

# OTTAWA HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Community Quantitative Research*

## PRELIMINARY SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

April 2017  
GLM 17010



3361 EXECUTIVE PARKWAY, SUITE 200 | TOLEDO, OH 43606  
TEL 419.534.4700 | FAX 419.531.7117 | WWW.GLM.COM

# Ottawa Hills School District

## Community Quantitative Research

April 2017

### Background

To understand the issues relevant to the Ottawa Hills School District, Great Lakes Marketing (GLM) conducted a survey among all Village residents. The content from this survey was based on findings from five focus groups conducted in September 2016. The purpose of the focus groups was to understand the thoughts and opinions of the community with respect to a variety of school issues. This most recent survey was conducted to quantify these opinions.

**This preliminary summary report shows the findings of the survey. Additional analysis will be completed to provide more strategic insights.**

### Research Objective

The primary goal of this study was to provide feedback from the community to allow the School Board to incorporate the voice of the Village in strategic planning.

### Methodology

A survey was mailed to all Village residents. The address list was provided by the Village of Ottawa Hills. One questionnaire was included in the survey packet, along with a stamped, pre-addressed GLM return envelope. A total of 1,815 surveys were mailed.

The survey was also accessible from a website (OHSchoolSurvey.com). The option to take the survey online was promoted in the survey packet mailing as well as through Village and school communications to Village residents.

## Demographics

### Response Rate

- 526 residents responded to the survey
  - 377 returned the paper survey
  - 149 completed the survey online
- The response rate is 32% (based on the number of packets delivered)
  - 146 survey packets were undeliverable

### Responses by Area of Residence

- Mailed survey

Between Indian & Kenwood	23%
East of Evergreen & South of Indian	21%
East of Talmadge & West of Evergreen	25%
Between Talmadge & Edgehill/Underhill	14%
West of Edgehill/Underhill	13%
Multi-family units	4%
- Online survey

43606	58%
43615	22%
No answer	20%

### Household Profiles (*could be in more than one category*)

Empty nester with grown children who attended OH schools	35%
Have Ottawa Hills junior/senior high students	30%
Have Ottawa Hills elementary school students	25%
Have preschool-aged children	9%
Empty nester who never had children attend OH schools	5%
Have junior/senior high-aged children attending other schools	4%
Have elementary-aged children attending other schools	2%
Have no children, but plan to start a family	1%
An alumnus or spouse is an alumnus	1%
No answer	6%

## Summary of Findings

### Level of Agreement with the Following Statements:

	Strongly Agree <span style="font-size: 2em;">→</span> Strongly Disagree										Average
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
The schools are an asset to the <b>Village</b> .	72%	14%	7%	2%	2%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	<b>9.5</b>
Students receive a top quality educational experience at Ottawa Hills <b>Elementary</b> .	53%	23%	14%	3%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	<b>9.1</b>
Students receive a top quality educational experience at Ottawa Hills <b>Senior High</b> .	51%	24%	10%	6%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>9.1</b>
Students receive a top quality educational experience at Ottawa Hills <b>Junior High</b> .	45%	21%	16%	7%	3%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%	<b>8.9</b>
The school district's academic results are worth the taxes I pay.	39%	18%	14%	8%	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%	3%	<b>8.2</b>
I receive the correct amount of information from the school district.	29%	17%	15%	9%	9%	8%	3%	3%	1%	3%	<b>7.7</b>
I feel connected to the <b>school district</b> .	31%	14%	12%	10%	9%	7%	3%	3%	3%	5%	<b>7.5</b>
My tax dollars are being used appropriately by the school district.	20%	19%	17%	11%	10%	7%	3%	3%	2%	3%	<b>7.5</b>
The <b>elementary</b> school building enhances effective instruction and learning.	16%	15%	22%	13%	9%	9%	3%	2%	2%	2%	<b>7.4</b>
I feel connected to the <b>Village</b> .	23%	15%	19%	12%	11%	6%	3%	5%	2%	4%	<b>7.4</b>
The <b>junior/senior high</b> school building enhances effective instruction and learning.	15%	14%	20%	13%	10%	9%	3%	2%	2%	2%	<b>7.3</b>
I understand how tax dollars are being used in the school district.	16%	14%	17%	17%	13%	8%	4%	3%	2%	3%	<b>7.1</b>
I feel the school board is aligned with my vision for the district.	15%	12%	17%	11%	12%	10%	4%	4%	3%	4%	<b>6.9</b>
The school board is transparent.	11%	14%	14%	11%	10%	11%	5%	4%	5%	5%	<b>6.5</b>
The Board of Education and Village Council have a unified vision for the betterment of Ottawa Hills.	12%	10%	13%	15%	11%	10%	5%	5%	5%	7%	<b>6.3</b>

### Receipt and Use of the Following Communications:

	Do Not Receive	Always Read It	Sometimes Read It	No Answer
School district's weekly electronic newsletter (via email)	31%	46%	19%	4%
School district's alumni newsletter	54%	19%	21%	6%
School district's "In Touch" newsletter	40%	27%	26%	7%

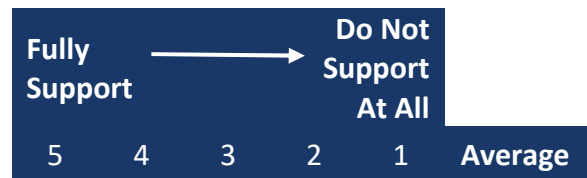
### Follow the School District's Facebook Page or Twitter Feed:

Both Facebook and Twitter	12%
Facebook only	20%
Twitter only	3%
Neither of them	61%
No answer	4%

### Preference to Receive School District Communications for the Following Type of Information:

	Digitally (via email)	Hard Copy Newsletters	Meetings	Do Not Want This Information	No Answer
School district finances	53%	37%	2%	3%	5%
School programs and events	66%	23%	0%	6%	5%
Information about what students are doing, learning, and achieving	63%	23%	1%	7%	6%
Levy issues	51%	40%	2%	2%	5%

**Interest in Supporting Each Improvement:**



**Buildings/Mechanicals Improvements**

Replacement of electrical, plumbing, and fire suppression systems; technology upgrades; emergency lighting upgrades.  
(2.59 mills = \$90 per \$100,000)

