**YS Schools Facilities Survey 2019**

**What were the biggest strengths of the facility plan provided to voters in 2018?**

**150 Total Responses**

| **What were the biggest strengths of the facility plan provided to voters in 2018?** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Number** | **Sample comment** |
| **Positive about process** | | |
| Communication | 15 | It was clearly described and was available on the school website. I also liked having the full report from OFCC available online. |
| Community input | 13 | It seemed to me that the community was included in most of the process. Our thoughts and opinions were considered thoughtfully through open discussions and surveys. |
| Funding | 2 | The decision to raise revenue through both property and income taxes to ease the burden on fixed income residents. |
| Trust the board | 1 | I trust the school board and administration to make a good plan, and I supported the plan. |
| **Positive about design** | | |
| Great design | 39 | The design was very progressive, state of the art HVAC, horrible tower gone, 3 large pods south facing and open to outdoors, revamped kitchen and access, revamped traffic pattern and secure entry. The cinderblock-prison like atmosphere would have been transformed. |
| Doing something to improve | 25 | That something was finally being done to make the facilities better. |
| Future | 11 | Focusing on what students needed for an education in this century. |
| Improved safety | 6 | * Safety--all students on one floor with multiple exits. * Safety for students as current building seems to be structurally unsound in some places |
| Maintained two separate sites | 5 | It would not be built on the Mills Lawn property. |
| Renovation | 3 | Addressed need for renovation rather than attempting to build new |
| Comprehensive | 3 | how comprehensive it was. |
| Technology | 2 | Trying to make the school more tech forward. |
| Need for future maintenance | 1 | The focus on the need for better maintenance once a new or modified facility was completed. |
| Location | 1 | The new facility would be on the campus of the high school. |
| Cost savings | 1 | That they were NEW and would require less maintenance |
| **Concerns** | | |
| No strengths | 35 | There were no strengths |
| High cost | 8 | It was difficult for me to see the strengths due to the overall cost. Those of us on fixed incomes were torn between the need for new facilities and the inability to shoulder such a financial burden. |
| Dishonest | 7 | Really can’t think of any overall strengths given the amount of erroneous information that was presented. it was quite a disaster with so many untruths expressed |
| Anger | 5 | What strengths, this is a loaded question with a bias to what the school board wanted |
| Did not listen | 3 | The original plan had none in my view because of the expense, however, those who chose the plan did not listen to those who wanted a modified plan. |
| Lack of maintenance | 1 | The biggest strengths were outside my perimeters of agreement, it made no difference what the design was, the school board has not had the desire to keep up maintenance on the present school buildings, equally the amount of money the new building will cost is a fraction of what would be needed to maintain any new building, |
| Waste money | 1 | I believed the wanted too much money. I don't see the schools making proper use of the funds they currently get. |
| **Confused answer** | | |
| Incorrect | 7 | * All in one school * There is asbestos floor tiles in Mills Lawn that have deteriorated beyond sealing. This needs to be corrected or the school should be closed and the children bused to Xenia or Fairborn. Asbestos gives children cancer later in life. Why is the school still open? |

