



Frequently Asked Questions about Lexington Schools Facilities and Finances

1. Why did we decide to move forward with the 7-12 building?

Leading up to our bond levy and subsequent issuance of our bonds, our partnership with OFCC allowed us to work hand in hand with OFCC officials in the development of the Master Plan and determination of overall costs for both the 7-12 building and an elementary building. At the time, all parties were acting upon the best available information and anticipated availability of OFCC funding, and the estimation from OFCC was that funding would be available in late 2019 or early 2020.

When the OFCC was unable to fund our project within the anticipated time frame, we knew we had to explore other options. Our legal counsel suggested we pursue the ELPP (expedited local partnership program), which allows districts to proceed with a portion of their project using the local share of the bond issue approved by the voters, after receiving approval from the OFCC.

We petitioned the OFCC for permission to proceed using ELPP, and our request was approved in March 2019. Since the local share approved by voters was enough to proceed with one of the two buildings, we chose to move forward with the new junior high/high school, which was the larger and more costly project, requiring more LFI (locally funded initiatives) in its construction.

Our timing was nearly perfect, as we secured contracts for construction prior to the pandemic and the resultant inflation that hit construction materials, labor, and more very hard. Our construction managers have estimated that if we had waited for the OFCC, the cost of our new junior high/high school building could have increased by tens of millions of dollars.

2. What is the status of the elementary school?

We are advocating for funding and credit for our elementary building, which was delayed due to various factors encountered by the OFCC. We recently met with Senator Romanchuk and the Director of OFCC in Columbus to discuss our situation and possible solutions, including:

- Confirmation of where Lexington Schools is on the list of districts awaiting funding.
- A tabulation of the number of credits earned for our elementary building, since we used our local dollars to complete the junior high/high school project.

- An inflationary factor to compensate for inflation during the time our project has been delayed.

3. What are you doing to ensure we start construction on the elementary building as soon as possible?

We requested using local dollars to begin planning, engineering, and site work, but this is not currently allowed, so the elementary building cannot be started until the OFCC approves our project. We will continue to meet with representatives from the OFCC and advocate for solutions to fund our elementary building as soon as possible.

Additionally, we are assessing the use of the junior high site as a possible location for constructing our elementary building. Doing so may allow for savings upwards of \$1 million as this site would require much less land preparation and excavation.

4. Why did we tear down the middle school?

The junior high would have required significant dollars to renovate, and exceeded OFCC guidelines for renovation vs. new construction. The building was becoming more difficult to operate and would have had significant renovation costs when compared to new construction estimates.

We understand that some may be concerned - many of us have fond memories of the red brick building, but the reality of operating the nearly 150-year-old structure was becoming more and more difficult. We commend our facilities and maintenance teams for keeping these spaces usable for our students these past decades.

5. What is Lexington Schools doing to advocate for funding and maintain funding levels?

Right now, the budget simulations show that our district will receive very minimal increases in state funding support. While we appreciate any increase in funding, these increases are well below inflation. That could pose some challenges in the future for our district. We will continue to advocate for fair school funding for our district.