41% 19% 17% 5% 10% **3.8**

**HVAC**

New heating, ventilation & air conditioning systems in both buildings  
(2.43 mills = \$85 per \$100,000)

38% 18% 17% 6% 13% **3.7**

**Security**

Installation of security systems and door controls; move elementary office to current kindergarten classroom and high school office to front of school to monitor visitors.  
(.63 mills = \$22 per \$100,000)

34% 16% 19% 8% 16% **3.5**

**Handicapped Accessibility**

Restroom accessibility; elevators installed in both buildings; upgrading stairs and guard rails.  
(2.59 mills = \$90 per \$100,000)

29% 18% 19% 10% 15% **3.4**

**Windows and Doors**

Replacement of all building windows and doors.  
(.35 mills = \$12 per \$100,000)

23% 15% 18% 8% 14% **3.3**

**Classroom Renovations**

Convert an elementary classroom to an intervention room; convert two small rooms at elementary to a full-size classroom; repurpose basement classrooms at elementary to group learning space; repurpose industrial arts room at high school to two art rooms.  
(.11 mills = \$4 per \$100,000)

27% 15% 21% 12% 18% **3.2**

**Gymnasium and Related Improvements**

Addition of a gym and weight room; repurpose high school multi-purpose room to large group/dining space; expand high school sun room into kitchen area; repurpose current weight room as kitchen space.  
(1.30 mills = \$45 per \$100,000)

19% 13% 16% 16% 29% **2.8**

**Auditorium Improvements**

Renovate dressing rooms; add restrooms; expand back of auditorium to provide storage and access from stage left to stage right.  
(.86 mills = \$30 per \$100,000)

17% 10% 20% 18% 27% **2.7**

## Levy Support:

Would not support any increase to taxes	28%
3.6 mills to 6.0 mills / \$126 to \$210 per \$100,000	41%
6.1 mills to 8.5 mills / \$213 to \$297 per \$100,000	18%
8.6 mills to 10.86 mills / \$301 to \$380 per \$100,000	9%
No answer	4%

## Preliminary Conclusion

This summary is provided to meet the initial timing request. Additional analysis will be conducted to understand the patterns within the data. Some initial insights include:

- A levy of no more than 6 mills has potential to pass. This could be the Village saying “I will support the schools, but at a relatively low level.”
- The Village is saying:
  - The schools are an asset to the Village and the students in all buildings get a top quality education.
- The momentum drops to less than 66% in the top-two box (rated 9 and 10 on a 10-point scale) for the rest of the statements about value, communication, connectedness, and transparency.
- Less than one-half of the Village is reading communications from the school district, which may help explain the disconnects between the Village and the school district.
  - Hard copy becomes more desirable when the topic is levy-related.
  - Meetings are not viable substitutes for multi-channel communications.
- Consistent with the findings from the focus groups, Village residents are more willing to support improvements that appear to be “necessary” (such as mechanicals and HVAC) rather than extras (gyms and auditoriums).

# Appendix

## Additional Comments

*Comments are shown in groupings based on their answer to the “levy support” question.*



**Please add any comments you would like to share:**

**Those who would not support any increase to taxes**

- 10.86 mills before operating? Focus should be academics. Boosters can support athletics. Theater charges me to see play (quite a ticket price) they can raise their own funds on those two issues alone. I would not support an increase when HVAC is needed.
- 2.5 mills to 3.0 mills support. Better presentation of architectural drawings. Reduce, reuse, recycle versus all new.
- Any decisions to enhance the school or its facilities should not be made by those in a position to profit from these improvements. All people who have conflicts of interest or could benefit from certain decisions should recuse themselves from the decision-making process.
- Any infrastructure improvements must include alignment to current lower and projected student population. Existing facilities are oversized and create substantial plant operation/maintenance costs. Ottawa Hills facilities should be bench marked to other districts.
- Base the levy on time required for each job.
- Based on how you are gathering information, I would not support any levies. You mixed and consolidated building improvements, additions and projects in one question. You should have had separated all your questions. You ask if the school buildings support education. What does that mean? You want a new gym and weight room so you can have storage, but you also want new storage and dressing rooms on a levy. Does Ottawa Hills really require more space as enrollment declines? I see monthly some of the best high schools in America. The doors, windows, toilets are original. No AC. The schools I describe have money for improvements but chose not to. Why?  
If you want truthful helpful responses, stop asking questions hoping to get the answers you want. Get people involved who challenge you. If I recall, The School Board was confused as to why the last levy was trounced. Can we say "Disconnection?" In closing, I am further disappointed you hired a professional firm to market Ottawa Hills' Schools. Doesn't Ottawa Hills have residents that have the skills and experience to build a campaign? In place of asking Ottawa Hills' residents about Ottawa Hills' Schools, you should be asking people outside of Ottawa Hills, like Maumee Valley families, why not Ottawa Hills.
- Be more efficient. Poor planning has led to these problems. Enrollment falling, no need for all of these expenditures.
- Better communication and more respect to Ottawa Hills residents who pay huge taxes to support the school system, but are not parents of current students.
- Building and mechanical improvements plus HVAC for air conditioning is a need. Some of this other stuff are wants. There is a big difference between a Cadillac plan and a Kia plan. Middle ground is usually the best.
- Contractors take advantage of our reputation. We have over spent on many "improvements". Additions to elementary school were very poorly planned. Some are real needs, other things, "dreams". A lot of "make work" jobs!

