



## Facilities Planning Frequently Asked Questions BEXLEY CITY SCHOOLS

[BexleySchools.org/FacilitiesPlanning](https://BexleySchools.org/FacilitiesPlanning) | [bex.fyi/facilities](https://bex.fyi/facilities)

### WHAT IS BEXLEY SCHOOLS' PROJECTED ENROLLMENT IN THE COMING YEARS?

Bexley Schools requested an enrollment projection report through the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission in early 2024. The report was completed by FutureThink, a Columbus planning firm, and was published in April 2024. This report predicts no growth, or flat enrollment, for Bexley Schools through 2034. [See the report online.](#)

### WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS?

We are grateful for the Bexley community's engagement in our facilities-planning work. Through in-person sessions, building-specific team meetings, online input, and more, our community has told us the following:

Neighborhood elementary schools, with Maryland, Cassingham, and Montrose located in each main area of the city, are valued and preferred.

Keeping the front façades of Montrose Elementary, Cassingham Elementary, and Bexley High School is desired, if possible.

While they enjoy the central location of most of the school district's athletic sites on the Cassingham Complex, many understand that one or more athletic venues may need to leave the Complex to allow for future expansion of the location's school facilities.

### HOW DOES THE POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE REMODELING OR REBUILDING OF BEXLEY SCHOOL BUILDINGS RELATE TO THE INCREMENTAL LEVY ON THE NOVEMBER 2024 ELECTION BALLOT?

Future changes to Bexley school facilities are not related to the November 2024 levy. The ballot issue Bexley voters will consider in November 2024 is for school operations only (i.e., staff salaries, benefits, student services, etc.). Funding generated by an operating levy is for a continuing period of time, while (bond) levies for capital projects function more like a mortgage with a payoff date.

### WHAT FUNDING ASSISTANCE WILL THE OHIO FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION COMMISSION (OFCC) GIVE TO BEXLEY SCHOOLS?

The short answer is none. While Bexley Schools have taken advantage of some services offered by the OFCC, we do not expect to qualify for direct and immediate funding for building projects any time soon.

Each year, the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce creates a K-12 District Equity List ranking all 609 public school districts in Ohio from lowest to highest, based upon a district's average adjusted valuation per pupil. See the [ODEW K-12 District Equity List for Fiscal Year 2024](#).

While the OFCC assists in funding new or remodeled school facilities, its funding formula, by law, assists districts with the lowest average per-pupil valuation first. The FY '24 Equity List ranks the Bexley City School District 513 out of 609 public school districts in Ohio, meaning 512 school districts are eligible for state-funding assistance for facilities ahead of us.

According to ODEW, "A school district's priority for state assistance is factored from the district's three-year average 'income adjusted valuation per pupil,' as calculated by the Department of Education pursuant to ORC Section 3318.011. Under that calculation, the district's taxable 'valuation per pupil' is adjusted by a factor reflecting the median income of the district's taxpayers. A district's valuation is the total value of all property in the school district as assessed for tax purposes."

## **HOW WILL BEXLEY SCHOOLS PAY FOR FUTURE UPGRADES OR CHANGES TO ITS SCHOOL FACILITIES?**

A final District Facilities Plan recommendation will be sent to the Bexley Board of Education in the spring of 2025. If the Board approves a District Facilities Plan that includes substantial remodeling or rebuilding of one or more Bexley School facilities, the school district must secure funding sources before construction or remodeling work can be done.

It is financially difficult for schools to use operating funds to pay for capital improvements (e.g., school construction, building upgrades, etc.). Typically, public school districts issue bonds to generate funds for repair, construction, or replacement of school facilities. A bond levy must be approved by district voters before bonds can be issued by the district.

In a bond-levy election, voters decide whether to authorize a school district to issue bonds in a specified amount. Investors who buy the bonds are paid back, with interest, using funds collected through property taxes.

## **WHAT IS BEXLEY SCHOOLS' DEBT LIMIT?**

Bexley Schools' debt limit is \$183 million as of 2024.

## **WHY IS BEXLEY SCHOOLS DOING A FACILITIES PLAN NOW?**

We understand that the environment where our students learn directly impacts how they learn and their experiences in our schools. The Bexley Schools' [Strategic Plan "Championing Our Future"](#) identifies facilities as one of three themes of the plan.

The facilities theme details three goals:

- Goal One: Develop a BCSD master facilities plan that will efficiently utilize spaces and resources to address the district's growing population and evolving needs.
- Goal Two: Prioritize flexible and adaptive spaces to support dynamic teaching and meet the needs of every learner.
- Goal Three: Create welcoming spaces that promote safety and belonging for all.

The Facilities Plan will be developed with experts in educational architecture and construction and will include community, staff, and student involvement. This plan will help guide and direct the future steps for goals two and three.

## **WHAT IS A SCHOOL FACILITIES PLAN?**

A facilities plan takes a broad look at school district facilities, assessing those facilities both from a physical and educational delivery viewpoint. It incorporates both the practical aspects of the current state of mechanics and infrastructure (roofing, internal systems like HVAC and plumbing) with the impacts on educational environments (classroom capacity, mobility, etc.).

