

YS Schools Facilities Survey 2019

What were the biggest strengths of the facility plan provided to voters in 2018? 150 Total Responses

What were the biggest strengths of the facility plan provided to voters in 2018?		
Category	Number	Sample comment
Positive about process		
Communication	15	It was clearly described and was available on the school website. I also liked having the full report from OFCC available online.
Community input	13	It seemed to me that the community was included in most of the process. Our thoughts and opinions were considered thoughtfully through open discussions and surveys.
Funding	2	The decision to raise revenue through both property and income taxes to ease the burden on fixed income residents.
Trust the board	1	I trust the school board and administration to make a good plan, and I supported the plan.
Positive about design		
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.
Doing something to improve	25	That something was finally being done to make the facilities better.
Future	11	Focusing on what students needed for an education in this century.
Improved safety	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Safety--all students on one floor with multiple exits. ● Safety for students as current building seems to be structurally unsound in some places
Maintained two separate sites	5	It would not be built on the Mills Lawn property.
Renovation	3	Addressed need for renovation rather than attempting to build new
Comprehensive	3	how comprehensive it was.
Technology	2	Trying to make the school more tech forward.
Need for future maintenance	1	The focus on the need for better maintenance once a new or modified facility was completed.
Location	1	The new facility would be on the campus of the high school.
Cost savings	1	That they were NEW and would require less maintenance
Concerns		
No strengths	35	There were no strengths
High cost	8	It was difficult for me to see the strengths due to the overall cost. Those of us on fixed incomes were torn between the need for new facilities and the inability to shoulder such a financial burden.
Dishonest	7	Really can't think of any overall strengths given the amount of erroneous information that was presented. it was quite a disaster with so many untruths expressed
Anger	5	What strengths, this is a loaded question with a bias to what the school board wanted
Did not listen	3	The original plan had none in my view because of the expense, however, those who chose the plan did not listen to those who wanted a modified plan.

Yellow Springs School District Facilities Survey Summary of Results

Lack of maintenance	1	The biggest strengths were outside my perimeters of agreement, it made no difference what the design was, the school board has not had the desire to keep up maintenance on the present school buildings, equally the amount of money the new building will cost is a fraction of what would be needed to maintain any new building,
Waste money	1	I believed the wanted too much money. I don't see the schools making proper use of the funds they currently get.
Confused answer		
Incorrect	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All in one school ● There is asbestos floor tiles in Mills Lawn that have deteriorated beyond sealing. This needs to be corrected or the school should be closed and the children bused to Xenia or Fairborn. Asbestos gives children cancer later in life. Why is the school still open?

What were the biggest weaknesses of the plan?

155 Total Responses

What were the biggest weaknesses of the plan?		
Category	Number	Sample comment
Supported the plan; external causes of failure		
Supported the plan	3	I was 100% for the plan-disappointed in community response
Negative people in the community	3	FACEBOOK. All of the blatant lies that were spread and disseminated and believed by a narrow margin of loud, angry, innacurate voices. Many were swayed by the spreading of lies.
No weaknesses	1	none
Voters don't value education	1	too many new people that can not afford the live here and came from areas that do not value education
Weaknesses of the plan and process		
Too expensive	91	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Way too much money asked for a new school when the village is not growing, so fewer kids in the future. ● Too expensive.
Lying/scare tactics	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I was at meetings when using fear, children would be in danger, and guilt, not caring for the children. ● publicity was misleading and insulting to public intelligence
Did not listen to community	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The superintendent and board did not listen to the community. Many ideas were dismissed. They appeared to have their own agenda. ● A sizable portion of the community was clearly stating that they weren't comfortable with the plan and the leadership paid lip service to their concerns. There wasn't clarity in the community meetings what was up for discussion and what had already been decided.
Should have renovated rather than replaced	23	The focus on demolition and construction over repair and renovation.
No plan for MLS	20	I think focusing only on one building without a plan for the elementary school left too much uncertainty about the future tax burden that could materialize
Perceived negative attitude of school board	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was too expensive for a lot of people in the community, and the school board was (and continues to be) dismissive of that, calling affordability issues a "red herring". There is a sense of condescension from the school board towards struggling residents, as though they don't exist and their concerns aren't real.

