

Winter
2018



Lexington Local Schools

www.lexington.k12.oh.us

MINUTEMAN Report

*Special
Report:*

Lexington Embarks On Master Plan For Our School Buildings

The time has come to address the state of the facilities in our school District. The average age of our schools is 69 years, and the biggest threat to the district's fiscal stability is the money that is allocated to the upkeep of old facilities.

Our District has begun a facilities planning process which includes three phases; assessment, options and decisions. No decisions will be made until all the options are determined and discussed, both among the school personnel, the Board of Education and the community.

Over the last year, we have been gathering information on the current condition of our school facilities and we have surveyed existing school district property to ensure it meets our school facilities' needs.

Last summer, our District did an assessment of each of the five buildings – with help from the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission – and it is becoming cheaper to replace them than to continue to make repairs and

Patching and repairing our buildings' infrastructure is no longer cost effective. Soon our District will be spending good money after bad to patch and make repairs.

replacements to failing systems and structures.

Our maintenance and custodial staffs have done a tremendous job over the years in making sure the facilities in our District are as safe and comfortable as possible. However, the need lies behind the walls and under the floors with the various infrastructure systems – electrical, HVAC and plumbing to name a few – that can be so costly to maintain as they age. Patching and repairing our buildings' infrastructure is no longer cost-effective. Soon our District will be spending good money after bad to patch and make repairs. Some of our systems are so old, the needed parts are

no longer being made.

In addition, our students are attending schools that were not built with today's learning in mind. New classrooms with modern learning environments, which include updated science labs and greater access to technology will enhance the quality of education we can offer and will enable students to be better prepared for the world they will enter after high school.

Over the fall, the architectural firm TDA studied all five of our existing school sites to:

- Determine the best options for potential building configurations that support the Lexington School program needs
- Determine if the existing schools can remain in session while new facilities are being constructed
- Determine most ideal locations for the new buildings on each site with the least amount of disturbance to site amenities (parking, playgrounds, etc).

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Western Elementary students working on computers

Special Report: Master Plan For Our School Buildings

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Our District and Community will continue to evaluate the options as we move forward. Next steps in the process will be to involve the community in the form of the offering of building tours and community meetings to assist in the decision-making process.

The goal is to continue the planning process and be ready to present a sound facilities project for the approval of the Board of Education in April, which would then be on the ballot in November 2018.

What Does The OFCC's Involvement Mean?

Our School District is eligible to receive financial assistance from the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) for a facilities project in 2019. Last summer, our District had an OFCC assessment completed to determine the state of our buildings.

There is an OFCC rule that states if renovation costs of a building meet or exceed two-thirds (66 percent) of the cost to build a new building, the OFCC recommends the building be replaced.

The OFCC assessment from this summer

...our District is eligible to receive, from the State, 48 percent of the total cost of a facilities project, easing the burden of local taxpayers.

found that all five of our District's buildings exceed the two-thirds rule, and that most classrooms were found to be undersized in terms of current standards established by the State of Ohio. The age of our facilities, and the wear and tear they have endured, dictates it is becoming cheaper to replace them rather than continue repairing them.

This means our District is eligible to receive, from the State, 48 percent of the total cost of a facilities project, easing the burden of local taxpayers. We will also receive, from the OFCC, all our assessments and enrollment projections at no charge and be able to work with the OFCC to develop various master plan options (including costs) at no charge.

Our District is eligible to receive the OFCC funding in 2019, so the time to act is now. Our District will use the time between now and spring 2018 to work with the community

to develop and finalize a facilities plan that will help shape the future of our schools. No decision will be made without the involvement and input of our residents and our school personnel. Please plan to join us at our March 12, 2018 community facilities planning meeting.

This is an exciting time for the Lexington Schools. We look forward to working with our community, our school personnel and the OFCC in the coming months to work toward decisions that will impact the lives of our young people for generations to come.

OFCC Assessment Findings

- All 5 schools were confirmed to exceed the 2/3rds rule, meaning it would cost more to renovate vs. replace
- Most classrooms were found to be undersized in terms of the current standards established by the State of Ohio
- The average age of our school buildings is 69 years
- Our District is eligible to receive 48 % of the total cost of a facilities project from the State.



Western Elementary Students of the Month



Central Elementary Students of the Month

District Hosts Community Meetings on Facilities

In December and January of this school year, Lexington Schools hosted two community meetings to share information with residents about the Master Facilities Planning Process and gathered feedback from attendees to help shape the future of Lexington school buildings.



Superintendent Mike Ziegelhofer addresses residents during December's meeting.

The theme of this process is "Your Voice Matters". Our District wants to make sure any plan for the new school buildings is based on community feedback.