At the end of the facility planning process, the district will have a document of recommendations for improvement to each facility that outlines both short- and long-term priorities. It's important to note that the recommendations will be used as a roadmap for how improvements should be made.

The facilities plan will be a living document, which can be reviewed and revised as educational delivery and student population needs evolve. Presented as a planning document (not as an architectural design), the plan provides opportunities for refinement in any resulting facility project.

## **WHAT IS THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF BEXLEY SCHOOLS' CURRENT FACILITIES?**

The teaching and learning process looks much different today than when our schools were built decades ago. We must examine learning spaces to ensure they meet the needs of today's learners and today's learning processes. It is time to embark on a District Facilities Plan to determine if it is in our economic best interest to invest in our district's infrastructure. If so, the next question becomes whether we should repair, renovate, or rebuild.

A long-term facilities master plan will answer how best to address our aging school buildings efficiently and strategically. Our five school buildings are, on average, more than 84 years old, and the building systems — roofing, plumbing, energy, electrical, and mechanical repairs are becoming more costly and absorbing a more significant percentage of our General Fund each year.

For example,

- Montrose Elementary was built in 1921;
- Cassingham Elementary was built in 1927;
- Bexley High School was built in 1931;
- Maryland Elementary was built in 1950; and
- Bexley Middle School was built in 1960.

## **WHAT IS THE COST IF WE DO NOTHING?**

According to a 2018 third-party physical assessment, our buildings have been very well maintained, which has extended the life of the building systems beyond what is typically expected.

Because the building systems in our schools are reaching their end-of-life, it is projected we will have to spend a significant amount of money over the next 15 years to keep our buildings adequately heated/cooled, safe, dry, and secure. That same third-party physical assessment estimated that Bexley Schools would need about \$46 million, at that time, to repair and maintain our buildings during that same 15-year period.

## **WHAT WILL BE THE OUTCOME OF THE FACILITIES PLAN?**

The plan will align Bexley Schools' strategic plan and educational program with our physical space while looking toward the future. The plan will consider options for repairs, renovations, or additions to school properties. The plan options will be tied to the realities of construction phasing and order-of-magnitude costs. The plan will be a long-term view of facilities and will likely be implemented over several years.

The Board of Education will review and consider the implementation of the facilities plan. The reality is that the implementation of such a plan may also require community consideration for future funding if recommendations exceed the district's current resources for capital improvements.

## **WHO IS INVOLVED?**

The facility plan is an extension of the district's strategic plan, which involved and included hundreds of stakeholders. The district plans to engage similarly on the Facilities Plan and hopes a large number of residents, if not all, will participate in the process.

This type of community collaboration takes time. As we progress through the process, we must learn from our community their values and priorities, as those will guide our work.

We plan to convene the following groups:

- Steering and Workshop Committees (community, students, parents, staff, alumni, administrators)
- The Bexley community-at-large
- Bexley Board of Education.

## **HOW WILL WE GARNER FEEDBACK AND MAINTAIN COMMUNICATION TRANSPARENCY?**

The district will utilize various methods to gather feedback throughout the process, including through in-person and virtual meetings, online surveys, and open feedback forms. It is our goal to include regular updates via our weekly electronic newsletter and the new facilities planning page on our website.

Watch for opportunities to engage:

- Online surveys (students, staff, faculty, parents, alumni, etc.)
- Community engagement sessions (visioning and planning workshops)
- Interviews and focus groups with administrators, faculty, staff, alumni, and students
- In-depth tours and observations
- Building team meetings.

## **HOW WILL WE ALIGN THE STRATEGIC PLAN AND THE FACILITIES PLAN?**

The "[Championing Our Future](#)" [Strategic Plan](#) very clearly states the goals that will guide the Facilities Plan. Those goals include important guideposts such as "efficiently utilize spaces and resources," "prioritize flexible and adaptive spaces," and "promote safety and belonging for all."

Goal One: Develop a BCSD master facilities plan that will efficiently utilize spaces and resources to address the district's growing population and evolving needs.

Goal Two: Prioritize flexible and adaptive spaces to support dynamic teaching and meet the needs of every learner.

Goal Three: Create welcoming spaces that promote safety and belonging for all.

These will be directly incorporated throughout the facilities-plan document.

## **WHAT DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE?**

The Board of Education has hired an architect of record to facilitate the physical assessments, as well as lead much of the community discussion and input sessions for the planning process. Beyond this very important step, no decisions have been made.

Our plan will be inclusive of and responsive to the feedback and input we receive from the community.

## **WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED TIMELINE FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE DISTRICT FACILITIES PLAN?**

The facilities planning process is scheduled to culminate in late 2024/early 2025 with a planning document containing recommendations for facility improvements for each of Bexley schools. The recommended facilities plan will be submitted to the Board of Education for consideration.

## **HOW TO FOLLOW OUR PROGRESS**

You can follow our progress on the [district's website](#). This document also will be updated as we progress. In addition, an [online community facilities planning calendar](#) has been created.