**What were the biggest weaknesses of the plan?**

**155 Total Responses**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Number** | **Sample comment** |
| **Supported the plan; external causes of failure** | | |
| Supported the plan | 3 | I was 100% for the plan-disappointed in community response |
| Negative people in the community | 3 | FACEBOOK. All of the blatant lies that were spread and disseminated and believed by a narrow margin of loud, angry, innacurate voices. Many were swayed by the spreading of lies. |
| No weaknesses | 1 | none |
| Voters don’t value education | 1 | too many new people that can not afford the live here and came from areas that do not value education |
| **Weaknesses of the plan and process** | | |
| Too expensive | 91 | * Way too much money asked for a new school when the village is not growing, so fewer kids in the future. * Too expensive. |
| Lying/scare tactics | 26 | * I was at meetings when using fear, children would be in danger, and guilt, not caring for the children. * publicity was misleading and insulting to public intelligence |
| Did not listen to community | 25 | * The superintendent and board did not listen to the community. Many ideas were dismissed. They appeared to have their own agenda. * A sizable portion of the community was clearly stating that they weren't comfortable with the plan and the leadership paid lip service to their concerns. There wasn't clarity in the community meetings what was up for discussion and what had already been decided. |
| Should have renovated rather than replaced | 23 | The focus on demolition and construction over repair and renovation. |
| No plan for MLS | 20 | I think focusing only on one building without a plan for the elementary school left too much uncertainty about the future tax burden that could materialize |
| Perceived negative attitude of school board | 17 | * It was too expensive for a lot of people in the community, and the school board was (and continues to be) dismissive of that, calling affordability issues a "red herring". There is a sense of condescension from the school board towards struggling residents, as though they don't exist and their concerns aren't real. * biggest weakness of plan was the utter determination of the school board to plow ahead regardless of the feedback that was given and the lack of funds for the maintenance of same such facility. There was no real listening on behalf of the school board |
| Future cost expected | 15 | Asking for funding for the High School and Middle School without addressing the future funding request for Mills Lawn. |
| Timing of the levy contributed to defeat | 15 | Honestly I also think it was unfortunate timing with the issues coming out about the High School Principal, and although that did not impact my vote, it probably impacted others to some extent. I know it has also been unfortunate timing with the addition of fire station levies, other increases in property tax and a severe increase in utility bills. |
| Design too grandiose | 14 | Much of it seemed focused on making YSSD look good rather than actually serving the students needs. |
| Poor/insufficient communications | 14 | The biggest weakness of the plan is that it was not sold to the public nor supported by Village Council. More should have been published in the Yellow Springs News. |
| Concern about the long term value of PBL | 13 | designing school buildings with a MAJOR focus on PBL (the "current" emphasis) |
| Insufficient maintenance in the past, concern about future | 12 | * The lack of a plan to address ongoing and long term maintenance costs (in the form of budget or levy dollars). * No responsibility taken for deferred maintenance. |
| The long duration of the bond levy | 10 | It was a very long, expensive levy over several decades that only paid for one building. |
| Did not believe state assessment | 9 | the reliance on state recommendations for building new was misguided; the research on the actual state of the building was poor and further research after the levy defeat made that clear (building, including tower has remedial prospects and did not need to be torn down) |
| No compelling message why support the levy | 8 | * The plan may have been just fine, but the case for the expense of the plan was not made. * It was progressive and would've added a lot of value for the homeowners in the region. I don't think the messaging was unique enough to build trust. The message must be about this community and not the standard. |
| Used an out of town PR agency not connected to community | 8 | The weaknesses were using out- of-town consultants & marketing agencies who were viewed with suspicion by many members of the community, seen as 'slick', agents of the state, dishonest, & not understanding YS culture & values. |
| School population not increasing | 6 | Way too much money asked for a new school when the village is not growing, so fewer kids in the future. |
| Poor/Incomplete planning | 8 | * Incomplete planning. No good explanation for the need for new versus remodeling and upgrading. * Not enough research and planning. A rush job, using very conventional ideas, no thinking outside the box. |
| Did not understand project | 5 | too expensive. Definitely do not put grade school kids with the older ones. |
| The approach was not focused on being environmentally sustainable | 5 | Not enough attention paid to environmental impact of the project in the context of climate change. Our town needs to be a bold leader in this area -- our kids' future depends on this. Sustainable design, energy efficiency, solar panels, geothermal, and/or a green roof, reuse of materials, smaller size, etc. should be central to the plan. We should also look more carefully at what can be saved, refurbished, and/or renovated in the current buildings (rather than tearing down). |
| Teachers more important | 4 | I feel that my child is getting a pretty great education in those buildings, as faulty as they may be, and that most likely it’s due to great staff. If we have limited money to spend, I would first ensure the staff are incentivized to keep making their magic; and if that’s ALL we can do, then I’m ok with that. |
| Need a discussion about the future of the schools | 3 | People were so focused on $ that the deeper conversation about what we want our schools to be was never able to happen. |
| Concern some had undue influence | 3 | I heard rumors of other more wealthy members of the community meeting with key school board members / or full board before I knew anything about a new building plan. |
| Belief there were hidden agreements | 2 | I heard rumors of other more wealthy members of the community meeting with key school board members / or full board before I knew anything about a new building plan. |
| Everything about the project was a weakness | 2 | The whole thing |
| Need to consider funding other than taxes | 2 | Absolutely NO consideration for alternative funding. Alumni, other types of grants, celebrity money, philanthropy groups, etc. |
| Discontinue having an independent school district | 2 | Acknowledge that YS may have to surrender the school system and students will have to go outside YS for school. |
| Consider other buildings in town | 2 | * There was never any real talk of trying to use McGregor. * Negotiate with Antioch to repurpose one of their buildings as the YS high school building. |
| Needed to use phasing in planning the improvements | 2 | I would have like to have seen a plan that had phases built into it. Do phase one and pay off that debt and then move to the next phase. |
| Did not explore all alternatives | 1 | Look to alternatives: 1) Combine Antioch school w/ high school OR 2) I don't know if the village still owns the middle school building but if so reclaim and use for high school. OR 3) Negotiate with Antioch to repurpose one of their buildings as the YS high school building. OR 4) Seriously reconsider the building of a new fire station. Refurbish old station and adjust levy to accommodate reduced size for a new high school that can be added to if student population increases. |
| Concern about single source | 1 | no competing bids, |
| Did not keep plan for all at MLS | 1 | That Mario pulled the option of putting everything on Mills Lawn. I thought that was a fantastic idea. |
| Need new buildings | 1 | Would prefer brand new buildings vs fixing up old structures |
| The school funding system is wrong | 1 | The fact that schools are funded by the wealth and value of the neighborhoods they serve is a travesty and frankly a barbaric practice. |
| Still have two campuses | 1 | Still two campuses to maintain. |

