

Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

Why is the District looking at its school buildings now?

- **Responsible to ask the tough questions**
- **Fiscally responsible to look to the future**
- **Responsible for maintaining/sustaining these treasured buildings**
- **Don't want to ignore our responsibility or our community's legacy**
- **Being proactive and forward thinking**

Why are we even talking about facilities?

We know there are lots of reasons to love Oakwood, including the services, the community feel, the tree lined streets and the walkability. One of those reasons is also the schools.

We know our community loves our beautiful old buildings, their architecture, their history, their feel, the memories we have created in and around them.

We know we want to protect, to maintain, to retain them.

We know 17 years ago we identified issues and areas of concern with our building's infrastructure and we have addressed some of them. Some of those issues are now 17 years older.

We know we continue to have issues now with our infrastructure including HVAC, energy efficiency, space, etc. Two independent third party teams of engineers, our staff and our students have confirmed these issues.

We know the current investment to maintain and to sustain them in our current budget and the continuance of a break fix approach is not the best plan in the long run.

We know that while we are addressing the infrastructure issues, it is prudent to look at other aspects of our facilities.

And finally, we know our students, education, our teachers, college and the workplace are evolving. In order to prepare our students, we have to consider how our spaces need to evolve too.

What is wrong with our existing school buildings?

- **According to two independent teams, staff and students there are problems with:**
 - **Leaking and failing plumbing**
 - **Insufficient and outdated heating, ventilation and electrical systems**
 - **Classrooms smaller than recommended square footage**
 - **Less than optimum space**
 - **Multiple issues with ADA accessibility**

Community/Student/Staff Involvement

How have teachers been involved in the process?

- **Interviewed and observed during educational assessments**
- **Regular two-way communication including:**
 - **Surveys**
 - **Committees**
 - **Small group and full building meetings**
 - **Workshops,**
 - **Field trips to other districts and learning sites**

What do teachers think about the facilities?

- **Love the feel and traditions of the buildings**
- **Dislike the HVAC, noise, space constraints, restrooms, cafeteria space**
- **Desire for flexible learning space, large group spaces, devoted fine arts area, becoming more accessible**
- **Questions regarding security, classroom sizes, water and air quality, electrical issues**

How can parents get involved in the project?

- **Attend meetings and workshops, join committees and future opportunities**

Who are members of the groups that have been involved since fall?

You can see the complete Master Facilities Plan roster at

<https://www.oakwoodschoools.org/district/master-facility-plan/mfp-roster>

How will students be involved in the process?

So far, students have been a part of the Facility Advisory Committee, workshops and the Principal/Superintendent Advisory Group. Students will also be included in future focus groups.

As Oakwood has a number of aging community assets, could we combine fitness center, library, community meeting rooms and school needs?

Yes, we are open to possible options that might address multiple community challenges. Various members of community groups are part of the MFP team.

How is community input being considered in this process

The Oakwood Schools Board of Education requires a totally open, honest and transparent process from the beginning. Whether it is in person, one-on-one, in small groups or in workshops, online, or through emails or phone calls, community input is central to the process. It will drive development of the options, narrowing of the options and the selection of the option, as well as the timing of the implementation.

Future of Education

Are we sure brick and mortar schools are the way of the future?

We are not sure of anything - but for the foreseeable future we believe our buildings will play a key role in the education of our children and grandchildren and will continue to play a central role in our community. We have seen a lot of pedagogical shifts during the last five to ten years that change the way we engage our students, but none of those changes have resulted in the elimination of physical school buildings. They have simply modified the way we program and allocate spaces.

Funding/Costs

How will any of these projects be funded?

It will probably be a combination of local tax monies with some private donations. There is also the possibility of state funds to help. District leaders are consulting with our Business Advisory Committee and Bond Underwriter to consider financial options for our community. Bond Funds, Permanent Improvement Funds, state dollars and private donations.

Is there state or federal money to support these projects?

State money could be possible through the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC). There are no federal dollars available.

Will the state contribute money toward new or renovated buildings?

