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Updated - Columbus City Schools Develops a Facilities Master Plan: A Nonpartisan Fact Sheet

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Condition of Columbus School Buildings

- Columbus City Schools (CCS) operates 109 schools. Of those, 43 are new or completely renovated schools funded through bond issues approved by voters in 2002 and 2008. An additional three buildings are under construction, for a total of 46.
- Engineers and architects retained by the Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC) determined that the average age of Columbus school buildings is over 55 years old. OSFC uses a Facility Condition Index (FCI) to measure the condition of a building by comparing the cost of renovations to the cost of replacement. A higher number reflects a worse condition – when the FCI exceeds 66%, a building is recommended for replacement rather than renovation. Over 90% of the elementary schools, 100% of the middle schools, and 60% of the high schools would qualify for replacement or historic renovation.
- CCS reports that roof replacement needs are projected to be over \$47 million for nine buildings over the next five years. No state-matching funds are available for emergency repairs.
- OSFC's goal is to place every student in a new or renovated school.

Enrollment Trends

- Between 2000 and the 2014-2015 school year, K-12 enrollment in the district fell from 63,589 to 49,841, but overall enrollment has been stable the past five years, increasing slightly this past school year.
- Current enrollment numbers are posted on the district's Digital Dashboard at <http://ccsdatazen.trafficmanager.net/viewer/content/dashboard.html>
- In response to falling enrollment, the school district closed five schools in 2014 and has closed over 20 schools since 2000.

Qualifying for State-Matching Funds

- OSFC will provide 30% matching funds to renovate or replace K-12 schools that are designed and built to a statewide standard.
- The state will not share the cost for prekindergarten classrooms, fixed-seat auditoriums, or some sports facilities. These have to be financed with local funds.

This fact sheet is available at www.KidsOhio.org and will be updated as new information becomes available.

Facility Master Plan Ad Hoc Committee

- An Ad Hoc committee of 50 neighborhood and community leaders was appointed by the School Board in January 2016. This committee reviewed nearly 100 different options for a district-wide modernization plan, including changes in attendance boundaries, grade configurations, and building sizes.
- A list of members can be found at <http://www.dejongrichter.com/ccsoh/6-2/ad-hoc-committee-members/>
- A survey of more than 1,700 people found that a majority of respondents preferred a “traditional” grade configuration of prekindergarten-5 in elementary school, 6-8 in middle school, and 9-12 in high school. Currently, the district has more than a dozen schools with other grade configurations.

Integrating the Facilities Master Plan with the Levy Millage Recommendations

- During May and June, the Ad Hoc Committee began narrowing options, drafting potential recommendations, and developing a timeline for a 15- to 20-year facility master plan.
- In June, the Committee presented its final recommendations, which call for replacing/renovating 18 buildings (including two high schools) over a 6- to 8-year period and total approximately \$300 million in construction.
- The 2016 Facilities Master Plan Recommended Pathways and Updated Segments can be found at <http://www.dejongrichter.com/ccsoh/>
- The Columbus Board of Education is expected to approve this update to the Facilities Master Plan at its June 30th meeting. Approving the updated plan does not commit funding to the projects – it only commits to the order of construction if funding becomes available.
- The updated plan also helps the district identify current unused buildings unlikely to be needed in the future, which could result in the potential sale of these properties.
- A school facility issue could be part of a November 8, 2016, ballot issue. The Board could make the decision by the end of June on whether to include an additional bond request for new building construction, as part of an anticipated levy request for operating/capital improvement funding.
- Using the proceeds of a facility bond issue in 2002 and 2008, Columbus has issued bonds – similar to a home mortgage and paid back through local property taxes – to pay for modernized schools. For perspective, the district estimates that the cost of the full proposed plan would be approximately 2 mills.
- In 2008, voters approved a \$1.13 mill bond to modernize school buildings and purchase new buses, textbooks, and computers. The proposed 9.01 mill levy/bond issue proposed in 2013 contained 1 mill for a facility bond. That proposal was rejected by voters.
- See “Columbus City Schools Consider Levy Millage Options: A Nonpartisan Fact Sheet” at <http://kidsohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/CCS-Levy-Millage-Options-Fact-Sheet-Final-062316.pdf>