

# **Yellow Springs Schools Facilities Task Force Report to the Community**



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# Topics

- **What we did.**
- **What we learned.**
- **Recommendations.**
- **Funding options.**
- **Your perspective.**
- **Next steps.**

# What We Did

# Our Perspective of Our Responsibility

- **Understand what is working and what is not in the current school buildings.**
- **Develop a clear list of what should be addressed and improved.**
  - **We identified problems to address rather than designing new schools or new additions.**
- **Prioritize the possible improvements.**
- **Share with the community to understand your perspective.**
- **Report to the board our recommendations for improvements and what we learned from you.**
- **We were not charged with:**
  - **Designing how to address the improvements we recommend.**
  - **Determining the cost of the recommended improvements.**

# Task Force Composition

- **Community members in favor of the levy, as presented.**
- **Community members opposed to the levy, as presented.**
- **People who spend their days in buildings (faculty, staff, students).**
- **Building/construction expert.**
- **Decision-makers.**

# Task Force Members

- **Abigail Cobb, Community member**
- **Benji Maruyama, Community member**
- **Chad Runyon , Community member**
- **Chris Hamilton, Community member**
- **Kat Walter, Community member**
- **Lori Kuhn, Community member**
- **Susan Miller, Community member**
- **Desiree Nickell, Faculty HS**
- **Ian Sherk, Student HS**
- **John Gudgel, Staff MLS**
- **Julia Hoff, Student HS**
- **Mike Ruetschle, Architect**
- **Terri Holden, YS Schools Superintendent**
- **TJ Turner, YS Schools Board**

# Activities Completed

- **Met since March 18, 2019.**
- **Visited both schools early in our work to experience the facilities ourselves.**
- **Conducted focus groups with faculty and students to understand their needs.**
- **Surveyed the community about the 2018 levy, with 156 responses.**
- **Developed guiding principles to use in our decision making.**
- **Learned about YSS current and proposed tax levies; how tax levies work.**
- **Asked School Board for their perspective on the future of K-12 education & the future for YS Schools.**

# Activities Completed

- **Participated in presentation from Fanning Howey (engineering firm that assessed the facilities) to understand their findings**
- **Participated in presentation from Mike Ruetschle to understand the proposal that went before the voters**
- **Listened to alternative options to address concerns provided by a local building inspector**
- **Explored each of the major areas in the FH report and the improvements requested by faculty, students, and principals.**
- **Visited both schools a second time to confirm what we had learned through our exploration**
- **Surveyed task force members to begin prioritization**
- **Discussed and confirmed task force view of priorities**



# Guiding Principles for Our Discussions

- **Health, safety, security.**
  - **Safe environment/pests/HazMat.**
  - **Air quality/HVAC.**
  - **Proper plumbing.**
  - **Building security/entry and cameras.**
  - **Fire/Tornado.**
- **Maintenance/Sustainment Plan built-in.**
- **Affordable.**
  - **What is the community willing to pay for even if it is “affordable”?**
  - **Reflect Yellow Springs values.**
  - **Address ongoing maintenance costs when considering affordability.**

# Guiding Principles

- **Designed for 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills and learning.**
  - **Warm and inviting environment.**
  - **Proper layout.**
  - **Proper technology.**
  - **Room for adapting to rapid technological change.**
  - **Accessibility.**
- **YS Values.**
  - **Environmental Sustainability.**
    - **Minimum waste.**
    - **Maximum efficiency.**
  - **Healthy Meals.**
  - **School facilities as community resources.**

# What We Learned

# From the Community Survey About the 2018 Levy

## **Biggest Strength**

- **Great design (39)**
- **“The design was very progressive, state of the art HVAC, horrible tower gone, 3 large pods south facing and open to outdoors, revamped kitchen and access, revamped traffic pattern and secure entry. The cinderblock-prison like atmosphere would have been transformed.”**

## **Biggest Weakness**

- **High cost (91)**
- **“Way too much money asked for a new school when the village is not growing, so fewer kids in the future.”**

# From the Community Survey About the 2018 Levy

- **Additional concerns.**
  - **Turned off by scare tactics.**
  - **Perception that the School Board did not listen to, or communicate with, the community.**
  - **Many wanted renovation rather than a replacement for cost and environmental reasons.**
  - **No plan for MLS – expected future cost.**
  - **Design too grandiose.**
  - **Design for PBL.**
  - **Lack of maintenance.**
- **YS residents remain passionate about the schools.**

# Task Force Member Learnings

- **Our schools are essential parts of the Yellow Springs community. They contribute to our identity as a village.**
- **There are real problems that must be addressed.**
  - **Teachers and administrators work hard to find alternatives to deficiencies.**
- **Affordability and the environment are serious considerations for YS residents.**
- **Maintenance has been underfunded, reactionary, and inadequate.**
  - **Aging buildings require much more attention than modern buildings, and we have some very old buildings.**
  - **The district does wonders with the resources available.**
- **Modular classrooms must be replaced.**
- **Modern security needs are not being met.**

# Task Force Member Learnings

- **Both schools are energy inefficient and waste money.**
  - Envelopes (windows, doors, roofs, walls) leak.
  - Heating and AC don't work well in all parts of the buildings.
  - Classroom conditions are not always conducive to learning or student health.
- **Both schools lack reliable, sufficient electric service.**
  - Insufficient outlets for modern technology.
  - Power disruptions.
- **Both schools lack reliable, sufficient, relevant technology.**
  - Infrastructure is aging – we are up to capacity available.
  - Power outages shorten the lifespans of technology
- **Plumbing has problems in both schools, and restroom facilities are insufficient for the number of students.**
  - Need accessible restrooms in both and gender-neutral in high school.