The District is partnering with the OFCC through the Expedited Local Partnership Program (ELPP). This program could allow the District to pursue a facilities project and receive a future 26% contribution (for the base plan) from the State of Ohio assuming certain planning criteria are met.

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

Currently, the renovation costs from the assessment at the 10-year mark (2027) represent approximately 55-63% of the cost for building new. Those costs do include an inflation factor of 3%, so as time goes on, the renewal costs will increase. For a specific breakdown by building, please see the Renewal Index portion of the Community Meeting Presentation at

http://www.oakwoodschoools.org/uploaded/Oakwood_City_School_District/District/MFP/Community_Meeting_1b.pdf beginning with slide #106.

What data was used to build the “purple” bar chart height?

Complete assessments were done on all of the different systems with the school buildings (walls, roofs, finishes, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, technology, security, technology). Their life expectancy was analyzed and future repairs and replacements over time were projected. The assessing team utilizes a robust software program that is tied directly to a national construction cost database to provide estimating, budgeting and phasing solutions. The software utilizes industry cost and benchmarking data, such as RSMeans, BCIS and BOMA to ensure reliable cost projections for deferred maintenance and systems renewal.

If we say our classrooms are too small, why is the replacement costs based on the same square footage? Wouldn't we be looking at building larger spaces?

That is strictly a way for comparing the costs for renewal of existing facilities to the cost for building new. It is not a final reflection of what a new facility would cost with all the amenities that may be expected by the Oakwood Community. We would be looking at building larger classrooms, but in order to do a direct comparison of renovated vs. new, identical square footages are considered. With that said, there are a lot of inefficiencies in the existing buildings, as a result of many years of additions. These inefficiencies have led to circulation square footage that could be correcting, allowing for a shift in square-footage from the corridors into the classrooms.

Transportation Issues

What percentage of students live within a half of a mile from the school they attend?

Three-quarters of a mile? One mile? More than one mile?

We are currently compiling this information but do not have the exact figures at this time. The answer will be posted as soon as possible.

What are the implications on transportation that would come with changes to the locations of the buildings?

If changing locations of the buildings was a solution we decided on, we would certainly need to discuss the implications and possible options for transporting some of our students.

What percentage of Harman, Smith, Lange and OJH/OHS students walk to school?

It depends on a number of factors, including weather, on any given day. But preliminary numbers are 35% of JH/HS students walk or ride bikes, the rest of the students drive or get a ride. At Smith a survey found approximately 52% of students walk or ride bikes.

Repairs/Maintenance

Does replacement cost include maintenance?

It does not include day-to-day repairs such as light bulb replacement or filter replacement. It does include the renewal or replacement of systems that have exceeded their life cycle.

What are the expenses for repairs to major systems for the last 5, 10 and 20 years?

The Oakwood Schools have spent an average of \$600,000 annually, maintaining the buildings and their systems during the past five years. In the last five years, we have spent approximately \$3 million. We have spent \$4.5 million in the last 10 years and \$27 million, including new construction, in the last 15 years.

How much, if any, asbestos is present in the current buildings and causing harm to students?

All asbestos currently contained in any of the buildings does not present a danger to students in its present form. Asbestos only becomes an issue when disturbed.

How much has the district spent on maintenance during the past five years by building and by athletic facility?

You can see the facilities expenditures for 2012 - 2017 on our district website on our [Master Facilities Plan page](#).

Teaching/Curriculum Development

With the rapidly changing world, is it realistic to create a 50-year plan for our schools?

Yes, if we are realistic about the need for flexibility of space and designing and investing in top quality equipment by focusing on the long-term costs rather than initial costs.

How are current classrooms hindering “global connections”?

They might not be currently hindering to a great extent but there are technology-infused spaces being created in school that could offer an environment unlike a typical classroom. These spaces have a more interactive component with multiple monitors and enhanced connectability. There are some concerns when looking at available power for one-to-one devices in the current classrooms. We would also like to see more collaboration spaces for both smaller and large group activities. These collaboration spaces are also supported by display and presentation devices for potentially communicating/skyping with classrooms across the world.