Yellow Springs School District Facilities Survey Summary of Results

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> biggest weakness of plan was the utter determination of the school board to plow ahead regardless of the feedback that was given and the lack of funds for the maintenance of same such facility. There was no real listening on behalf of the school board
Future cost expected	15	Asking for funding for the High School and Middle School without addressing the future funding request for Mills Lawn.
Timing of the levy contributed to defeat	15	Honestly I also think it was unfortunate timing with the issues coming out about the High School Principal, and although that did not impact my vote, it probably impacted others to some extent. I know it has also been unfortunate timing with the addition of fire station levies, other increases in property tax and a severe increase in utility bills.
Design too grandiose	14	Much of it seemed focused on making YSSD look good rather than actually serving the students needs.
Poor/insufficient communications	14	The biggest weakness of the plan is that it was not sold to the public nor supported by Village Council. More should have been published in the <u>Yellow Springs News</u> .
Concern about the long term value of PBL	13	designing school buildings with a MAJOR focus on PBL (the "current" emphasis)
Insufficient maintenance in the past, concern about future	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of a plan to address ongoing and long term maintenance costs (in the form of budget or levy dollars). No responsibility taken for deferred maintenance.
The long duration of the bond levy	10	It was a very long, expensive levy over several decades that only paid for one building.
Did not believe state assessment	9	the reliance on state recommendations for building new was misguided; the research on the actual state of the building was poor and further research after the levy defeat made that clear (building, including tower has remedial prospects and did not need to be torn down)
No compelling message why support the levy	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan may have been just fine, but the case for the expense of the plan was not made. It was progressive and would've added a lot of value for the homeowners in the region. I don't think the messaging was unique enough to build trust. The message must be about this community and not the standard.
Used an out of town PR agency not connected to community	8	The weaknesses were using out- of-town consultants & marketing agencies who were viewed with suspicion by many members of the community, seen as 'slick', agents of the state, dishonest, & not understanding YS culture & values.
School population not increasing	6	Way too much money asked for a new school when the village is not growing, so fewer kids in the future.
Poor/Incomplete planning	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incomplete planning. No good explanation for the need for new versus remodeling and upgrading. Not enough research and planning. A rush job, using very conventional ideas, no thinking outside the box.
Did not understand project	5	too expensive. Definitely do not put grade school kids with the older ones.
The approach was not focused on being environmentally sustainable	5	Not enough attention paid to environmental impact of the project in the context of climate change. Our town needs to be a bold leader in this area -- our kids' future depends on this. Sustainable design, energy efficiency, solar panels, geothermal, and/or a green roof, reuse of materials, smaller size, etc. should be central to the plan. We should also look more carefully

Yellow Springs School District Facilities Survey Summary of Results

		at what can be saved, refurbished, and/or renovated in the current buildings (rather than tearing down).
Teachers more important	4	I feel that my child is getting a pretty great education in those buildings, as faulty as they may be, and that most likely it's due to great staff. If we have limited money to spend, I would first ensure the staff are incentivized to keep making their magic; and if that's ALL we can do, then I'm ok with that.
Need a discussion about the future of the schools	3	People were so focused on \$ that the deeper conversation about what we want our schools to be was never able to happen.
Concern some had undue influence	3	I heard rumors of other more wealthy members of the community meeting with key school board members / or full board before I knew anything about a new building plan.
Belief there were hidden agreements	2	I heard rumors of other more wealthy members of the community meeting with key school board members / or full board before I knew anything about a new building plan.
Everything about the project was a weakness	2	The whole thing
Need to consider funding other than taxes	2	Absolutely NO consideration for alternative funding. Alumni, other types of grants, celebrity money, philanthropy groups, etc.
Discontinue having an independent school district	2	Acknowledge that YS may have to surrender the school system and students will have to go outside YS for school.
Consider other buildings in town	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There was never any real talk of trying to use McGregor. ● Negotiate with Antioch to repurpose one of their buildings as the YS high school building.
Needed to use phasing in planning the improvements	2	I would have like to have seen a plan that had phases built into it. Do phase one and pay off that debt and then move to the next phase.
Did not explore all alternatives	1	Look to alternatives: 1) Combine Antioch school w/ high school OR 2) I don't know if the village still owns the middle school building but if so reclaim and use for high school. OR 3) Negotiate with Antioch to repurpose one of their buildings as the YS high school building. OR 4) Seriously reconsider the building of a new fire station. Refurbish old station and adjust levy to accommodate reduced size for a new high school that can be added to if student population increases. OR 5) Acknowledge that YS may have to surrender the school system and students will have to go outside YS for school.
Concern about single source	1	no competing bids,
Did not keep plan for all at MLS	1	That Mario pulled the option of putting everything on Mills Lawn. I thought that was a fantastic idea.
Need new buildings	1	Would prefer brand new buildings vs fixing up old structures
The school funding system is wrong	1	The fact that schools are funded by the wealth and value of the neighborhoods they serve is a travesty and frankly a barbaric practice.
Still have two campuses	1	Still two campuses to maintain.

