

# **Troy City Schools Bond Issue FAQ**

## **Why do we need new school buildings?**

On average, our elementary school buildings are 77 years old. Concord Elementary School is 100 years old this year. The Van Cleve 6th Grade Building is 105 years old. Those buildings have served our students and community well for the duration of their existence. But simply put, those buildings no longer can keep up with the needs of our students. Of our nine school buildings, only Troy Junior High School has air conditioning. Many of our buildings have original boilers that, should something go wrong, can't be replaced because the parts are no longer available for purchase. Every summer, we are investing hundreds of thousands of dollars in capital improvements, such as new roofs.

From a geographic standpoint, our school locations also no longer make sense. There is a heavy population of students living in the southern portion of Troy that weren't there when many of our elementary schools were built. Our most southern school is Kyle Elementary School.

The time has come to give our students the buildings they need and deserve.

## **Where will be the locations of the proposed school buildings?**

There will be new Pre-K through 4 school buildings on the site where Cookson Elementary School currently is located, a site near the "old" Concord Elementary School Building on recently purchased land between McKaig Road and State Route 718 and a site in the southern portion of Troy near Swailes Road and S. Co. Rd. 25-A.

There will be a building for grades 5-6 at the site where Hook Elementary School currently stands.

## **How did you decide upon the locations for the new buildings?**

We looked at a map of Troy, which featured where students lived, as a blank slate. We set out to put schools in locations around Troy that were the most densely populated by our students. What we found was that there were no schools south of Kyle Elementary School. Our goal was to put an affordable number of schools in locations that made the most sense in terms of best serving our student population as close to their neighborhoods as possible.

## **What will become of the buildings no longer in use?**

The Concord, Cookson and Hook buildings would be demolished to make room for the new buildings. With purchase of the new land near the current Concord site, we would sell the property on which the school currently sits.

We would likely keep the Forest Elementary School building. It's the building we've put the most money into recently, with a new roof and other upgrades. We could use that space for alternative education programs.

We are working with the City of Troy to decide what would be best for the Kyle, Van Cleve and Heywood sites. We've talked to the city about a possible property swap and also the possibility of repurposing those buildings. Whether those buildings are repurposed or demolished, they will not sit vacant and be allowed to deteriorate.

### **What will be the timetable on the opening of the new buildings?**

When the levy passes in March, we would enter the planning phase. This is an exciting time that would involve us getting feedback from both staff members and families in terms of what those buildings should look like. That planning process would take about one year. Construction would then begin, with a target of moving into the new schools during the 2022-23 school year. All four buildings would be built at once.

### **Why a separate 5-6 building?**

One, it's most cost-effective for us to deliver special instruction to fifth and sixth graders. Take band, for example. Currently we have band in one sixth grade building. If we were to make four K-6 buildings, we would need four band rooms, four band storage rooms and possibly more band teachers to cover each of those four schools. Fifth and sixth grade is typically the age where you start to introduce those types of electives, so it makes sense to have them in one location. Having them under one roof makes more sense from a cost and personnel standpoint.

Second, we feel it makes the most sense from a developmental and social aspect. Students in the fifth and sixth grades are different from students in grades K-4 socially, developmentally and in terms of maturity, while at the same time being very different from junior high or high school students by those same measures. A fifth-sixth grade building would allow them to change classes as a team, as opposed to the high school model, in which each student changes classes individually. They also aren't sitting in the same classroom all day with one teacher, as they typically are in grades K-4.

### **What will the cost be to taxpayers?**

The estimated total cost of the project will be \$98.7 million. Our plan is to put a 6.54 mills bond levy on the ballot, along with a 0.5 mills maintenance levy.

That would be an approximate annual cost of \$248.52 annually per \$100,000 home value. That's a monthly cost of \$20.71 per \$100,000 home value or a cost of roughly 72 cents per day.

In the near future Troy City Schools will receive a \$31.8 million back from Columbus that we can use to reduce reduce property taxes.

### **Will you be adding air conditioning to the high school?**

We cannot use the money raised from the March bond issue to pay for air conditioning at the high school, however, we can use some of the maintenance dollars we are required to pass

alongside the bond issue to pay for air conditioning. Our plan is to begin adding air conditioning to the high school with the early collection years using maintenance dollars. As the only high school in our area without air conditioning, we understand the need for it. It is a part of our plan but will take some time.