## Please add any comments you would like to share:

### Those who would not support any increase to taxes

- Despite their excellent reputation, we have found the school district, especially the high school, to be a poor experience, and are surprised by how many families have moved out of the district or sent their kids to private schools. The school does NOT need better buildings or more money. They need a greater appreciation for developmentally appropriate practices, more emphasis on the overall well-being of the students, a reassessment of their college advising, and other process changes.
- Dumb survey if you want facts about community support for a future levy. Why would the school hire an AD so old and not liked by the kids? No young people out there?
- Everyone has dreams, but we need to be realistic. Air conditioning is a must. If students can't have air, then we do not need it in Administrative offices. I feel the district needs to address the real problem of why so many kids are leaving the district. Focus on retaining students.
- I am not happy with this survey. The answers might make you feel good about the work that is taking place, but the questions are wrongly self-serving. Do I think the schools give a good education? How silly to ask. Maintenance, and a schedule for when things require replacement are different from you wanting new. You folks were shocked when the levy failed. Have you asked yourselves why? Not why did it fail, but why were you shocked. In place of having friends on your committees, it would better serve you to have people like me or my husband. We obviously see things differently than you. Another example of my point is the outside garden that is used a couple months while school is in session. Looks great, but practical? I think not. Imagine if those same dollars went towards an inside year-round greenhouse where bugs could have also been studied along with winter studies. These are the things that would make our schools more attractive and successful. The next generation is about research, learning to explore and test. Lose the arrogance, take a deep breath, and simplify. Trust me.
- I am sorry to not agree with many improvements. However, my home value has dropped from \$200,000 to \$166,000 since almost ten years ago.
- I do not support school building improvements because I feel our Village community would be better served with brand-new structures.
- I feel out of touch with the Village. "Spoiled kids given too many breaks, should be consequences. "If you are not from here, you are an outsider," i.e. The kindergarten club. People are friendly, but not your friends.
- I feel there are too many issues with low-performing teachers that should be addressed before we worry about our buildings. Our students' lack of basic grammar and lack of enthusiasm to learn due to too much busy work is sad for our future.
- I find it hard to understand with declining enrollment why the proposed physical plant changes are necessary. I don't think they would attract more residents especially as they will increase taxes. I would rather the money was spent on improving instruction than on infrastructure.

## Please add any comments you would like to share:

### Those who would not support any increase to taxes

- I indicated that I would not support a levy for these improvements not because I do not think that updating our facilities is important, but because you did not include the actual cost of these improvements. There is a very large difference between knowing what my share of the cost will be and what you plan to spend on the project. This survey was designed to hide the actual costs and show just how little it will cost each homeowner. As parents, residents and voters, we need the School Board and the Superintendent to be open and transparent in what they plan to do. Also, this "wish list", does not include the complete scope of the overall plan and I am sure that items like a new, glass enclosed office for the Superintendent that were part of the plan rejected by voters last time around are included in the final planning this time as well. I also have questions about the proposed allocation of funds -- for example the amount included for elementary school classroom renovations and replacement windows and doors is a fraction of what is proposed for gymnasium renovations alone. I interpret this as a primary example of misaligned priorities, although it is difficult to judge based on the limited information you have provided. I feel that the school board, much like the Village, is more focused on appearances than on substance which only enhances the negative image of Ottawa Hills in the larger Toledo community. Also, your final question about zip code is a very clever way to determine which part of the Village respondents live in since there are only two for the Village and to determine approximate income levels and potential financial support.
- I no longer support tax increases. The Village and school must learn to operate within current financials.
- I pay thousands of dollars to send my kids elsewhere. Your school is horrid. We moved here from Washington Local Schools, as we thought Ottawa Hills schools were "the best". Far from it! We had a horrible experience there for years. My daughter and son do not attend, never will attend with current leadership in place. Why is enrollment down? Why did the last levy fail? You didn't even get one "yes" vote per child that goes there. Ask yourself why so many families are choosing to pay money to go to private schools. School leadership does not want to hear about problems within its own ranks. Your school system is abysmal!
- I think funds should be used from the general school fund and improvement fund first to start some of these improvements. Then when deemed necessary, the addition of a new Levy to finish up the work
- I will actively oppose any levy proposal. The school buildings may be dated in style, but it is the quality of the staff and the strength of the curriculum that give the excellent results. Please do not increase taxes to improve buildings. Our community cannot support higher taxes! We are already sky high! We have older children who have graduated for Ottawa Hills. They achieved well and had an excellent education with the facilities as they are now. No need to raise taxes!

**Please add any comments you would like to share:**

**Those who would not support any increase to taxes**

- I will NOT support any increase in taxes until the school board and the Village look at the amount of surplus in the coffers, and make a concerted and unified effort to effectively use those funds for deferred maintenance and capital improvements at the school in a transparent manner. I include the Village council in this BECAUSE the Village appeal is buttressed by the school system, and the council should not derive any benefit from the school improvements without participating on the expense side. No person, Villager or otherwise, with a potential financial benefit from a levy decision, or deferred maintenance decision, or capital improvement decision, should be involved in the planning phase of the process UNLESS they are specifically excluded from benefit. For example, if I am commercial/industrial contractor that has the opportunity for significant contracting responsibility and revenue with the school if a levy or spending plan is approved, then that person and their firm should be excluded from bidding.
- I would like to be better informed about needs requested. What are the issues with the mechanicals/HVAC system? Why the classroom renovations? Are these all actual needs or just wants because the school is old?
- I would support increase items supported above, 5.59 mill + .35 mill = 2.94 mills.
- If the infrastructure is in deplorable shape, where have you been spending the tax dollars?
- If we lose those homes on Secor to construction, I'm sure our taxes will go up anyway. If we vote for increase, for how long? Where are these prices from? Were there, or will there be bids for the work? Who says the things mentioned are needed? Numbers are deceiving, not many \$100,000 homes in Ottawa Hills.
- Individual families and the Village, as a whole, cannot afford the economic burden of additional taxes. Houses do not sell in the Village because of this tax burden (while Sylvania has the same priced houses with bidding wars.) The school board needs to think outside the box, perhaps cut administrative costs, and use the money you already have.
- It is my understanding that the state will eventually offer Ottawa Hills money for new buildings. I feel like these renovations are a waste if there are new buildings in not too distant future.
- It's a fine school the way it is! Look at Toledo Public, all those new schools didn't improve the quality of the education. It was a waste of money.
- Like clockwork every 3 years you increase taxes. Have you ever thought of reducing it? Everyone should be cost conscious. How is it that you use Davy's Tree service, the most expensive one in town?
- My annual property tax is \$25,000. I would not support any more. You have plenty of revenue, use it more wisely.
- New athletic director is a controlled pawn of Millers. Athletics is not encouraged or supported by McMurray or Miller.