What changes or improvements would have caused you to support the levy?

156 answers

Yellow Springs School District Facilities Survey Summary of Results

What changes or improvements would have caused you to support the levy?		
Category	Number	Sample comment
Lower costs	62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Asking for 1/3 of the amount of money. ● More forethought on what this community can truly afford.
Did support the levy	50	I voted for the levy and I challenge anyone who thinks the high school building is OK.
Need greater community input	21	The only levy I can support is one where the entire community drives the plan.
Tell the truth	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Also, even though I supported the levy, I felt the advertising campaign was deceptive. ● If the information provided to us had not been extremely overblown and if the requested amount of the levy would have been more realistic, then it absolutely would have had my support. As it is now, I fear I will have trouble trusting the administrators and the people in charge of giving us information. We've been scarred. It's difficult to come back from that.
Need to plan for all schools	17	Didn't address Mills Lawn, which has problems too, and we all knew they were gong to ask for another levy in the next 5 years to address that.
Renovate buildings	17	Interest in salvaging the building and consciousness about the need not to add to material and financial waste.
Increase ongoing maintenance	13	Recognition also that maintenance had been neglected for years and the budget for more staff and resources for good maintenance needs to be built into any plan.
Improve school board attitude	13	The attitude of the school board was atrocious. Be inclusive to all people and their situations. Run a POSITIVE campaign.
Story not clear or compelling	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● And a much longer, more in-depth campaign to connect with voters, to build buy-in. ● create a timeless design that would allow for all aspects of learning - not just PBL - what happens if PBL is dropped and now we have buildings that don't support the new hot learning pedagogy
Have one consolidated campus	12	I suggest we seriously look into a one campus solution at the East Enon Rd campus.
Needed independent assessment	11	I did support the levy but did so with some hesitation because there was never a second assessment conducted independent of the OFCC
Use a phased approach	11	I think focusing on a phased plan with well defined phases encompassing both schools is ideal.
Set priorities	7	We need a levy that focuses on the things that we MUST have and at the most economical cost.
Declining student population	6	The declining student population was not taken into consideration.
Find other funding sources	6	Find a way to get wealthier people to pay a larger share, so there wouldn't be such impact on lower income Springers (capital campaign, YS Foundation, etc.).
Wrong design	5	Less focus on having a state of the art building and more focus on safety of building, and recognition that good education does not rely on architecture.
Environmental sustainability	4	Radical commitment to reduction of carbon footprint.
Need more options	4	Surely, there were other options that were not even explored other than the ones presented to us.