What will be done to change teacher training and improve curriculum to revolutionize learning?

We invest a great deal of time, money and effort into our continual improvement focus and investment in professional development. We focus on the growth of our students, our teachers, our staff, our administration and our Board of Education. All of this is done to keep abreast of the best practices and the latest research and pedagogical advancements in the field.

How do interior windows in classrooms impact students who are distracted by visual stimuli?

Transparency and Passive Supervision is an important concept in school design. This concept promotes the idea that learning should be visible and celebrated. It helps create an atmosphere that gives a sense of openness yet preserves acoustic separation. It provides opportunities for peer-to-peer learning at both the staff and student level. It allows teachers to extend their teaching space to outside the four walls of their

classrooms since they now have visibility beyond the classroom walls. It provides visual relief to the student who needs to escape momentarily before re-engaging. The transparency has proven to NOT be a continual distraction for students as they quickly learn to adjust to the visual noise. This concept has proven to help prepare students for the next step in their life journey which will most likely have more distractions than now. With any design project, however, ideas like this must be fully vetted by the staff and students to ensure this will be an appropriate solution for them, As with any change or new idea, professional development and thoughtful conversations must take place.

Class Size

With Oakwood schools continuing to provide top rated education year after year, how can you say the existing spaces hinder education?

The current space inhibits the options of our master teachers to create collaboration space, maker spaces and areas for small and large group interactions. Our student are moving into learning environments in college and the workplace that do not look like their learning space in their k-12 education. This hinders their development and throttles them back from running as fast and as far as they could.

When talking about standard classroom sizes, how many students are considered to be in a standard class?

Class size in this context is about square footage not the number of students in the space. OFCC standards are based on 25 students in a typical classroom of 900 sq. ft.

What is the average class size in Oakwood in the different buildings?

Class sizes from 2012-2016 can be found at

https://www.oakwoodschoools.org/uploaded/Oakwood_City_School_District/District/MFP/Average_class_sizes_October_2016_ADA.pdf

Do enrollment projections include new construction on NCR site?

Yes.

Construction Questions

What land is available for building?

The Oakwood Schools District owns a very limited amount of land, with all currently being utilized. Some spaces, such as the athletic area between Schantz and Shafor could be repurposed for more academic endeavors.

If a new building were built, where would it be?

Any new construction would need to be built on land currently owned by the district or we would need to work out an agreement with the owner.

Where would students go during construction?

This is a detail we have not answered yet and will not be able to until the options are narrowed. This is a critical issue for all of the options.

Professional Firms Involved in the Process

How much money has the “dream team” been paid?

The district has a contract with the three architectural firms for a combined total of \$260,000 as earlier reported.

What was the process in hiring the “dream team”?

Local, state and national architect companies with an interest in school work were notified the Oakwood Schools had issued a RFQ (Request for Qualifications). Ten companies applied and interviews were given to the top three firms. The final selection was made by the administration with Board of Education approval.

Is the “dream team” contracted for the entire project or will there be open bids to other firms?

The current Design Team is under contract for the Master Planning Phase (between now and when a possible issue might be placed before voters). After successful funding of a project, the District will release Requests for Qualifications to select a Design Team to execute the Project.

Other Questions

What are district officials’ top priorities?

Our priorities are that our learning environments will:

- **Facilitate individual learners**
- **Be fiscally efficient**
- **Be responsive to the community (households with and without children)**
- **Promote and encourage healthy relationships**
- **Enhance collaboration and creativity**
- **Provide a safe place to learn and work**
- **Be accessible to all**

What other school districts comparable to Oakwood have had similar plans and assessments?

Approximately 80% of districts in the state of Ohio have undergone similar assessments and plans

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

Additional information, background of the facility and community engagement process, state reports, and presentation shared at community meetings are available on the Oakwood City Schools; website at <http://www.oakwoodschoools.org/district/master-facility-plan>. You can also send questions to facilities@oakwoodschoools.org