## Please add any comments you would like to share:

### Those who would not support any increase to taxes

- No new taxes. Find money elsewhere. More fundraisers?
- Our concern is taxes are already high and why hasn't maintenance/upgrades been done already. Also, concerned about declining enrollment, either because of smaller size families or families sending kids to private schools. The Village needs to be marked on more than just the schools.
- Our homes do not increase in value, hence we are not interested in having our real estate taxes increase. They are already too high.
- Our school structurally needs help!
- Overall, I am supportive of the Ottawa Hills school system and school board. I would not vote for a tax increase solely based on the notion there is a surplus of funds available to the school system which is not being utilized. From the two years of financials I've seen, we have had a surplus each of those years and, as such, I think we would be better served to invest surplus into the schools based on some agreed upon priority. Separately, I think the schools and school board need to evaluate why people living in Ottawa Hills chose to send their children to private schools as a means to understand the Village expectations & align priorities. Losing 9.4% of the student enrollment over the past 5 years (as reported in the Blade 3/27/17) is something that needs to be evaluated and discussed.
- Planning should've been done to accommodate many of the levy items (repairs, handicap accessible). All but the new safety items should've been planned for. We pay a lot of taxes. Where has the \$ been going?
- Please justify why I should pay more tax when my property taxes are already approaching \$30K a year.
- Property taxes are already too high in Ottawa Hills.
- Questions about HVAC, building, classrooms, etc., should have been separated into maintenance, new wish-list, or required. Support answers will not guarantee voters' support. I saw all this as "wish-list". Not required for students' success! Front page questions are stupid. Who doesn't support the school?
- School board fire Miller! He's useless, rude, and treats teachers badly. His wife, fire her too!
- Schools need better sports programs. Schools need to focus on all students, not just "gifted" high achieving students. Schools could retrain students in the Ottawa Hills district rather than students choosing the private Catholic schools.
- Since I have no idea where my taxes go in the Village, I chose not to support increase in taxes. Where are they going? Where can I find information on the Village and school budget?
- Since Ottawa Hills has no commercial tax basis, the funding of the schools fall on the homeowners. Despite the school system's reputation as one of the best in the state, it is apparent that homes "for sale" languish on the market, and are sold only when there are significant price reductions. I believe this is highly due to high taxes, not just property but also income tax. It is getting out of hand and the parents of Ottawa Hills students need to engage in active fund raisers to defray these tax increases.

**Please add any comments you would like to share:**

**Those who would not support any increase to taxes**

- Student population is declining. Technology is replacing classroom instruction. Need a long range comprehensive plan for reducing physical plant. Village needs to attract other types of demographics by reducing taxes.
- Taxes are already second highest in the state.
- Taxes are disproportionately high in Ottawa Hills and not conducive to empty nesters staying on after the kids are gone. Property values have not kept up with high taxes in the district and owners need to renovate their homes before they can sell, which is an additional cost to them.
- Taxes keep going up, but home values keep going down. People are not attracted to the Village and are opting to send their children to private schools instead of paying such high property taxes.
- Teachers and Staff are WAY OVER PAID.
- Thank you for asking. Weight rooms, folks have equipment or memberships. Excellent education/teachers/programs. Do students with hearing disabilities/behavioral issues etc. receive assistance? What if the hearing educational load (including homework) cannot be met?
- The basement classrooms in the elementary school are horrible.
- The biggest negative about living in Ottawa Hills is the high taxes and the schools account for 70% of this. I am not against education, I just think enough already! The houses in my area are not selling and I believe it is because of the school tax liability.
- The last issue on the ballot left me with very bitter feelings as to how the School Administration and Board came before the voters. These seem to be the same ideas and still with a hefty price tag. Building/mechanicals improvements, when driving by the schools there seems to be a lot of this done currently but without an additional 5.59 mills. Air conditioning, who is it for, the teachers or the students? Classroom renovations, is it a necessity? Auditorium improvements, we had two graduates who participated in the shows and programs and they both thought this idea was frivolous. Addition of gym and weight room, former students who participated in sports at both junior and senior high school thought that the idea was absolutely crazy and a true waste of money. All new windows and doors, a lot of families would love to do that to their houses, also know that it would not be fiscally responsible, so it's not going to be done. The school might take some lessons. The administration or whoever dreamed up these ideas might want to be reminded that they are spending a lot of money and it's mostly other people's money. Many of us have tightened our belts, but apparently the school doesn't think that they need to.
- The latest information I got showed the district with a surplus. It should be used for the above.
- The leadership at the schools (Ben McMurray and Kevin Miller) lack vision or direction for the school. The school board also lacks vision and acts as a "rubber stamp" for administrative requests. Marc Thompson, in contrast is consistently professional, friendly, competent and committed to the best interest of Village residents.

**Please add any comments you would like to share:**

**Those who would not support any increase to taxes**

- The overall ranking of the high school (nationally and in Ohio) has gone down (from gold to silver classification in the national ranking). Why are many students residing in OH attending private schools? If 63% of the kids are gifted, what is the value added by the school system? Do we really need that many administrators (two principals, superintendent, etc.) for one elementary and high school? The amount we spend on repairs and taxes for a house (along with income taxes and sale taxes) is one of the highest in the nation. It is time we critically examine our old ways of thinking.
- The problem with levies are that they are permanent. I would support a one-time levy to do a specific repair, not a levy to create a slush fund to spend at will.
- The schools failed to diagnose and deal with my child's Dyscalculia, it was discovered and managed at the college level. Disgraceful!
- The superintendent is an arrogant person and the board is no better.
- The taxes are already the highest in the greater Toledo area and the property values have decreased considerably, making Ottawa Hills not as desirable for executives and professionals who have new homes outside the area with lower taxes and good schools.
- The taxes make it very hard to sell our home. These old houses need improvements and often will result in higher valuations if improved. Many rentals in the district do not pay the property taxes. Maybe extras should be paid by families with children in the school. This tax issue is serious with the competition of Sylvania, Anthony Wayne, and Perrysburg. The Village will end up with only families with children and wealthy people that used or had children that used the schools.
- The Village Voice used to keep me informed. However, we can't depend on that anymore.
- The voters are not ready for another increase. Because of so many voters are renters, the Village had changed. We moved here for the schools. They don't necessarily have to be bigger to be "better". Brick and mortar school might go the way of the brick and mortar store!
- Until the school district takes affirmative steps to actively improve educational services (teacher quality, extracurricular offerings), I will not support any effort to implement capital improvements. Window dressing will not improve the educational experience for these kids. They deserve first priority.
- Very disappointed in Jack Straub and Rex Decker. They are not interested in saving the schools money. Jack Straub was beyond rude to members of the community. The Village Mayor and Council want to expand Secor and not receive the \$55,000 in school taxes, and then turn around and ask for a levy to make up for it. As a graduate of Ottawa Hills, I went to school without air conditioning and the current students can do the same.
- Village would not prioritize any projects. The school board would be the decision.
- We already have some of the highest taxes in the state! Dr. Miller is dishonest. No new taxes until he is gone!



