school facility plans can be thwarted by many different situations, such as unpredictable growth, building renovations, and lower student/teacher ratio requirements. For these circumstances and many others, school districts in every state rely on the efficiency and ease of modular space.

II. The Benefits of Modular Space



It's no wonder schools across America utilize modular space. It quickly and affordably provides a pleasant, modern learning environment. And, while traditional buildings are being constructed, replaced or renovated, it offers a comfortable and convenient temporary solution.

Consider just a few of the many benefits of modular space:

Quality

Units are built in climate-controlled factories by experienced tradespeople using top-quality materials

Flexibility

Space can be configured to meet unique needs, ranging from one mobile classroom to multi-story permanent structures

Economy

Typically less costly than traditional construction

Speed

When crisis strikes, mobile classrooms can often be ordered and installed in days

Convenience

Your space can easily be moved to another location, expanded or removed, as needed

Controlled Environment

Units have their own HVAC systems which can adjust to changing temperatures

Regardless of the specific circumstances for considering modular space, its benefits are compelling.

III. Selecting Your Space

There are several options available within the modular space family. The best solution depends on your school's particular need. Is time of the essence? Is flexibility essential? Whatever your specific requirement, a modular solution exists to meet it.

There are three basic types of modular space:

Mobile/relocatable units

Mobile units provide the fastest way to secure your space. They are also known as "relocatables" because they are so easy and inexpensive to move. When additional space is needed in a hurry, mobile units/relocatables may offer the best alternative.

Modular units

Modular units, while still "relocatable", are a more permanent option offering greater possibilities but a longer lead time to secure. Space configurations can be customized to meet specific needs and sizes can range from a single classroom to 10,000 square feet or more. Modular units also offer numerous flexible options to consider, such as restrooms, locker rooms, wiring for computers, exterior siding, lighting, and much more.

These buildings can serve you for many years, yet they are still relatively easy to move if your needs change. If you need additional space for just a few years, or are planning to build in the future, modular units may provide the best solution.

Modular construction/major projects

Modular construction involves factory-made units that are assembled on your site. The result is a permanent building set on a foundation. It is often impossible to differentiate between modular construction and traditional construction just by looking at the building. A key difference is that modular construction enables building completion in substantially less time than traditional construction, resulting in a lower cost and earlier occupancy for the customer. Time savings are achieved through a highly efficient process where the site work and construction of the units occur simultaneously.

IV. Buy or Lease?



A major part of the appeal of modular space stems from its flexible financing options. For example, if getting cash for a down payment or an approval for a major purchase is an issue, other alternatives exist. Leasing is a popular method for schools, because it provides more financial flexibility, depending upon individual space and financial requirements.

There are three primary means of acquiring modular space:

Purchase – Allows you to own your space outright and sell it when no longer needed

Lease – Offers affordable monthly payments, typically for one to three years. When the term of the lease is through, so is your obligation.

Lease to own- Allows for monthly payments with the ultimate goal of ownership, typically within several years

V. Choosing the Right Supplier



The right vendor can make all the difference between an outstanding experience and a horrific one, so it is important to do research and choose wisely. Factors to consider include:

Referrals – Ask colleagues who have been through the process for referrals. Visit sites where potential suppliers have done work.

Experience – How long has the company existed? Are they knowledgeable about local codes?

Reputation – What is the supplier's reputation? Are they considered reliable? Trustworthy? Knowledgeable? Timely?

Ability to provide turn-key service – Can they be flexible and are they able to provide additional services such as relocation, refurbishment, parts, accessories, furniture, etc?

Proposal – Review the proposal in detail. Ensure that specific services to be performed are clearly outlined before approving.

References – Ask for a list of references from potential suppliers, and then be sure to check them.

Price and availability are important factors to consider, but the least expensive bid is not necessarily the best one. Select the proposal that best meets your needs.

VI. Designing Your Modular Space



Modular space can be extremely flexible, so take advantage of its extraordinary capabilities to make it meet your school's unique requirements.

Determining size requirements

Once you have decided that relocatable classrooms are the answer to your needs, you will want to determine how much space is required. This is largely influenced by your school district's student/teacher ratio requirements. Specific requirements may vary widely; often the ratio is between 25 to 50 square feet per student. You should check your state and local codes or enlist the help of an informed supplier who is experienced in working in your area. In addition, ensure that your supplier is able to provide space that meets federal requirements, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act.

It is wise to think beyond today when determining how much space you will need. Consider all possible uses for the space you are designing and prepare for them. In addition to classrooms, space may also be needed for restrooms, computer labs, administrative offices, and other ancillaries, so be sure to include those plans, as well.

Aesthetics

Just because a portion of your school may be modular does not mean that it must lack architectural details that can unify it to existing structures and be eye-appealing.

Especially effective are the use of:

- Color
- Finishes
- Exterior lighting
- Covered walkways
- Landscaping

These relatively minor touches can go a long way in making your new space an attractive and pleasant addition to your campus.

VII. Making Ordering Easy



You can facilitate getting your space by careful planning and ordering early. Once it becomes apparent that modular space is needed, begin planning for it immediately. Often there is such a demand for space that last minute orders cannot get completed in time. And, as the school year approaches and orders flow in, backlogged requests mean a longer waiting period. Placing your order in February or March will ensure that your new space will be fully functional for the upcoming school year.

Pre Plan

- Select Your Space
- Choose Your Supplier
- Design Your Space
- Determine Financing Plan

Finalize & Order

- Select Your Site
- Order Your Space Six Months Prior to Occupancy

Delivery

- Installation & Occupancy

VIII. Selecting the Site



Site planning is very important and should be addressed early in the process. A number of considerations must be addressed when determining where to put your modular space, including:

- Access to utilities
- Codes
- Grading
- Proximity to property lines or other buildings
- Moisture
- Soil composition
- Visual impact in relation to the campus as a whole
- Accessibility for delivery and removal of units

A reputable space provider with local expertise will be able to assist you in evaluating the site you are considering. Their experience can be invaluable so it is critical to select a knowledgeable company.

IX. After Installation



Maintenance

Make a long-term plan for maintaining your new space appropriately. Ensure that funds to cover proper maintenance are in your budget. Ask your supplier to advise you as to what maintenance tasks should be done and their frequency. Consider getting a maintenance agreement from your supplier.

Make a periodic inspection of your HVAC system, roof, floor, etc. This kind of regular maintenance will dramatically extend the life of your space. Ultimately, you may decide to relocate, refurbish, or sell your space, and a history of proper maintenance will be highly beneficial.

Service/warranties

If you have a warranty, make sure you know what items are covered and for how long. Is an extended service policy available? Whom do you contact if you experience a problem? Thinking ahead can save you time and money down the road.

X. Conclusion

Williams Scotsman has been providing relocatable space to the educational market for over 50 years. A national company with local expertise delivered through more than 90 branches across North America, Williams Scotsman provides premier quality and service. Each of our branches is staffed with experienced local professionals who know your area, understand its special requirements and can meet your specific needs.

Williams Scotsman offers a variety of flexible financing options and we will work with you to select a program that fits your situation and budget.

With more than 50,000 units in stock, Williams Scotsman has the availability to begin preparing the space you need. And, Williams Scotsman representatives are known for their excellent service and willingness to “go the extra mile”. We are pleased to provide this guide to modular space for education and we hope you found it useful. If you have questions or need additional information, please call us at 1-800-782-1500 or visit us at www.willscot.com.



800.782.1500
www.willscot.com