Yellow Springs School District Facilities Survey Summary of Results

Nothing will make me support a levy	4	I probably will not support a levy period. We already pay far too much.
Performance space	3	A traditional design with an auditorium that would accommodate large audiences for plays and graduation is what I wanted to see.
Cost assessment of new vs. renovation	3	I would have liked to see cost/benefit analysis between repairing the current facilities & replacing them
Need options	3	A menu of design options with corresponding costs would have been attractive and encouraged buy in rather than the total package or nothing.
Change leadership	2	A change in personal from the top, broad, superintendent, and principles, sex scandal, and the drug use by the students.
Collaborate with others	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with other places in town (like Antioch College for performance space -- work is starting on Main Building and Kelly Hall would be a great community investment collaboration) to minimize redundant facilities. • I love the idea of joining together in owning these schools, heart and soul. I think we as a village must together own this problem, model a new way of working together.
Combine with another district	2	We need to be thinking of combining these schools with another school district. It is simply too expensive to have our own high school and possibly middle school.
Coordination between village and township	2	There should have been a broader conversation between Village, Township, and Schools. A more strategic approach could have been taken regarding which initiative went to the ballot first.
Plan for real enrollment	2	Really consider future enrollment needs based on current and anticipated demographic changes in the Village, and try not to plan for artificially inflated numbers that are supported by open enrollment. How much space does this small Village need for educating our kids?
New buildings	2	Brand new buildings. Do it right for the long run like surrounding communities do
Other issues	2	I voted for the levy. I think it failed because there were too many side options that confused the issue
Plan for real enrollment	2	Really consider future enrollment needs based on current and anticipated demographic changes in the Village, and try not to plan for artificially inflated numbers that are supported by open enrollment.
Different kind of levy	1	Create a levy that places a much larger tax burden on higher income earners.
Look at other school	1	Let me suggest a walk through the renovated STEM school in Springfield's old "dome" Springfield High School. That is what YSHS could look like.
More taxpayers	1	A large influx of affluent new residents into the school district to share the cost.
Response to public lies	1	It would have been good if there were fact-checkers on the Facebook vile that was spread around, I know with certainty that many falsehoods were spread as fact and that led to people's mistrust.
Improved safety	1	Plan a drop off and pick up that is safe and big enough. Separate loading areas, cameras on busses, mentor bus buddy assignments. Emphasize how much safer .
Increase state funding	1	I did support it, but I believe that the state should put more funding into the public school system to allow these improvements and others to be made without overburdening the average citizen, who may not be able to afford an extra task.
Listen to teachers	1	include teachers at all levels of the design phases

Yellow Springs School District Facilities Survey Summary of Results

Use state funding	1	Obtain state support for financing. Don't tax residence twice.
Realistic tax burden		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● effect targeted improvements to solve problems while minimizing taxation to more palatable levels. It's not that people don't want to help the schools, rather they want common-sense applied that they can afford. ● Wait until the utilities levy is done so I'm no longer paying 3 times a normal utility bill before you come asking for more money.

Comments that Relate to our Work

Note: One person described our needed work:

1. The whole process needed to start with a list of problems that we need to solve to improve our kid's educational opportunities. That list should be ranked in importance of the amount of effect it might have in improving, changing or supporting what is currently available. Then ideas for solutions to those problems could be more creatively considered, priced and ranked against their ability to solve the problems (we may find that some of the solutions have nothing to do with the building). Then we can determine which are the best use of our limited money, and WE HAVE TO ADDRESS BOTH CAMPUSES. 2. The buildings CAN NOT be evaluated in a bubble separate from our overall financial ability to run the schools. This is a financial decision that has to be fit into an overall financial challenge of funding ALL aspects of our system including teacher pay. I feel that my child is getting a pretty great education in those buildings, as faulty as they may be, and that most likely it's due to great staff. If we have limited money to spend, I would first ensure the staff are incentivized to keep making their magic; and if that's ALL we can do, then I'm ok with that. 3. Another weakness of the plan was the big upfront investment that needed to be paid off for 30 years right on the heels of two other publicly funded infrastructure projects. We need a more traditional, measured budgeting approach. And perhaps our solutions have to be more piecemeal.

We have now had expert inspectors demonstrate that the situation is not as bad as originally portrayed. Frankly, if this facilities committee comes up with a plan in the same price range and overzealous intentions. I and my family will vote against the levy again.

I think trust and a shared educational vision by the community and school administration has to be re-established before new proposals are designed and presented. That will not happen in only a few months-it may take a whole academic year for that kind of listening and relationship building to happen.