**Please add any comments you would like to share:**

**Those who would not support any increase to taxes**

- We already have the highest property taxes in the area. I want to support our schools and trust that the teachers know what they need. But with falling home values and a continually decreasing surrounding area (Toledo schools score "F" while we score "A"; Hickory Farms just moved away from Toledo "to find better talent"; we have intermittent issues with drinking water and pollution in our river) - these larger regional issues are affecting our home values and quality of life in the Toledo area. We cannot continue to just raise taxes without addressing the larger issues at hand. Our property taxes are too high now. If we had a commercial business district it would help to offset our high property taxes.
- We already pay very high taxes to support Ottawa Hills schools. The taxes are higher than other places that have equally great schools. Our real estate has not really grown in value, so our school tax rate should not go up.
- We don't need more tax. We need to use the money differently. It's ridiculous to have school buildings in such disrepair with the taxes we pay. Where is the money being spent? Sports teams? Four golfers often traveling around the state? Ridiculous amount of professionalism in elementary school plays!
- We had three children graduate from Ottawa Hills. We are now in our 90's and reluctant to see increase in taxes.
- We send to school top quality students who are fed, rested, dressed with warm and clean clothes. The teachers do a fine job. Some are great and some not so great. I think the teachers are lucky to work in Ottawa Hills schools.
- We should all try to live within our budget, as we do.
- We understand that certain improvements need to be made. However, an increase in taxes would provide hardship for us at this time.
- Why do they keep moving the high school office? This school district does not need to spend any more money on the gym or athletics.
- Why do we "need" three administrators each making over \$100,000.00 to run such a small school district? This is a perfect example of a want and not a need. Before raising taxes, we should eliminate one of these positions. Many of the items listed above are wants, not needs. There is a big difference between the two. A family has to learn to live within a budget and OH should learn to do the same. Our teachers are some of the highest paid in the state. Yes, they do a good job, BUT they do not have to deal with many issues faced by other school districts (i.e. poverty, parents on drugs and/or in prison, etc.). Thus, teaching at OH is relatively easier than teaching in other school districts. The residents spoke loud and clear with an overwhelming "NO" vote on the previous school levy. This should tell the district something, but as always, since "WE ARE OH and WE ARE ENTITLED" and like a spoiled child, we will get asking until we get our way.



**Please add any comments you would like to share:**

**Those who would not support any increase to taxes**

- Why was Kevin Miller given a \$25,000 annuity after the last levy failed? Why was Kevin Miller given a 3% raise after the last levy failed? Why was Kevin Miller allowed to retire and rehire? Why were these expense items not made public to the community? Is the foundation administrator funded by funds raised or tax dollars? Why are more administrative positions being added when the school system is facing a \$50,000 funding cut from the state? Why is the board of education not cutting expenses? Is the new athletic director a full or part-time position? How does the Board of Education justify paying a Superintendent the same as a small college president? These and other items will be made public to the community in the fall before elections. It's time for accountability, which this school board did not learn from the last levy defeat.
- Why with all the taxes paid and levies approved over the years have we neglected maintaining buildings on an ongoing basis?
- You make no effort to market the schools to residents. As far as I can tell, the only thing the school has going for it is high academic achievement. Well, I care about educating the whole person, character development, exploratory learning etc. I have no clue what efforts you are making in those areas. It is also unfortunate that the school system is the only thing that creates a sense of community in Ottawa Hills.
- You need to go back to the basics. Artistic and enlarged buildings do not make quality education. This is public education and not private education and campus. There are a lot of senior citizens, many singles who have worked all their lives for what we have. Think about us before you tax us to death.
- You need to understand that there is a breaking point at which our taxes become too much of a burden. I strongly support our Ottawa Hills schools, however, it is reaching that financial breaking point where we can no longer take on any more taxes.

**Please add any comments you would like to share:**

**Those who support 3.6 mills to 6.0 mills /\$126 to \$210 per \$100,000**

- 6.1 mills is too much for our small district.
- AC upgrade versus heat. Roughly half HVAC/mechanical budget money allocated to most pressing need. 5 mills total excess over 4.65 is either windows or mechanical/HVAC.
- Aging school buildings, like aging homes, need to be updated over time. We must be careful to ensure that residents aren't burdened with so much additional tax to update the schools that they can't afford to upgrade their own homes. Buyers want fully upgraded homes. Proposed upgrades to the schools need to be fully explained and prioritized.
- Are there energy savings to offset? Why so expensive? Confusing.
- At age 73, I really don't pay much attention to the schools now that my kids have moved on after graduating many years ago. A strong school system is important, so I will continue to support the schools and not move out of the Village like so many others do after their kids graduate.
- At the max 6 mill range I would still have some reservations.
- Building/mechanical improvements could be broken up more. Technology upgrades (new laptops?) is very different from plumbing problems. Same for gymnasium and related improvements. I support a new weight room, but not a huge professional kitchen as was proposed on the old levy. Board and Education and Village Council have a unified vision, was rated so low because of council member Strauss attack on school board member Hupp at a meeting.
- Consider the cost of a new building.
- Don't like the combo questions. I want better ES security but don't want to waste money moving offices and that is asked together. Why did you hire an old person for new AD? Out of 90 candidates. Was donation money involved from her parents?
- Expect to be downsizing and leaving the Village soon.
- Handicapped parking at elementary, while perhaps meeting legal requirements, is not functionally adequate for handicapped van with passenger side ramps. Curb easements are in wrong place, and there is no monitoring of excessive abuse by non-tag holders. The two spaces on the busy, busy traffic circle are practically useless, and only one of those works for ramp users.
- Home values have not risen to accommodate higher tax rates. Tough selling.
- HVAC can be upgraded, without complete replacement of entire system. Same with electrical, plumbing, and fire suppression. We really don't need AC in all buildings given the small number of school days when it is over 80 degrees.
- HVAC, plumbing and weight room are of high priority.
- I am a "senior citizen" on a fixed income.
- I don't know the present condition of our electric, plumbing, and heating systems. Need to know what really needs to be done. We don't need a junior high gym, etc.