At the December meeting, over 120 community members were in attendance where school construction

and finance experts shared information on the facilities planning process, possible options for new schools, and how school financing works when it comes to funding a project.

Attendees were divided into groups of 8-10 and asked to discuss and list the pros and cons to each of seven facilities configuration options generated by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission, which range from renovating existing buildings to building various numbers of new schools on our existing land. After much discussion in the small groups, each group reported what options they considered best for our District and Community. The groups unanimously narrowed the options to two possibilities that would either require two new school buildings or three new school buildings.

District officials and attendees did indicate that they would want a gym in the new high school that seated 2,200 and also a 700-800 seat Performing Arts Center. The majority of the cost for the performing arts center and

the cost for an additional 1,200 seats for the gym to have 2,200 gym seats would need to be locally funded.

The next facility-planning meeting was January 29th at which about 60 people attended. During this meeting, the attendees discussed at length, the two and three building options and a couple of different grade configurations for the two building option.

Those attending were divided into groups of 8-10 to discuss the pros/cons of the two and three building options, **which would be eligible for 48% paid by the State:**

Three building option - a pre-K-3 building behind Western, a 4-6 building behind Central and a 7-12 building behind the current HS.

Two building option A - a pre-K-6 building behind Central and a 7-12 building behind the current HS.

Two building option B - a pre-K-5 building behind Central and a 6-12 building behind the current HS.

- In all the options there would be separate wings for 7-8 or 6 and 7-8 and 9-12.
- In both two building options there would be separate wings for pre K-3 and 4-6 or 4-5.
- In all options the current buildings would be taken down.

After lengthy discussion among the small groups, each group presented the option they preferred. The two building option B with a pre K-5 building and a 6-12 building was the unanimous choice. However, the entire group believed it best for the district's educators to determine the grade configuration of the facilities, specifically where it was best to house sixth grade.

The locally funded segments of the project continue to be the Performing Arts Center

(auditorium), the additional gymnasium seats in the High School, keeping the current "new" gym for additional gym space and the relocation of the baseball, softball and soccer fields which will enable the new High School to be built adjacent to the current "new" gym. A locally funded project is a project for which the state will not pay 48% of the cost.

We are also discussing the possibilities of a partnership/collaboration with Ohio Health, the YMCA and the Village of Lexington within our new buildings.

Please know that nothing has been finalized. The input from the community members present will be very helpful as we move forward in our planning process. There will be additional community meetings as we work toward finalizing a plan to present to the Board of Education. Information regarding upcoming meetings will be in the local media and social media. All who are interested in being part our community meetings are welcome.

We continue to be very thankful for our community's active involvement in this important process and decision. Our next community meeting will be held on Monday, March 12 at 6:30 pm in the high school auditorium. For more information or questions about the facilities planning process, please contact (419)-884-2132.



Attendees were divided into small groups to consider the different building options suggested by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission.

The Challenge of Sound Financial Planning for Lexington Schools

...the treasurer's office must constantly monitor changes at the State level as well as changes locally to properly plan for the future financial stability of the District...

The treasurer's office of the Lexington schools works very hard to assure the future financial condition of the district remains strong enough to provide for the daily needs of the children. Doing so requires regular monitoring of the factors that contribute to both

the revenues and expenses of the district and interpreting changes in those factors.

As some of you may know, every school district in Ohio receives money from the State to operate their districts. Lexington receives nearly 48% of its operating money from Ohio. What many don't know is that State funding is subject to change every two years as a part of the State's biennium budgetary process.

The amount of tax revenue the State receives can vary significantly from year to year leaving it with sometimes tough decisions on how much to allocate to its numerous departments, including the Department of Education (ODE). For 2018 and 2019, the State appropriated \$7,988,711,535 and \$8,117,425,393 respectively to Ohio's schools. Public education is one of the largest budget items for the State of Ohio.

Using a complex formula, ODE determines how much each district should receive from its share of state funding. While there are many factors in the formula, one key factor is the estimated wealth of each school district. This factor is used to allocate more money to poorer communities and less money to wealthier communities. The factor uses a calculation that divides a community's property values by the number of students in the district. As a result, each district is assigned a ranking based on the result of that calculation.

Lexington has a \$133,305 assessed valuation per pupil, giving it a ranking of 338 out of 612. Districts with lower ranking are considered wealthier than districts with higher rankings. Because of Lexington's ranking, among other factors, the district receives approximately 48% of its operating needs through this formula. That means to operate each year, the district must fund the balance of 52% of its operational cost from other resources, which includes, and is largely comprised of local property taxes.

For the school year ending in 2018, Lexington collected local property taxes from farm land, homes, commercial real estate, industrial property, public utility property, and mineral and railroad property. Residential property represents about 80% of Lexington's local tax base. The remaining 20% of the tax base is non-residential property. Changes in the local tax base can impact how much money the district receives from local tax payers, as well as, how much each taxpayer might pay in taxes in the future.