I would have like to see clarity on where leadership stands. Are they the facilitator or the leader of the project.

The campaign "for" was not started soon enough; more support letters were needed to counteract the negativity of Facebook's commentators (and mistruths); the picture of phone wires vs. faulty wiring really stoked up the nay-sayers. I felt if the school board committee had tried to talk to the major opponents privately and very early, even before it started (and maybe they did) - it might have made some difference. It seemed TJ Turner was alone, primarily (he did a good job but he didn't get a lot of support)

I did vote FOR the plan... but reluctantly. 1. I didn't like that it only addressed one campus. We must look at the whole picture of what we need AND what we can afford. It was not a complete solution. And, I preferred the single campus at Mills Lawn option; partially for that reason. 2. I felt like I wasn't sure what

Yellow Springs School District Facilities Survey Summary of Results

we were truly “fixing” with the plan. I didn’t feel it would necessarily make our kids “better educated” although it would make the experience more visually appealing & comfortable. I really want to believe that the plan’s expenses are truly needed and transformational. I wasn’t fully convinced, especially in the vacuum of not knowing how it affects the overall financial situation of the system. 3. I felt that voting for such an expensive plan could effect the overall financial health of the educational system in a negative way. I felt that asking for that much public funding on the facility would cause the community to not be willing to make the necessary increases to the operational funding for future levies. Fancy buildings without money to attract great teachers does not make for better education. Look at Antioch Midwest; nice building that is a cost burden, so staff gets cut and building sits empty. I felt we may be shooting ourselves in the foot with this plan. 4. I felt like such an expensive plan could effect the financial health of our town in a negative way. 5. I didn’t feel like the plan was created in concert with the commercial forces in our town that could benefit from some of the proposed changes to parking, facility offerings etc. There may be ways to create mutual benefits that could support larger & mutual spending. 6. I think we should look into ways to spread the funding out over time, look for creative solutions through local partnerships and reduce the redundancy in offerings locally (theaters, sports facilities, educational buildings). 7. We can’t act like the school’s finances & offerings are independent of the other issues in the village (parking, public space, utilities, aging demographics, jobs affordability.)

I did vote FOR the plan... but reluctantly. 1. I didn’t like that it only addressed one campus. We must look at the whole picture of what we need AND what we can afford. It was not a complete solution. And, I preferred the single campus at Mills Lawn option; partially for that reason. 2. I felt like I wasn’t sure what we were truly “fixing” with the plan. I didn’t feel it would necessarily make our kids “better educated” although it would make the experience more visually appealing & comfortable. I really want to believe that the plan’s expenses are truly needed and transformational. I wasn’t fully convinced, especially in the vacuum of not knowing how it affects the overall financial situation of the system. 3. I felt that voting for such an expensive plan could effect the overall financial health of the educational system in a negative way. I felt that asking for that much public funding on the facility would cause the community to not be willing to make the necessary increases to the operational funding for future levies. Fancy buildings without money to attract great teachers does not make for better education. Look at Antioch Midwest; nice building that is a cost burden, so staff gets cut and building sits empty. I felt we may be shooting ourselves in the foot with this plan. 4. I felt like such an expensive plan could effect the financial health of our town in a negative way. 5. I didn’t feel like the plan was created in concert with the commercial forces in our town that could benefit from some of the proposed changes to parking, facility offerings etc. There may be ways to create mutual benefits that could support larger & mutual spending. 6. I think we should look into ways to spread the funding out over time, look for creative solutions through local partnerships and reduce the redundancy in offerings locally (theaters, sports facilities, educational buildings). 7. We can’t act like the school’s finances & offerings are independent of the other issues in the village (parking, public space, utilities, aging demographics, jobs affordability.)

I did support the levy and would make the unpopular argument to spend more money on the project not less. We need public institutions that inspire pride in our democratic ideals. We need an auditorium for the community. We need to build something that adds elegance and beauty to our cityscapes and not just the best thing the lowest bid could buy. Design is important! Architecture shouldn't always sacrifice form to function. The drawings should inspire confidence without the need for explanation.