**Please add any comments you would like to share:**

**Those who support 3.6 mills to 6.0 mills /\$126 to \$210 per \$100,000**

- I don't think the improvements should have been categorized. I would vote higher for some portions of a category, but not others. For example, I would agree to add a security system, but I wouldn't agree to move an office to a kindergarten classroom. Plus, these options need to be more detailed. It is hard to agree to when we don't know why. I know there were meetings last year on it, but I don't think it was explained well.
- I feel that the district is very top heavy in administration salaries for the number of students that are being serviced. I feel that some positions could be combined very easily, and still meet the needs of our students. I feel that the district can improve on being more accepting of the special needs students.
- I have no idea what improvements are needed for the school building.
- I moved here for the schools. Allowing outside children to go here on a "tuition" basis is not right. Keep doing what you do, please.
- I think overall definitely the buildings, at least I know for sure the Jr./Sr. High school building needs lot of improvement. It's a great school district and safe neighborhood to reside in. We support the School District and its values totally.
- I think the school is excellent from K-12. However, in my opinion the college ( and career) planning needs to start in 9th grade. Focus on what the common app includes. Also, the parent should be included in the registration process of 9th grade classes and what the ultimate plan is for each subject. Extra-curricular activities could be represented with an assembly or sign-up day.
- I think the school needs to "sell" the community on the improvements. There needs to be a full-fledged marketing campaign - with an over abundance of information on why each item is needed. I think meetings at the school are good, some at people's houses (but I don't think people are comfortable going to homes they do know the owners). Do Facebook Live videos, bring the information to the voters. Don't expect them to come to you.
- I think you could eliminate the "kindergarten club" attitude as it does not promote inclusiveness. It only stresses the point that if you were not here from day one, you are different.
- I will definitely not support the building of any new schools.
- I would encourage more project bidding across the board. Food providers, office supplies, uniforms for teams, sports equipment, other contract services used within our school and Village.
- I would like to see class size at about 25 students. Taxes in Ottawa Hills are oppressive and services to those with no children in school keep being reduced. This situation is unacceptable. I am thankful there will be no roundabouts at the expense of the Village.
- I would like to see more focus on curriculum advances and less on buildings and mechanical. More arts, more science, more exploration. Less testing, less worrying about HVAC.
- I would like to see more transparency of funds currently given and where they are going, since we already pay such high taxes. A bit frustrating that we may need to pay more if we are trying to bring more people to the Village, increased taxes may hinder this.

**Please add any comments you would like to share:**

**Those who support 3.6 mills to 6.0 mills /\$126 to \$210 per \$100,000**

- I would not support Gym or Auditorium improvements at any level. I don't trust the school board to make honest or effective decisions after last levy. Irresponsible.
- I would personally prefer a community area with small businesses and restaurants near the center of Ottawa Hills.
- I would prefer a lower amount and to do the renovations in phases. Prioritize the improvements and fund in this order. Absolutely necessary in next 5 years, could put off for 5 years, but only if enough money is raised.
- I would support a larger auditorium as it can make money.
- Is there any way to lower the cost? Is 10 mills enough to build a new school?
- It is my opinion that the schools need to first, focus on safety and security. Swinging for the funds to completely revamp the schools would increase taxes to the point of property value devastation. All of these are arguments that have already been introduced and had a blind eye turned toward them.
- It's really based on need. The first three or four above seem necessary, but it is not clear. Asking for prudent use of tax payer dollars for necessary improvements.
- It's very concerning that the past and present school board has let our schools get to these poor conditions. Last year, I was mailed a letter to support the tax increase that included pictures of the schools leaking pipes, faulty electrical, and overall poor condition. I can't believe they had the nerve to send that to us. I'm not putting the blame on one person or this current board as this issue did not happen overnight. I do feel that ownership of these problems are due to the years of negligence of all who's responsibility it was to ensure the buildings are maintained. They should be ashamed for the lack of leadership and poor management of these assets. While some may think that raising taxes will take care of the current issues, they are lacking the foresight of future problems. Higher property taxes will make Ottawa Hills a less than desirable place to live regardless of the schools. Several areas have very good schools systems while keeping their property taxes in check. It's time to come up with creative thinking and manage our tax dollars better or find new people that can.
- Limit capital projects to energy efficiency improvements and building code issues.
- Maintenance and renovation of existing facilities in order to ensure safety, improve usability, and possibly decrease future operating expenses seems sensible. Adding new space, which will require added annual operating expenses seems highly questionable in the face of declining enrollment.
- More information on upcoming plays or special programs. The plays are excellent! We love living in the Village!
- Necessary improvements, not make everything "perfect".
- Need outreach to residents with no students in the schools, support from Realtors and business residents.