# Task Force Member Learnings

- **Both schools have inadequate kitchens and cafeterias.**
- **The value of open enrollment is not clear to all residents. Benefits of open enrollment include:**
  - **Sufficient students to allow opportunities such as AP classes, foreign languages, and sports teams.**
  - **Significant state funding for each student, which exceeds the amount of state funding for local students.**
  - **Brings diverse perspectives to our school community.**
  - **Note that we don't add classrooms to support open enrollment, we add students to fill classes.**
- **Our students and teachers deserve better.**
  - **“Beautiful, functioning schools are central to the life and vitality of our village. Our children deserve to spend 7 hours per day, five days a week in a facility that tells them they are valued.”**



# Our Recommendations

# Our Overall Approach

- **We determined the best way forward is to invest in significant improvements to both buildings rather than near-complete replacements.**
- **Our recommendations represent the best spirit of compromise within task force members.**
  - **Items are not necessarily the first choice of all task force members, but the recommendations are something that we all agreed to.**
- **All of the guiding principles informed our deliberation, but health and safety, maintenance, and affordability were the primary drivers of our decisions.**

# Please See Handout

## Highest Priority Improvements

District Wide	
Category	Description
Increase maintenance funding and staff	Task force members recommend strongly that the school district significantly increase funding and staff for ongoing maintenance in addition to these specific building improvements. Maintenance must be proactive and planned.

Both Schools	
Category	Description
Replace modular classrooms with permanent classrooms **	These are <b>not</b> functional as educational space. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommend replacing the educational space at both schools</li> </ul>
Improve overall security **	Modern security needs are not being met. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure all doors (exterior door badge readers, classroom doors)</li> <li>Additional cameras</li> <li>Add a recognizable front entrance that provides secure access at HS</li> <li>Add secure entry vestibule at MLS</li> </ul>
Hazardous materials abatement as needed	Nothing is dangerous today. We will address any materials that become hazardous as a result of the renovation work.
Plumbing **	Plumbing has problems in both schools. Some students refuse to use restrooms. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address plumbing deficiencies and increase capacity of student bathrooms</li> <li>Accessible restrooms</li> </ul>
Building Envelope **	Currently buildings leak water, mud, air, insects, and animals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make building envelope improvements (roof, walls, windows, doors)</li> <li>Will increase energy efficiency</li> </ul>
Provide functional heating and cooling in classrooms and gym **	Poor air quality, poor temperature control, wastes energy, contributes to challenging learning environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide AC in the HS gym/multi-purpose room</li> </ul>
Cafeteria and serving line **	The cafeterias and serving lines are insufficient for the number of students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the capacity in the cafeterias and serving lines.</li> <li>Improve the acoustics in the cafeteria at the HS.</li> </ul>
Kitchen **	The kitchens have old equipment with spotty performance. There is some, but limited capacity to prepare fresh food. Serving capacity is inadequate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renovate the kitchen and upgrade the kitchen equipment to offer improved dining options</li> </ul>
Provide sufficient, reliable electric power **	The electric power is insufficient for today's use and is unreliable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrade the electrical system</li> <li>Add alarms and emergency lighting</li> </ul>
Technology	The technology is insufficient for today's use and is unreliable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide functional, reliable, relevant technology (infrastructure/systems technology and classroom technology)</li> </ul>

\*\* Principals Hatert and Housh identified this as a priority.

Note that the items within each priority are not sequenced in any way. They all have equal priority.

# Challenge Today

- **We won't know the total costs of the recommended improvements until the school board scopes the projects and formally asks for proposals.**

# How Might We Pay?

- **Recommendation: Increase district-wide maintenance funding.**
  - **The task force recommends the School Board increase the permanent improvement levy to fund increased maintenance.**

# How Might We Pay?

- **Recommendation: Address the multiple recommended improvements.**
- **There are multiple approaches to funding the recommended improvements. Taxpayer-funded options may include:**
  - **Get all of the funding up front and repay the principal and interest through a bond levy, an income tax, or a combination of both.**
  - **Significantly increase the permanent improvement levy to allow us to fund major improvements over time.**
  - **Combination of both above – take out a smaller loan and increase the permanent improvement levy.**
- **Other approaches could include:**
  - **Sell district assets to generate funding.**

# School Board Information Sessions

- **Note that the District will hold informational sessions about school funding.**

# We Need to Hear From You

- **What excites you about the recommendations?**
- **What questions do you have?**
- **What concerns do you have?**
  
- **Note that in order to allow as many as possible to share their perspective:**
  - **We ask that each person keep comments to one minute or less.**
  - **If you have a question that is easy to answer, we will answer right away. If more complex, we will capture the question and answer it in a written response available on the district website.**



Next Steps

## **Task Force**

- 1. Consolidate input from all public meetings to understand your perspective.**
- 2. Update our list of priorities, as needed.**
- 3. Present our recommendations to the School Board.**

## **School Board**

- 1. Provide informational sessions on school funding and levies.**
- 2. Prepare possible project plan & timeline options.**
- 3. Prepare budget estimates.**
- 4. Share with community & get feedback.**
- 5. Adjust the plan as appropriate.**
- 6. Develop a long-term funding plan.**

**Thank you for your time and good thinking!**