**What changes or improvements would have caused you to support the levy?**

**156 answers**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Number** | **Sample comment** |
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**Comments that Relate to our Work**

Note: One person described our needed work:

1. The whole process needed to start with a list of problems that we need to solve to improve our kid's educational opportunities. That list should be ranked in importance of the amount of effect it might have in improving, changing or supporting what is currently available. Then ideas for solutions to those problems could be more creatively considered, priced and ranked against their ability to solve the problems (we may find that some of the solutions have nothing to do with the building). Then we can determine which are the best use of our limited money, and WE HAVE TO ADDRESS BOTH CAMPUSES. 2. The buildings CAN NOT be evaluated in a bubble separate from our overall financial ability to run the schools. This is a financial decision that has to be fit into an overall financial challenge of funding ALL aspects of our system including teacher pay. I feel that my child is getting a pretty great education in those buildings, as faulty as they may be, and that most likely it’s due to great staff. If we have limited money to spend, I would first ensure the staff are incentivized to keep making their magic; and if that’s ALL we can do, then I’m ok with that. 3. Another weakness of the plan was the big upfront investment that needed to be paid off for 30 years right on the heels of two other publicly funded infrastructure projects. We need a more traditional, measured budgeting approach. And perhaps our solutions have to be more piecemeal.

We have now had expert inspectors demonstrate that the situation is not as bad as originally portrayed. Frankly, if this facilities committee comes up with a plan in the same price range and overzealous intentions. I and my family will vote against the levy again.

I think trust and a shared educational vision by the community and school administration has to be re-established before new proposals are designed and presented. That will not happen in only a few months-it may take a whole academic year for that kind of listening and relationship building to happen.

I would have like to see clarity on where leadership stands. Are they the facilitator or the leader of the project.

The campaign "for" was not started soon enough; more support letters were needed to counteract the negativity of Facebook's commentators (and mistruths); the picture of phone wires vs. faulty wiring really stoked up the nay-sayers. I felt if the school board committee had tried to talk to the major opponents privately and very early, even before it started (and maybe they did) - it might have made some difference. It seemed TJ Turner was alone, primarily (he did a good job but he didn't get a lot of support)