**Please add any comments you would like to share:**

**Those who support 3.6 mills to 6.0 mills /\$126 to \$210 per \$100,000**

- Now that all my children and grandchildren have graduated from Ottawa Hills schools I really don't need this information. For property value, I will vote for schools levies every time!
- Please consider community recreation enhancements, as well, including better river access and removal of log jams to promote paddle-sports within the Village.
- Real estate taxes do not fit the investment in our homes and schools. They have continued to increase at a rate exceeding the benefits of living here. Stricter financial stewardship is needed over administrative decisions and capital improvements. When the market declined in 2008-2010, we saw this. However, I feel we are looser with the financial decisions now and heavier in staff and benefits and extras. Great teachers will choose OH for the families/students here if pay was equal to even a little less to those at the private schools, Sylvania or Perrysburg. We are very different from Maumee Valley and should not try to compare. We need to tighten the wallet.
- Several members of the Village council are upset that the school board took a position on the Secor Road project. I fully support the school board looking out for the school.
- Since the Village Voice is not relevant, I find I do not know the Elementary Principal's name, or much about the grade school.
- The City needs to find other ways to raise money for schools. Can't keep raising taxes.
- The district is showing a lot of interest in marketing the schools to the taxpayer. I would like to see it market itself to its students as well, so that they have pride and appreciation for the opportunity they have at Ottawa Hills. It will help the whole community if this happens.
- The last levy was too much to ask at once. You may want to survey families who have school aged children who don't go to our schools and find out why.
- The school needs to continue to pursue advertising and marketing initiatives to attract people to the Village and students to the school.
- The schools are great! I like the communication from parents to teachers.
- This survey is a great idea. Good job! The Secor Road issue will affect my thinking. I would vote no on the Secor Road issue.
- To prevent people from leaving the Village as soon as their last child graduates, perhaps you could consider a tax credit for empty nesters. This would help the supply/demand equation to keep property values from dropping more than the surrounding areas.
- Way too many "big egos" is a detriment.
- We don't fully understand the concept of mills, regrettably. We try with our schedules to keep abreast of all matters pertaining to tax dollars, the school board, etc., however we moved to Ottawa Hills because we fully trust the district and believe in the direction they're taking so we don't stress if we can't follow every move. Our top concern will always be security, safety, and AC would be nice!

**Please add any comments you would like to share:**

**Those who support 3.6 mills to 6.0 mills /\$126 to \$210 per \$100,000**

- We need an adequate, functioning building, but the success of the school system is based on the quality of the teachers, students, staff, and parents of this community.
- We no longer have children in the school. When our children were at Ottawa Hills they got a great education.
- When you talk about the improvements to HVAC and the window replacements, you should share estimates on how much these improvements would save in operating costs. In addition, please estimate how much the district's carbon emissions would be reduced. Regarding transparency on finances, please see the level of transparency reporting required of nearby schools in Michigan (note grey transparency reporting box in upper right corner on this page): <https://www.birmingham.k12.mi.us/>. Ohio schools would be stronger if they shared this same level of information. I hope you will be proactive in this regard. Thank you for the good work you do.
- Why even use a \$100k home as the example when the median home price in Ottawa Hills is \$254,500 - just makes the increase seem like less when for the average homeowner it's substantially more.
- Work with the Village to encourage them to develop land for business purposes. Coffee houses, restaurants, etc. in the Village to allow for business tax revenue. Levies in small doses are more palatable but Ottawa Hills houses are not selling, so maybe private fundraising is better so the school doesn't raise taxes on homes out pricing what a home can bear.

**Please add any comments you would like to share:**

**Those who support 6.1 mills to 8.5 mills /\$213 to \$297 per \$100,000**

- A recent Village Council Member stated people move to Ottawa Hills for the garbage pick-up? Similar services, not for school system. That council member can't be more wrong from someone who moved here from Chicago. I would however, like to see more areas on the millage for services like school programs. Maybe preschool services that enhance the quality of the education system, not just facilities.
- How can Ottawa Hills schools connect with area businesses to gain financial support? How do we keep kids from leaving our district to attend private schools for grades 7 through 12? Continue to work on gaining support of community members without school age children.
- I do not like the market for out of district students. The last levy asked for money to renovate everything and the kitchen sink. Get real!
- I hope the board does not screw up on selecting the right AD. This is a key position to recruitment and retention of students, especially athletes. Current/retiring AD has been a detriment to everything.
- I love the OH school system. It is not perfect, but no school system is -- however, the focus on academics and success is unmatched. If there were no public schools in the OH Village, I would be spending my money on sending my child to a private school. The beauty of OH is the public vs. private experience, although some would argue that based on its size, OH is more private than public. Regardless, I would not change my decision to send my son to OH schools. Thank you to the faculty and staff who work so hard on behalf of our kids.
- I prioritize renovation for basic safety above adding functions. Since there are so many safety concerns - i.e. fire systems and security- these should be completed first and any other optional renovations should be considered as a separate issue.
- I would be willing to support a large levy, but I have kids in the school, many don't, and our property taxes are already quite high. We need to find another source of revenue for the Village and for the schools. Also, if we pass a very expensive program for school facilities, it will limit our ability to fund things that actually matter for educational outcome, like teachers with advanced degrees.
- I would favor a cafeteria with a closed lunch. For the safety of the children, they should be required to stay at the school. Also, in order to stay competitive with other schools, we need the gym and other improvements. Athletics are an important factor for many families when deciding on a school district.
- I would rather tear down current facilities and build new to incorporate all these improvements, plus more advancements. I feel that would be a better use of my taxpayer dollars. I would support a 7.9 mill levy for this. I also feel we could rent out new facilities (i.e. theater) as a source of revenue.
- If a levy was introduced to the Village, I would mostly support a levy that included an elevator in the high school. I would also like to see cosmetic upgrades in the elementary school and junior/senior high, like painting interior, fixing cracks or deterioration where it would be needed and general cosmetic upgrades.
- If building improvements are necessary, they should be done. Our children and grandchildren live in nice homes so they should be able to be educated in a school with a nice learning environment.
- In favor of all improvements. Perhaps some done over a period of time, instead of all at once.

