

FAQs about the November Ballot Issue

1. What is on the November 5 ballot for Chardon Local Schools?

On June 17, the Board of Education voted unanimously to place a 5.3-mill bond issue on the November ballot. This bond issue would build a new 6th through 12th grade school building that would provide up-to-date learning environments equipped for delivering today's education. The new school would be constructed as two separate spaces with age appropriate divisions and shared areas.

The issue would also include essential renovations to the stadium that would allow the District to build on its current site without displacing any students during construction and would avoid unnecessary costs for temporary classroom trailers.

This bond issue represents phase one of a two-phase process. Phase two will address a new pre-kindergarten through 5th grade building at a later time.

2. Why does Chardon Local Schools need a bond issue for a new school building?

The bond issue is necessitated by our aging, inefficient buildings that disrupt and distract from the productive learning environment the District is trying to provide. Challenges in buildings throughout the District include:

- Leaking roofs that require buckets in hallways to catch water
- Classrooms too small to accommodate today's teaching methods
- Limiting electrical capacity that prevents teachers from using technology our students need for the jobs of today and tomorrow
- Outdated fire, safety, and security measures
- Less than full accessibility for students and visitors with disabilities

The State of Ohio reviewed our buildings and concluded they are beyond repair and no longer suited for today's education. According to the State's thorough analysis, the cost just to renovate our buildings to minimum standards would be nearly equal to the cost of building new schools. [View the State's analysis on our Facilities Planning Page.](#)

Our District is proud of its academic achievements, but the quality of our facilities is holding us back and impacting our ability to keep up as education and technology continue to evolve.

3. How did this bond issue come about?

A 40+ person group composed of business and community leaders, retirees, alumni, former and current parents and educators recommended a master plan to the Board of Education after a lengthy review process.

The Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC), met for months and reviewed financial information, building assessments, enrollment projections, and other detailed information to come up with a Facilities Master Plan (FMP) that would address all of our building challenges and meet the needs of our current and future students. They considered [nine different master plan scenarios](#), but decided on the most cost-effective solution to address the District's greatest needs.

After a comprehensive community feedback and engagement process, the Board voted in June to pursue a bond issue to fund the first phase of the FMP.

4. Why are the facilities in disrepair – did the district neglect them?

No, in fact, the opposite is true. The average age of our buildings is 70 years old, surpassing the normal life expectancy of school buildings in Ohio. School buildings do not reach the age of our buildings without careful attention to proper maintenance and upkeep. Our maintenance staff continues to do their best to keep our schools safe and in the best shape possible. This includes spending thousands of dollars each year on basic and Band-Aid repairs to expensive, outdated systems that no longer function efficiently. However, we have reached the point where repairs are no longer enough.

5. Why can't the District just repair or renovate the schools?

Our school buildings are beyond repair and no longer suited for today's education. At no cost to the District, the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) thoroughly reviewed our buildings and determined the cost just to renovate our buildings to minimum standards would be nearly equal to the cost of building new schools.

Specifically, the OFCC uses a 2/3 rule when analyzing buildings. If the cost of renovating is 2/3 or more than the cost of building new, they recommend replacement as it is more fiscally responsible. [View the OFCC assessments on our Facilities Planning Page.](#)

6. Why can't the District use money from the permanent improvement levy?

Our permanent improvement levy currently generates \$1.3 million per year, which is not at all sufficient to meet the full scope of our building needs. Our school buildings are beyond repair and have surpassed the normal life expectancy of a school building in Ohio. We spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on Band-Aid repairs to expensive, outdated systems that no longer function efficiently. Permanent improvement levy funds go toward areas such as, replacing busses each year, maintaining and updating technology, and providing routine maintenance. Once the new 6th through 12th grade level school building is constructed, these permanent improvement funds will also help maintain this new school building so it can serve our community for decades to come.

