

Why is the District looking at its school buildings now?

Assessing our facilities is one part of the 2020 Strategic Plan developed by a broad committee of teachers, administrators and community members and adopted by the Board of Education in 2011. That plan has guided the District's decision-making about the future and decisions need to be made to either repair, maintain, renovate, or replace our existing buildings.

What is wrong with Mills Lawn Elementary School, McKinney Middle School and Yellow Springs High School?

Mills Lawn Elementary School was originally constructed in 1952 (65 years old), and McKinney Middle School / Yellow Springs High School was originally constructed in 1963 (54 years old). The schools present constant costly repairs, and do not meet state guidelines. They are extremely outdated and cannot accommodate the 21st-century educational environment Yellow Spring's students need to prepare them for the future. A 2017 Assessment by the Ohio Facility Construction Commission (OFCC) cited major deficiencies and recommended that the buildings be replaced. Some of the issues the State documented in its assessment include:

- Needed abatement of asbestos and other hazardous material
- Water damaged ceilings and failing plumbing
- Insufficient and outdated heating and ventilation systems
- Antiquated security and lack of fire suppression systems – not compliant with building codes or state school guidelines
- Deteriorating masonry, and lack of any exterior insulation
- Classrooms that are too small and poorly configured for today's educational needs
- Obsolete and strained electrical systems and infrastructure that cannot support modern educational technology
- Multiple issues with ADA accessibility

What are the costs of renovating our current buildings? How does this compare to the cost of new construction?

The Ohio Facility Construction Commission (OFCC) visited the District in the spring of 2017 and prepared a thorough report on the state of our buildings. Their estimate is that it will cost \$10.4M to renovate Mills Lawn Elementary School and \$16.3M to renovate McKinney Middle School / Yellow Springs High School to be compliant with State Standards. These costs approach 90% of the cost to construct new buildings (without LFIs). The OFCC's full assessment report for all of our buildings is available here ([McKinney/Yellow Springs High School](#), [Mills Lawn School](#)).

Where do the approximate cost budgets for the different building/renovation options come from?

These budgets are based upon the State standard cost per square foot figure multiplied by the required square footage for the identified buildings. Buildings are sized to accommodate future projected enrollment.

Will the state contribute any money toward new or renovated buildings?

The District is partnering with the Ohio Facility Construction Commission (OFCC) through their Expedited Local Partnership Program (ELPP). This program will allow the District to pursue a facilities project and receive a 17% contribution (for the base plan) from the State of Ohio assuming certain planning criteria are met.

How are school building projects financed?

Typically school building projects are financed through issuing bonds. These bonds raise money through an increase in property taxes. These bonds are sold at current interest rates (now approx. 5%) at the time of sale and the term on them is usually 35 years. Alternately, school buildings can be financed in part or full through an income tax, though this is less common. The District will be consulting with a Bond Underwriter to consider financial options and capacity analysis for our community.

How do the bonds affect the District's annual budget?

The money raised through the bonds is separate from the District's annual operating budget. However, maintenance and repair cost do come out of the operating budget. One of the District's concerns is that given how old significant portions of our buildings are, the costs of maintaining and repairing them will rise.

What about the operating levy recently passed? Can't those funds be used for the new buildings?

Operating levies are designated for the day-to-day operating costs of our schools; things like utility costs, textbooks, classroom materials, and salaries. Those funds are not typically used for building new schools or other permanent improvements. Further, we do not raise enough operating funds annually to fund our operating costs and also to build new schools. All of the bond issue funds must be used for new facilities, building renovations, and other permanent improvements.

What are LFI's?

LFI's stands for "locally funded initiatives." These are additional parts of a project that are not co-funded by the State but which the District might pursue if funds for them can be raised in other ways. What the District has heard repeatedly is the need to have a performing arts facility that could be used both by students and by community groups. Building such a facility would be an LFI over and above our base facility master plan.

What do teachers think about the facilities?

In April the District held a meeting with all teachers and staff to discuss the facilities. After that meeting, teachers and staff were given a survey. Teachers overwhelmingly favored moving to a combined K-12 facility and were split almost evenly about where that facility should be. The results of that survey can be found [here](#).

Have other districts in the region built new schools recently?

Yes. All of the 6 other districts in Greene County have built or are in the process of building new facilities. Greenon voters passed a levy in May to build a new \$54M K-12 building. Xenia has recently replaced all 5 elementary schools and are currently pursuing an \$85M plan to replace their 6-12 buildings. Greeneview Schools have recently built a new Middle School and upgraded their High School and Primary School. Fairborn is currently designing two new schools, a PK-2 and 3-5 Elementary School valued at \$51M. Cedarcliff recently built a new K-12 School and Beavercreek has made major facilities investments including their new Trebein Elementary and Coy Middle School.

What if I have additional questions? Where can I get more information?

Additional information, background on the facility and community engagement process, state reports, and presentations shared at community meetings are available on the Yellow Springs District's website at: ysschools.org and click on "YS Facilities Plan". For other questions or for assistance, please contact Mario Basora, Superintendent, at mbasora@ysschool.org or by calling 937-767-7381.