**Please add any comments you would like to share:**

**Those who support 6.1 mills to 8.5 mills /\$213 to \$297 per \$100,000**

- It would depend on how the dollars were going to be used. We love our school district, neighborhood, and teachers. We will do our best to support things that will enhance their education.
- Let's not forget the music room in the Junior High/Senior High. It desperately needs expansion and renovation!
- My answers assume these improvements will be phased in, not all attempted in one year!
- Need to focus on things that need to be done and leave the other things for a later time. Asking for it all at once may have had people vote on the prior ballot because of the expense. The things I marked as not much support is because I feel the other things should be priority and these can wait.
- The schools are the best!
- The schools keep adding administrators. Why do we need so many? Is this a good way to spend our tax dollars considering you lost a levy? One of the questions was about changing the multi-purpose room into large group/dining space. WE DON'T WANT a closed lunch at school. We live close to school, and I like having the option of having my child come home for lunch. You always ask about this and we always say no. TAKE A HINT!!! The school board and council need to work together. It looks like the Village wants to save our tax dollars and the schools just want to spend them. Both of you need to work together. The arguing about Secor Road in public was embarrassing. It made that councilperson look bad and the schools were grandstanding. Did you try talking to Mark Thompson or the mayor privately?
- The sooner improvements are made, the less costly it will be in the long run.
- We believe we should be considering a new school to house grades K-12. Example, Northwood, Carey, Ottawa Hills seems to be a trend for smaller districts and gets state support. Though we would support the above millage, it does seem significantly large. Keep Ottawa Hills school #1!
- We did not support the recent levy request due to the waste we see on spending at the high school level. Money is spent on things that are not important, so it is difficult to justify spending so much on new things. Most schools cannot spend freely and have to be very careful. Ottawa Hills is a wonderful district blessed with tax payers willing to pass levies generously. In return, we do not feel it is a lot to expect that this money be spent with care.
- We love Ottawa Hills schools and absolutely support a levy to modernize the learning environment at the elementary, junior high, and high schools. In order to remain competitive it is vital that the physical plant is as progressive as what happens in the classroom. We would also like to see some enhancements to the curriculum, more emphasis on programming/coding, leadership, stress management, some of the course work could be better aligned with emerging skills, current issue, and topics.
- We support the schools and believe in capital improvements. But we were troubled by the auditorium and gym plans of the last levy, which left us wondering if the board was trying to create a Maumee Valley experience. Ottawa Hills school students do not need private school style sports and auditorium facilities. Focus on academics please, improve the schools for safety and maintenance.



**Please add any comments you would like to share:**

**Those who support 8.6 mills to 10.86 mills / \$301 to \$380 per \$100,000**

- Both of our children received excellent education in Ottawa Hills, and we still wish to support the system as long as we are in the community.
- Education teaching styles need to evolve as the traditional classroom style of teaching is dying. The school buildings need to be overhauled to better align with the quality of education the students are receiving.
- Explain the improvements better to the tax payers.
- I hope the school district/school board will put forth a request that is similar to the last one. There are people, like me, who vocally support the levy but who could have worked much harder. We will work harder next time. The improvements to the schools are worth working for.
- It's time for a new high school, so instead of making patches, build a new one. Consider having fees for attendance in addition to millage. That is, families should pay a fixed fee for their kids to attend school, plus millage. The fees would placate those without kids.
- My husband and I moved here 3 years ago. The only place we looked for houses was Ottawa Hills due to the school district. We have 2 children who are preschool and one in first grade. We fully support any school levy and were very disappointed the last levy did not pass.
- Need to communicate exactly why we would not build a new school. One campus housing K-12 with an athletic complex feels like we are putting band-aides all over and are not addressing how this district will endure. Education is our foundation, but our institution is crumbling.
- Our facilities are not a drawing card for families moving into the Village. This impacts not only the schools, but also the Village. Our teachers and students deserve better. We would support building new schools. The Village leadership needs to work harder to support the schools.
- Our primary motivator for moving to OH was the school system. We fully intend to have all 3 of our children spend the next 18 years moving through the OH school system. We support any and all levies that enhance the quality of the OH education.
- Prefer new schools over renovations.
- Realtors who railed against the last levy did not know what they were talking about. The opposite is true. If they want the same house but at a lower cost and lower taxes, they can go live in old orchard - lower priced similar houses, lower taxes, bad schools. People come to Ottawa hills because of the schools and Village services. Higher taxes do not keep people from moving - and do not drive down house values. Higher taxes drive schools to be better, Village services to be better, and thus house values to be higher.
- School board needs to be more conscious about implementing delays and closing when conditions are unsafe to transport my child to school.
- The amount of paperwork being mailed is excessive. We have an in-touch and foundation promo material which can be handled electronically, or send it only to those who do not receive the district e-newsletter. Please don't waste money on PR, put it to quality teaching.
- The facilities badly need updating. This is going to hurt property values if this is not dealt with quickly. Other private schools in the area (which are competing with Ottawa Hills) have much nicer and modern facilities. Even Toledo Public are looking better. It's a disgrace!

**Please add any comments you would like to share:**

**Those who support 8.6 mills to 10.86 mills / \$301 to \$380 per \$100,000**

- The Ottawa Hills system is great, but I do not think it can financially maintain itself. The school board should plan for a merger with Sylvania, Toledo, or Washington Local.
- The school system is the Village.
- The schools need to be updated to keep up with the changing times. We cannot be competitive by standing still.
- There is a disconnect between how some view the conditions of our school buildings and how people outside the Village view the conditions of our school buildings. We want to attract young families with children, and we think we can do that based on academic achievement alone. Though our academic reputation is solid, the buildings in which we deliver instruction are not. We are not competing with Perrysburg, Sylvania, and Maumee Valley Country Day School (which has a new high school building). Rossford will soon have a new high school. Anyone who goes to basketball games at Toledo area schools sees the types of new buildings being built. We support whatever needs to be done to make our buildings comfortable, welcoming environments that reflect our commitment to education. At the same time, sometimes we wonder if putting money into our current buildings is wise, when in actuality, what we need are new buildings. We've got to think twenty, thirty, forty+ years down the road. Some can't see any further than their noses. We are dealing with an aging housing market (which is something the Village council must address). When we are selling our schools, we need to sell a complete package--from facilities to academics to opportunities for students. Our administrators, teachers, and students are getting the job done. It's our obligation to give them the facilities they deserve.
- We have never been in the high school or junior high so we cannot comment. We are new to the area. I would like to see a cafeteria in the elementary school.
- We moved here for the schools, are happy with the education our children are receiving and fully support improvements. We recall only receiving 1 "In Touch" newsletter.

**Please add any comments you would like to share:**

**Those who did not answer the levy question**

- Shame on the school board, as obviously the questions were designed to lead the respondents to a pre-determined answer. We believe the message of the most recent tax levy was that our homes are not an ATM machine for the schools. You are trying to sell outdated buggy whips to Uber drivers. Your school buildings were not maintained. We are in a time when the cost of a University education is decreasing. The education model (including yours) is obsolete. We believe that the ultimate solution will not involve property taxes. There are many books written in recent years that address the coming collapse of the educational system. If and when you as a school board are ready to move this community forward and into the educational model of the future, let us know.
- We are retired and in our nineties. No children at home but still living at home ourselves with help. Our only interest is that the Village remains a good and safe place to live.