Overall, the treasurer's office must constantly monitor changes at the State level as well as changes locally to properly plan for the future financial stability of the District and for a local taxing structure that is as affordable and equitable as possible. In future articles, we will discuss how the local taxes are shared between individuals and businesses in the community.



Lexington students work in teams to assemble a VEX robot kit, plan to participate in future robotics competitions.

Building, Programming Robots Produces Future Problem-Solvers

by Kayla Heimann, Eastern Advisor

Next year, with matching funding from the Richland County Foundation, the district aims to establish its first robotics clubs at Eastern Elementary and the Junior High.

Robotics engages students in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields by providing interactive, hands-on, cross-disciplinary learning opportunities. Through the excitement of building and programming robots, our students will become inventors, thinkers, and problem-solving leaders of tomorrow.

With the purchase of VEX robotics kits and curriculum, the district's goal is to compete in robotics competitions. We are excited to offer this great learning opportunity to our students.



Lexington High School Boys and Girls OCC Swim and Dive Champions

Lexington Third Graders Score High Marks on State Language Arts Test

In late October the district administered the first round of Ohio's English language arts state test to all third grade students. The test, taken on computer for the first time, is used for the purpose of the state's promotion requirements for the Third Grade Reading Guarantee and is given twice in a school year, in October and April. The test provides two scores: a scaled score and a reading sub-score.

The scaled score is a three-digit number used to determine the student's level of performance on all the grade 3 English language arts standards. Students who score 672 or higher on the English language arts scaled score meet the Third Grade Reading Guarantee requirements. This test is required to be given to all third grade students.

The table below shows the scaled scores needed to meet each performance level and the percent of Lexington students in each of the five performance levels: limited, basic, proficient, accelerated, and advanced.

Scaled Score	545-671	672-699	700-724	725-751	752-863
Performance Level	Limited	Basic	Proficient	Accelerated	Advanced
Lexington 3rd Grade	6%	32%	24%	23%	14%

We take great pride in the progress that our third grade students have shown on this first round of assessments. Our goal is that every third grade student will achieve his or her full potential.

The reading sub-score of the grade 3 English language arts state test is a two-digit number and is based on reading items only. The reading sub-score indicates students' reading competency on the test. Students who score 44 or higher on the reading sub-score meet the Third Grade Reading Guarantee requirements.

The graphic below shows the percent of Lexington third grade students that met the Third Grade Reading Guarantee of 44 or higher.

Third Grade Reading Guarantee of 44 or higher.

We take great pride in the progress that our third grade students have shown on this first round of assessments. Our goal is that every third grade student will achieve his or her full potential. The end of the year grade 3 English language arts assessment will be given in April. We are confident that with the quality instruction delivered by our dedicated teachers, the hard work of our students and the support of our students' families, every third grade student will meet and exceed these state expectations.

146
Lexington
Students
Tested

95%
**Lexington
3rd Grade
Scoring 44
or Higher**



Above: Miss Lexington, Grace Riegel, spent time with students at Western Elementary.



Above: Spelling Bee Champions - Katie, Maggie (first place) and Seth.



Right: Spelling Bee Team

Lex Preschool Earns 5-Star Rating From State

The Lexington Schools' Preschool Program has earned a 5 Star rating from the Ohio Department of Education. "Step Up to Quality" is Ohio's rating system for childcare and preschool facilities. Participating programs can earn from one to five stars. All Early Learning Childhood Education and Preschool Special Education Programs funded by the Ohio Department of Education participate in "Step Up to Quality" and are required to achieve a rating of 3, 4, or 5 to maintain state funding, as well as to administer and report on the Early Learning Assessment for all early childhood education and preschool special education funded children.

...creating the social, emotional and learning environment that is of the highest quality has always been our goal and expectation for our children.

The five-star rating is based on five different domains: learning and development, administrative and leadership practices, staff qualifications/professional development, family/community partnerships, and ratio and accreditation.

Last school year, the preschool team submitted a comprehensive written report detailing the operations and practices of

the Lexington Preschool Program. In March, the Ohio Department of Education conducted an on-site visit, which included interviews, classroom observations, reviews of lesson plans and the comprehensive application.

We are honored to have received this 5 Star rating in our third year of programming because creating the social, emotional and learning environment that is of the highest quality has always been our goal and expectation for our children. It is an expression of the continued excellence that Lexington provides to the children in our community and a true example of what we love to do; serve children.

Lex Staff, Families and Community... a winning combination that influences young lives that will change the world.



Eastern Elementary Students provided lunch for those less fortunate.