I supported the levy. I think if I had been on the team, I would have tried to openly and publicly pull vocal critics into a position of making constructive contributions and pitching contradictory vocal critics against each other.

Yellow Springs School District Facilities Survey Summary of Results

I did support the levy. I don't believe the plan was perfect but I am challenged currently by the number of residents that have said they will NEVER vote for another levy. That is the real tragedy in this town. The organized opposition without regard to our children and our future

Honest exploration with the community of possibilities at the beginning of the proposal. Interest in salvaging the building and consciousness about the need not to add to material and financial waste. School board members and strong proponents to be able to actually discourse rather than shove an agenda through. Honest publicity. Less focus on having a state of the art building and more focus on safety of building, and recognition that good education does not rely on architecture. Recognition also that maintenance had been neglected for years and the budget for more staff and resources for good maintenance needs to be built into any plan. Recognition that this community is becoming terribly expensive to live in, and adjusting wish lists down with that in mind.

I supported the levy because I support quality education for our children. However many people were very concerned about the costs making the village out of reach for those with lower incomes. The committee needs to ACKNOWLEDGE this issue front and center. ACCEPT that it is an issue and REQUEST /SEEK BUY IN from those concerned parties. INVITE THEM TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION!! That's the only path toward success - inclusiveness.

More time to process it, and understand options. It was too high! It came on top of a federal tax increase. I do not agree with building a new facility to support a teaching methodology. The school should last at least 30 years and education methods will evolve, along with technology. We need a flexible building.

I did support the levy because of the flexibility of the space. I want my children in project-based and hands-on learning. I would've been more excited if there was a community space and arts focus. I also like indoor-outdoor spaces. I think we all need to hear about how progressive the taxes will be for the project and what the other funding sources will

I would like one campus, no extra space for PBL, repair rather than replace when it's cheaper. One kitchen for all grade levels and do a big cafeteria that can be shared with a movable wall to divide elementary from secondary and be a stage area too. It could also be an area for pbl group activities and non ball gym classes. Plan a drop off and pick up that is safe and big enough. Separate loading areas, cameras on busses, mentor bus buddy assignments. Emphasize how much safer . At secondary level, Build some classrooms that can be divided with temporary walls for classes of 12 or less instead of a larger number of big classrooms that are half empty or empty Much of the day. Then for teachers at HS and MS make the teacher's desk areas in a group office space instead of giving them "their " classroom. Include storage closets . This would increase flexibility for the number of courses to be taught. Because teachers would not be in there during planning periods. This would work for all subjects except science labs. It would promote group planning. Have a doable plan for current Mills Lawn building For example an agreement to sell it to city for the senior housing like Spring Valley did and a community gym. Keep the lawn for a park. Or some other plan acceptable to community. Too late to do art studios! Have the actual predictions for how much money a one campus, one bus route, shared cafeteria/kitchen, no assistant principal, only two full time counselors, and only one pupil services person instead of 1.5 will save for staffing. Get serious about affordability. Everything in one building will help all non teaching staff efficiency and be cheaper. Look at Cedarville for ideas I know parents like MLS location but if you really show the savings and have a play area and pick up area well planned with separate sides for elementary and secondary. I think it would work, For elementary, build adequate storage closets and do not allow stuff stacked all over the classrooms anymore.. Kids need less visual stimulation and sensory input. We have a lot of kids with ADHD, Autism, emotional and sensory issues. Rooms need to have good acoustics, no Fluorescent lights,

Yellow Springs School District Facilities Survey Summary of Results

And minimal visual distractions. Besides 10 years of hoarding seldom used stuff is just a fire hazard. If you can't do one campus you might as well just repair what you have and forget building new.

I did support the levy, & was very disappointed when it failed. Next time we'll need to use more local talent & expertise, make public an independent (non-state) assessment of the buildings, include cost estimates of renovations @ MLS, hold more talking groups face-to-face both inside & outside of school buildings, have a plan with maximum re-purposed & recycled buildings & materials, & make public results of polls of all teachers, students, & parents.