**Will there be room for growth in the new buildings?**

Our district is projected to remain relatively flat with enrollment. But, if we do grow, we are going to have the space and capabilities to grow our buildings at a relatively low cost.

**Will the new buildings be handicap-accessible?**

All of the new elementary schools would be handicap-accessible. Our plan would be for each building to have a handicap-accessible unit at their neighborhood school.

**Would better safety features be added to the new buildings?**

Yes. All of the schools would not only be fitted with new security cameras, but the designs of the new buildings would be safer in terms of increased layers at entry points.

**Will the buildings be energy efficient and “green?”**

We purposefully partnered with Ruetschle Architects because of their track record of designing schools that not only are energy efficient, but also make use of ecologically-friendly technology. Ruetschle Architects designed the new school buildings within the Milton-Union School district, which now pays an average of 66 cents per square foot to heat and cool their buildings. The average cost to heat and cool a school building is about \$1.25.

**What will the buildings look like?**

All of the buildings will be two-stories, with elevators. The PreK-4 buildings will look almost identical in terms of blueprint, but each will have different features so they don't look identical from the street. But the interior of all four will be essentially the same, which will cut down on design costs.

**How many school employees will lose their jobs as the schools consolidate?**

It is not our plan to dismiss school employees once we go to the new school buildings. While we will need fewer positions in some areas, we feel as though we can get to those numbers through attrition, whether that be retirements or employees choosing not to return. We will still have the same number of students to educate, therefore will need to maintain a strong workforce. Our staffing costs will go down, but we will do it through attrition.

**How will students be transported to those schools?**

Due to safety concerns, any student attending the proposed new school at McKaig and State Route 718 will be bused to school, regardless of distance. The lack of sidewalks and speed limits on both of those roads will make it too dangerous to get students to school. Two of the sites, where Cookson and Hook currently are, have plenty of sidewalks available and students less than a mile from the school will be able to walk to school, as they currently do. We are

currently looking for a suitable fourth site in the southern part of Troy. Until we are certain where that site is, we cannot say for sure what the busing vs. walking situation will be. We do not anticipate a major increase in the cost of transporting students to school.

### **How will the district be divided?**

We cannot accurately answer that question at this time. Once we have decided where the fourth location will be and the bond issue passes in March, we will make it one of our top priorities to figure out how those lines are drawn. We will work with staff and parents to ensure those lines are drawn in a way that makes the most sense and is the most equitable for all three Pre-K through four buildings.

### **How can these be called “neighborhood schools” when some of our neighborhoods are losing them?**

We have repeatedly called this our “best plan for neighborhood schools.” It is true that not all neighborhoods will have schools but it is also true that most don’t today. Edgewater, Carriage Crossing, Kings Chapel, Fox Run, Stonebridge and Merrimont don’t have schools today but could be considered “neighborhoods.” Conversely, Forest, Kyle and Heywood are considered “neighborhoods” because of the schools near them.

Nearly half of our student population lives south of Kyle, which is our southernmost school, yet there is no neighborhood school to serve them. This is why it is important for us to include a southern site in our plan. We encourage people to check out our population map, which can be found in the presentation on our website.

The state WILL NOT partner with us to renovate or build new buildings on the Heywood, Kyle, Forest or Van Cleve sites. We could do it ourselves but this would be entirely locally funded and would drive the cost up by tens of millions of dollars. Our voters will not approve of that.

This is our best plan for neighborhood schools because it is the best way we can place elementary schools near where our students live in a cost effective way. It keeps transportation needs at a minimum. It also allows us to educate our special needs and preschool students in neighborhood schools, which is something we don’t do now. We currently bus all preschool students to the Van Cleve site and all students with multiple disabilities to the Cookson site, even if they live across town. This plan fixes that problem.

### **Why is the term of the bond 37 years?**

The term is spread out over 37 years to keep the cost down. It is important to remember that the \$98.7 million cost is for the entire project BEFORE \$31.8 million is returned to us from the State of Ohio. Once we get that money back the term and/or the total millage WILL be reduced. We have to remember that in just a few years approximately one-third of the debt will be erased by this state refund.

**Why don't we wait if state funding isn't immediately available?**

There are several reasons for this. First, our need is immediate. We are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to maintain buildings that are 100 years old. This is diverting dollars from our general fund that should be used to teach students instead of fixing buildings. This is not sustainable, even for the short term. Secondly, construction costs and state requirements only increase over time so they won't become cheaper to build. We can't continue to find small fixes for big problems.