Lex Teams Place 1st in Academic Challenge Competition



A big congratulations to the Academic Challenge Varsity and JV teams! Recently, at a large mid-Ohio tournament, Varsity and JV Gold both came in first in their brackets and both trounced the competition in the final round, with Varsity beating out Mt. Vernon and JV beating Ontario. JV Purple also did very well, coming in 2nd in their bracket. Special congratulations to co-captains Ajit Venkatakrishnan and Elyssa Leslie for their strong senior season. Good luck to all the teams as they finish out the winter league and attend the Scholastic Showdown at WMFD.

*Shown in photo, left to right, are:
Front row: Rachel, Elyssa, Ajit, Micah, Gavin, Melina.
Back row: Marin, Darron, Evan, Colin, Nick, Anshul, Emily.*

Continued Growth at Lexington Digital Academy

The Lexington Digital Academy has seen continued growth in its enrollment this school year. There are currently over 90 students enrolled in courses for grades K-12. Our digital students fall into one of the following profiles;

- A student who is performing at or above grade level but who seeks a more challenging curriculum and, in particular, wishes to capitalize upon the enrichment potential of individually-paced and independently-completed online instruction.
- A student who is performing below grade level and wishes to focus their education exclusively on a digital course of study, starting at the student's current skill and knowledge level and building forward at a pace determined by the student in collaboration with online instructors.
- A student who is already successfully learning at home but their home-schooling will benefit by including the Academy's formal and standards-based online curriculum.

Students and parents work with our staff to build a flexible but rigorous schedule to meet their unique needs. Students can select course work to fit one or more of the following pathways;

- **Full Digital** Students carry a completely digital class load and work on coursework primarily from home. About 20% of our digital students select this option.
- **Blended** Learning occurs online and as part of a "brick and mortar" school. This pathway often allows students to have some control over time, place, path or pace of learning. In many blended learning situations, students spend some of their face-to-face time with

Students and parents work with our staff to build a flexible but rigorous schedule to meet a student's needs.

the teacher in a whole class setting, some face-to-face time with a teacher as part of a small group, and some of their time learning independently. About 65% of our digital students select this popular pathway.

- **Credit Recovery** Often, students with extended illnesses or other personal issues may fall behind in their studies. Credit recovery provides these students, many of whom attend traditional classes, the opportunity to use a study hall or other free time to enroll in the Digital Academy, catch up on lost credit, and stay on track toward graduation. These students are primarily "brick and mortar" students and are enrolled in the Academy if they have a study hall or sufficient free time in their schedule. Over the past three years over 30 LHS seniors have been able to graduate on time utilizing this pathway.

Lexington Digital Academy also provides opportunity for both credit acceleration and credit recovery during summer vacation. Students pay to take a variety of courses over a nine week period to make room in their future schedule as well as get caught up to grade-level requirements. Last summer over 30 Lexington students took advantage of this opportunity.

Lexington Schools is committed to meeting the evolving educational needs of our students and families, The Digital Academy is a wonderful example of the continuing efforts to prepare our students for whatever comes next.

If you are interested in receiving more information about Lexington Digital Academy please contact Tucker Bacquet at 419-884-1111 ext. 1920 or bacquet.tucker@lexington.k12.oh.us



Above: Elementary students celebrate the 100th day of school.

Right: Lady Lex bowling team wins the 2018 OCC Bowling Championship at Wayne Lanes in Wooster.



Left: Lexington High School's boys and girls state champion cross country teams were recognized at the Ohio State Capitol.

Lexington Local Schools

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Eastern Elementary Academic Challenge Team Heads to Nationals

by Jennifer Berry, Academic Challenge Team Advisor

Eastern Elementary started off the 2017-2018 Academic Challenge Season with a bang. Eastern entered both the 5th and 6th grade teams in the 3-2-1 National Fall Academic Competition. Each team was given 120 questions. In late December, Eastern found out that one Lexington team placed second in the nation among all teams who competed and were invited to go to the National Academic Competition in Washington D.C. in June 2018. Five students will be traveling to Washington D.C. to represent Eastern at the National Competition.

More than 65 students tried out for the fifth and sixth grade teams. The 2017-2018 fifth grade team consists of Logan, Logan, Cara, Oden, Jaybyx, Adelee, Owen, Isaac, Natalie, Julia, Kennedy, and Addison. The sixth grade team consists of Ava, Grant, Austin, Jacob, Sophia, Andrew, Wyatt, Darcie, Noah, Scott, Zach, Makenna, Kylie, and Carter.

More competitions are planned for spring 2018 for the fifth and sixth grade teams. These are held at Mid Ohio Educational Service Center.



The Eastern Elementary Academic Challenge Team, left to right: Ava, Sophia, Grant, Wyatt, Noah, Jacob.