

Building team meetings for each Bexley school were held on February 12 and 13. Each building team received the same presentation.

Dr. Harley Williams

To begin each meeting, Dr. Harley Williams, Director of Facilities and Operations, welcomed attendees to the event and introduced the building principal, who will lead each school's building team.

After introductions, Dr. Williams introduced Superintendent Dr. Jason Fine, who acknowledged Board of Education members and thanked them for their support.

Dr. Jason Fine

Dr. Fine presented information about Bexley Schools' strategic plan, which was developed during the 2022-2023 school year and approved by the Board of Education in May 2023. The strategic plan went into effect this school year and focuses on school culture, teaching and learning, and facilities. In addition, diversity, equity, and inclusion are woven throughout the goals of each focus area and working toward each goal uses the lens of DEI in accomplishing each goal.

The strategic plan also specifically calls on the schools to develop a formal district facilities plan. Specifically, the plan called for developing "a BCSD district facilities plan that will efficiently utilize spaces and resources to address the growing population and evolving needs of the district."

Dr. Fine explained the behind-the-scenes work to prepare for facilities planning.

Dr. Fine explained that the school district utilizes the input and expertise of a 38-member Facilities Advisory Team. The team, created in 2018, comprises faculty and staff members, parents/guardians, and community members. It helps assess and study the district's facility needs and advises the district on prioritizing upgrades and maintenance.

Secondly, Dr. Fine said that the district, also since 2018, has utilized a Finance Advisory Council to assist the Treasurer by providing feedback on the financial health and operations of the district. There are 16 group members, including staff, administrators, parents/guardians, and public finance experts.

The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission has also provided reviews of Bexley Schools, which are being updated and considered.

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Finally, the district issued a Request for Qualifications last Fall and a follow-up Request for Proposals from architectural design firms to help lead the schools' facilities planning work. In December 2023, the district announced the selection of Perkins&Will and Moody Nolan, two top firms that have partnered on similar projects for about ten years, including on projects in the Columbus area.

In discussing the facilities plan, the superintendent assured the attendees that no decisions had been made regarding any building. He also stated that there is "no zero-cost option," meaning that regardless of whether decisions are made to upgrade, amend, or refurbish any building, the truth is that our aging buildings need upgrades to maintain the operations of the buildings, including for heating/cooling, roofing, etc. – and those upgrades will cost money. He also assured the crowd that the school district is committed to an open and transparent process to develop our district facilities plan and told the group, "We need you!" He explained that the plan will be a community-driven initiative, one in which we value and welcome input from all Bexley residents.

He then explained the three steps of the planning work: Inform – through community meetings, building team meetings, surveys, and the work of the Facilities and Finance Advisory groups; Recommend – the core planning team will make recommendations based upon feedback; and Decide – the Bexley Schools Board of Education ultimately will make the final decisions regarding the district facilities plan.

To end his segment of the meeting, Dr. Fine introduced members of the Perkins&Will and Moody Nolan architectural design team.

Steve Turckes

Steve Turckes, a partner at Perkins&Will, reiterated the cycle of the planning work – specifically Assessments, Options, and Decisions and explained that the full process would take about 15 months. The Assessments and Options phases are expected to wrap up in late 2024. A final plan recommendation will be submitted to the Board of Education for consideration in early 2025.

Mr. Turckes also explained what a district facilities plan provides. He said it assesses current facilities and determines what physical assets are in need of repair or replacement; it provides an educational assessment to determine how current facilities support Bexley student learners; and it provides a financial assessment to help determine priorities and the associated costs.

In the architects' assessment work, Mr. Turckes explained they are considering the 2017 OFCC reports of each school, as well as the projects that have been completed and those still to be addressed. Their physical assessments look at building systems, such as HVAC, electrical, plumbing, lighting, drainage, doors/windows, accessibility and safety, roofing, outdoor facilities, and structure.

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Their educational building assessments determine safety and security, lighting, daylight, technology, room shape and size, furniture/ergonomics, circulation, materials, thermal comfort, acoustics, indoor air quality, flexibility, and whether the building supports collaboration.

Mr. Turckes also shared that there will be six total community engagement meetings, including ones to be held in March, April, May, September, and November. The first meeting was in January.

To start the work, he explained, a visioning session was held in January with administrators and other key members to develop guiding principles for the work. Together, the group developed three principles that Bexley School buildings will: support powerful learning experiences, foster well-being and a sense of belonging, and be designed for the future and be community responsive.

Dr. Harley Williams

Dr. Williams introduced Building Teams and their use in the Facilities Planning Process. He shared that a building team would be formed for each school, that all who wished to participate in one or more building teams could do so, and that the essential questions would guide the work of the building teams. The first essential question is, “In what ways are the facilities failing to meet the expectations and needs of all stakeholders today?” The second essential question is, “What changes in the facilities need to occur to align with the district’s educational vision?” Dr. Williams shared that the District’s educational vision must include skills that our students need to be prepared for jobs that currently may not exist.

Dr. Williams shared the Building Team schedule for the six meetings and emphasized the remaining five meetings would be conducted virtually. Finally, a QR Code was shared with the audience to allow members to register for one or more of the five Building Teams.

Following Dr. Williams’ presentation, Aimee Eckmann, a partner at Perkins&Will, showed example slides explaining how physical and educational assessments of each building are made.

Aimee Eckmann

Regarding the options phase, she explained buildings could be recommended for repair, renovation, or rebuilding. She said a facility that may be recommended for repair would have only physical needs that need to be addressed. Facilities that may be recommended for renovation or rebuilding have both physical needs and educational adequacy needs that need to be addressed.

Following Ms. Eckmann’s presentation, attendees for each meeting were offered building tours and were asked to complete an online “First Impressions” survey form.