



Westlake Schools Facilities Timeline

2001-02

The Ohio Schools Facilities Commission (OSFC) assessed the Westlake Schools' facility needs to determine Westlake's eligibility for state assistance under its construction program. OSFC provided an on-site evaluation, enrollment projections and an initial master plan with project cost estimates.

The seven-year-old "bricks and mortar" assessment found:

- Roofs, ventilation/HVAC needed replacing
- Heating systems – pneumatic controls needed major work/replacement
- Electrical systems – undersized and near age limit, little spare capacity – needed replacement
- Plumbing – flush valves and faucets corroded
- Windows – at the end of lifespan/needed replacement
- Foundations – sunken floor slabs needed repair
- Walls – brick veneer visibly pulling away from concrete block back-up wall/remove and replace
- Interior lighting – lighting levels too low, interfere with sprinkler system requirements/ needed replacement

The master plan for facilities, which included 80,000 additional square feet of teaching space, had a cost range from \$53.8 million to \$54.4 million seven years ago. This plan favored consolidating our elementary and intermediate schools. An alternate plan to meet the state's minimum building standards without adding the recommended square footage for teaching space had a cost of \$42.3 million.

Spring 2002

DeJong Inc. completed an enrollment projection study in Spring 2002 that indicated enrollment was flattening and would settle somewhere around 3,780 students.

2004-05

Land-use study was performed by Lesko Architecture, a Westlake-based firm that specializes in school facilities. The study indicated that the district's existing land could be utilized for facility projects and that no foreseeable need existed to add land to meet future facility needs.

2007

DeJong completed an enrollment projection study in Spring 2007 that indicated enrollment was flattening, but the steady number predicted was changed to approximately 4,050.

Spring 2008

Lesko created an OSFC replication study to update the OSFC information. Lesko presented a number of options ranging from \$74.9 million for the first phase of a phased project, up to \$126 million for comprehensive improvements and the additional teaching space. The new cost to meet the state minimum standards without the additional square footage is now up to \$66 million.

A nine-member focus group of local experts and residents was formed to address and review the district's facility needs. The group toured schools, compared Westlake with like districts and reviewed needs identified by the OSFC and Lesko study.

The group met six times throughout March and April and reached several conclusions:

1. They felt strongly that facility needs exist
2. Encouraged community input through community forums
3. Suggested creating a 25-year comprehensive and cost-effective master facilities plan

The Westlake Board of Education moved meeting locations for two meetings so tours could be conducted at Lee Burneson Middle School and Parkside Intermediate School. Plans were then made to continue these tours in the fall to encourage more community members to attend and see the buildings.

Summer 2008

The district obtained input from community stakeholders through in-depth interviews, discussion groups, and telephone and on-line surveys. The move was meant to define a set of values that will contribute to solutions that best serve Westlake students and represent the entire Westlake community. The process also allowed the district to analyze awareness of and opinions about how to address needs.

A total of 27 in-depth interviews of community leaders and 393 survey responses revealed overall satisfaction with the school district, that the district has a record of being fiscally responsible and that the district acts in the best interest of its students. Top areas of concern included overcrowding at our seven school buildings, a lack of technology, HVAC systems, and general landscaping and upkeep of the buildings. Many responding indicated a need to know more about the status of the buildings before deciding whether they need major repair or renovation, or if any new construction is necessary. Respondents also indicated they saw a connection between facilities and performance, agreeing that facilities affect a child's ability to learn.

Fall 2008

The Board of Education made public notice that the facility tours, started in the spring, would continue throughout the fall. Tours were held in conjunction with meetings at Hilliard Elementary School and Bassett Elementary School. The tours, which follow the Board's regular meeting schedule, are planned throughout the fall to provide the opportunity to visit all seven school buildings in the district.

Based on the interviews and survey results, the district hosted three community forums to gain a perspective from a wider audience. The forums were held in our school buildings, with a fourth forum summarizing the comments and opinions.

Following the forums, a 20/20 Vision Committee of 18-24 community and school representatives was formed to analyze all of the data collected and create a long-term master facilities plan for the Westlake City School District.

Winter 2008/09

The 20/20 Vision Committee met several times between October and January, paring down 14 options into two. The Committee made a presentation to the Board of Education in January, offering two educational options to pursue:

- Option 1: Five buildings in a grade-level configuration
- Option 2: Six buildings in a regional elementary configuration

The Committee said the problem must be addressed responsibly and soon. The Committee also encouraged the district to raise awareness and support for improving facilities.

A TRIAD survey conducted of residents in December indicated the community was uninformed about the district's facilities challenges and needed more facts before making an informed decision about supporting the district's master facilities plan.

The Board of Education took the feedback of the 20/20 committee, combined with the survey data, and made a decision that while the issue should be addressed as soon as possible, a spring ballot issue was

not the right time. Instead, the Board decided to focus efforts on addressing the great communication needs pointed out through the community survey.

Dr. Keenan talked to staffs at individual buildings about the challenges and progress of the 20/20 Vision Committee. Building tours were arranged and information provided to city leaders on the condition of the district's facilities.

The district developed a communications plan with our strategists to outline steps and activities to build community understanding and support for the facilities issue. This included the creation of an informational video now available on our web site – www.wlake.org/facilities -- that outlines the challenges the district faces with its facilities and asks for support in an eventual bond issue.

Spring 2009

The district has made facilities presentations and showed the video to a number of groups, including the Westlake Ministerial Forum, West Shore Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club, Town Criers, the Westlake Community Services Department, neighborhood associations, Porter Public Library Board of Trustees, among other groups.

Board members and district administrators have become engaged in the school funding debate, working through state professional associations, state representatives and a lobbying group representing affluent suburban districts to provide a voice for our school district. The district also applied for federal stimulus money to address facility needs, but we were notified those funds cannot be used for this purpose.

The Board of Education moved to advertise a request for qualifications from architectural firms to validate the district's facilities plans and craft them into a usable format to better illustrate the district's solution to the community. Eighteen firms replied, 9 were interviewed. The Board intends to approve one firm at the May Board meeting.

The district will gauge the success of its informational campaign with another community survey by TRIAD in mid June. The results of that survey, along with feedback from various community groups, will help the Board in its consideration of pursuing a ballot issue next school year. The decision on how to proceed will take place in July.

The district continues to ask for the 20/20 Vision Committee's continued support in this process and we will look to the group as we proceed to address this problem.

Summer 2009

A dismal economy and a lack of substantial savings from a state bond program led to the Board of Education's decision to defer a planned ballot issue request to address facilities until next spring. Te

decision came after a discussion on balancing the current economic and employment situation with the great need to address the district's aging facilities.

One of the district's biggest challenges is adequate classroom space. With the start of the 2009-10 school year, the district has added two modular classroom units – one each at Parkside Intermediate School and Lee Burneson Middle School. The Parkside unit houses a computer lab and two small learning class spaces and enabled the building to add technology previously unattainable due to space constraints. The LBMS unit houses two math classrooms, allowing the building to achieve smaller class sizes to ensure adequate learning spaces are available.

The Board of Education has committed to a micropoll of residents in September, with the intent of gathering additional community input and moving toward a May ballot issue. The Board also has enlisted MKC & Associates architectural firm to develop a process where a master facilities plan is finalized and an issue defined for the spring.

Fall 2009

The 20/20 Vision Committee was reconvened to provide an update on the facilities process and to expand committee membership to further advance the master facilities planning project. Business leaders, staff, administration, civic organization representatives and community members were added to the committee to provide further input into the final draft of a plan that will specifically outline the district's facilities goals for the future.

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