7. Is the District prioritizing the athletic stadium over educational needs?

No. The District's top priority is building a 6th through 12th grade school building that provides up-to-date learning environments equipped for delivering today's education. To do this, the first step has to be moving the track to the stadium to free up space so the District can build on its current site, not displace any students during construction, and avoid unnecessary costs for temporary classroom trailers. Other needed renovations to the stadium include making our bleachers handicapped accessible, replacing the turf and scoreboard, and adding a facility to house restrooms and locker rooms, both of which we currently do not have.

8. How much will this bond issue cost taxpayers?

The bond issue would cost about \$15.50 more per month per \$100,000 of home value.

9. What is the timeline for completion?

With passage in November, site work and the design phase would begin in 2020. The plan would be to have the new 6th through 12th grade school building open for the start of the 2023-2024 school year.

10. What happens with students during construction?

By first moving the track to the stadium and constructing a transportation facility off-site (location TBD), the District is able to build the new 6-12 on its current site without displacing students and without having to purchase temporary classroom trailers. Once construction of the 6 – 12 is complete, Chardon Middle School will house grades 2 – 5, Park Elementary will house grades K – 1, and Maple will continue as our Pre-K site.

11. What will happen to the other school buildings in Phase one of the Facilities Master Plan?

Chardon High School, Munson Elementary, and the transportation facility will be abated and demolished. The costs associated with this process are included in the bond issue. Chardon Middle School will be renovated only with minimal essential improvements necessary to house grades 2 – 5, while Park Elementary will house grades K – 1 and Maple Elementary will continue as Pre-K.

12. What safeguards are in place to ensure the quality and costs of construction are maintained?

Public school districts must adhere to specific rules and regulations regarding construction projects. The District conducted a thorough qualifications and value-based search to identify ThenDesign Architecture, located in Willoughby, as its architect and will conduct a similar search to identify the most capable construction management service providers. The construction costs are just estimates and each major component of the construction project will be competitively bid to ensure the District is getting the best pricing.

13. What happens if this issue does not pass?

The District will continue to feel the strain of educational and financial challenges caused by its aging and inefficient buildings and the Board will have to make tough decisions.

Our maintenance staff works hard to make emergency repairs to our building systems and keep the buildings functioning as well as they can. But the process costs thousands of dollars every year we would otherwise spend elsewhere on education and instructional resources. This bond issue is the most cost-effective solution to address our building needs.

14. If enrollment is declining why is the District considering new facilities?

Our enrollment is declining and one of the outcomes of the FMP is to streamline our buildings even further. More importantly, however, our aging, inefficient schools are the problem this bond issue will solve. The District undertook a significant reconfiguration effort in the 2018-19 school year that resulted in consolidating students into fewer buildings and taking Hambden Elementary offline. While this was never a solution to our building needs, it did help us contain costs and has allowed us to operate more effectively. [View the enrollment projection report on our Facilities Planning page.](#)

15. Is Chardon Local School District fiscally responsible?

Yes, Chardon Schools are in a solid financial position and will remain so even if a bond issue is passed. The District has been diligent in implementing cost saving measures and maximizing its budget to meet the educational needs of its students. In addition, the District is grateful for the community's support of an operating levy that passed in May 2018. [View our Five Year Forecast on our Facilities Planning page.](#)

16. What is the difference between a bond issue and an operating levy?

By law, funding for school buildings and other capital improvements are separate from funds used for general operating expenses. A property tax-based bond issue is the simplest and most common way to pay for building projects. An operating levy is also a property tax, but can only be used to pay for day-to-day operations of schools, including educational resources, utilities, salaries, benefits, etc. Thus, none of the funds generated by the most recent operating levy can be used to build new buildings.

17. When is this issue on the ballot?

The bond issue is on the November 5, 2019 ballot. On Election Day, polls are open from 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM. Early voting in-person and by mail begins on Tuesday, October 8, 2019.

18. How do I register to vote?

Monday, October 7 is the deadline to register to vote and be eligible to vote in the November election.

[Click here to register to vote online.](#) OR

[Fill out this form](#) and mail it to your local board of elections:

Geauga County Board of Elections
470 Center St. - Building 6A
Chardon, OH 44024