

Parma City School District Monitor

Building Our Future: Fewer is Better



Charles Smialek, Ph.D.
PCSD Superintendent

Happy 2022! We hope that the new year has begun in a very positive way for you and your family. Here in our Parma Schools, we have begun the

work of Building Our Future, our attempt to forge a consolidation and new schools construction plan that will gain the confidence of our communities. We understand that this conversation is not new and, accordingly, many have very strong opinions about the most appropriate path forward. We cannot possibly earn the agreement of our 115,000 residents but we commit to the following:

1. *We will be as transparent as possible, including showing our Building Our Future (BOF) meetings on our website and Facebook page.*
2. *We will attempt to incorporate into our plan the feedback we receive from our residents both through our BOF committee meetings and the survey that they can complete in multiple media.*

We also have reached several conclusions upon which we are basing our efforts.

First, we will not renovate our current schools as part of any bond issue or attempt to address the long-term future of our facilities. The state of Ohio, through the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC), will provide 37% of the cost of new construction but nothing toward renovation. Their study in 2017 found the cost to renovate all of our schools exceeds 66% of the cost to rebuild them. Thus, it seems rational to build new schools, not renovate old ones.

Second, we do not need to purchase property for new construction. Our architectural consultants have explained that we have more than enough land in our current portfolio of properties to build whatever model we ultimately decide to pursue.

Third, we must dramatically reduce the number of schools we operate so that we can stay off of the ballot for operating levies as long as possible. Currently, we feature 15 schools (First Step Preschool, eight elementary, three middle, and three high schools).

This is not fiscally responsible nor sustainable. Our work to prevent requests for additional operating funds from the community has led to our resources being stretched extremely thin. In too many instances, we perpetuate mediocrity instead of concentrating excellence. We have set 50% as a goal for the reduction of campuses, meaning that we believe we can operate successfully and efficiently in seven or fewer facilities. We will continue to seek community input into the grade bands and programming to which we dedicate each of these campuses.

We ask that you carefully review this edition of The Monitor. After you have read through the information that we provide, we invite you to complete the included survey so that we can incorporate your opinions into our planning process. Of course, you can also visit our website, www.parmacityschools.org/buildingourfuture to learn more and/or complete an electronic version of the same survey.

Thank you for your continued interest in and support of our Parma Schools!

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BUILDING OUR FUTURE COMMUNITY SURVEY

- What community do you live in?
 Parma Parma Heights Seven Hills
- Have your child(ren) ever attended a Parma City School District school?
 Yes No
- How important is it to you that we unify (reduce the variations between) the student experience as much as possible?
 Not Important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely Important
- As we plan to build new schools, how important is the offering of the same curricular opportunities to all students (First Step, Kindergarten Launch, STEM, AP courses, College Credit Plus, elective classes)?
 Not Important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely Important
- As we plan to build new schools, how important is the offering of the same extracurricular opportunities to all students (sports, student council, etc.)?
 Not Important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely Important
- As we plan to build new schools, how important is it that we add high school transportation if we reduce the number of high schools we operate?
 Not Important 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely Important

- Three K-12 Model:**
 Each campus would have facilities for K-12 students, one K-5 segment, one 6-8, and one 9-12 with Career Tech included. Students would be clearly separated by grade band, only traveling to another part of campus for peer tutoring, Career Tech shadowing, etc.
 Extremely Favorable 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely Unfavorable
- Six/Two Model:**
 We would maintain six elementary schools and two secondary campuses (grades 6-12, each with Career Technology). The middle and high school students would remain separate during the school day unless our staff needed to bring them together for a specific purpose (peer tutoring, shadowing, etc.).
 Extremely Favorable 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely Unfavorable
- Four/One/One Model:**
 This model would include four elementary schools (K-5) in the four quadrants of our district, one middle school (6-8) and one centrally located high school (9-12, including Career Tech).
 Extremely Favorable 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely Unfavorable
- Our goal is to reduce the number of campuses we operate to seven. This will increase consistency of student experience and reduce overall operating costs. Other than the four models you just rated, are there any others you would like to suggest using seven as the limit of campuses?

For questions 7 through 10, please share your reaction to the Potential Campus Models found on page 3.

- One Elementary/One Middle/One High Model:**
 We would have three campuses total: one for elementary (K-5), one middle (6-8) and one high school (9-12). The high school would include Career Tech.
 Extremely Favorable 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely Unfavorable

- What factor/factors would most motivate you to support a tax increase for new schools?

Where Can I Drop Off My Survey?

- PCSD Administration Building
5311 Longwood Ave., Parma
- Normandy High School
- Parma Senior High School
- Valley Forge High School
- Greenbriar Middle School
- Hillside Middle School
- Shiloh Middle School
- Dentzler Elementary School
- Green Valley Elementary School
- John Muir Elementary School
- Parma Park Elementary School
- Pleasant Valley Elementary School
- Pleasantview First Step
- Renwood Elementary School
- Thoreau Park Elementary School



Scan this QR code with your phone to take the survey online or visit www.parmacityschools.org/buildingourfuture
 DEADLINE TO PARTICIPATE IS FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2022

Potential Campus Models

We have developed several potential models of our district's footprint to help the community understand some of the options for consolidation available to us. Importantly, these can evolve and we include them simply as starting points for conversation.

In each model, elementary includes Pre-Kindergarten through 5th grade, middle is grades 6-8, and high is grades 9-12 and includes Career and Technical Education learning spaces.

Model	Enrollment(s)	Examples of Pros	Examples of Cons
One Elementary School One Middle School One High School	Elementary: 3866 Middle: 1758 High: 3000	Consistency in programming, instruction, facilities for all students Dramatic reduction in facilities to maintain, less operating costs equal more instructional investment	Travel time, especially for youngest students, increased transportation costs Loss of "neighborhood" elementary schools
Three Grades K-12 Campuses	Elementary: 1288 Middle: 586 High: 1268 Total: 3142	Consistency and familiarity for students and families Mentoring and peer tutoring from older students to younger Dramatic reduction in facilities to maintain, less operating costs equal more instructional investment	Continues the "three sports teams?, three marching bands?" inefficiency of current model Significant obstacles to creating consistency in programming for three high schools
Six Elementary Schools Two Secondary School Campuses (Grades 6-12)	Elementary: 644 Middle: 879 High: 1903	Maintains "neighborhood" elementary schools Only one transition in campuses for students and families	Same model that failed twice (Issue 73 in 2020, Issue 10 in 2021) Does not meet campus reduction benchmark
Four Elementary Schools One Middle School One High School	Elementary: 967 Middle: 1758 High: 3000	Maintains relatively smaller elementary schools than other models Consistency of programming and concentration of resources, particularly at secondary level	Increased transportation costs Can three communities support one middle and one high school?

Enrollments are based upon the study recently completed by the OFCC and represent their projection for the 2026-27 school year. A full report is available on our website.

Why Don't You Just Renovate Schools?

In 2017, the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) visited our district to assess our schools. Their model allows them to fund renovation, but only if that cost is not more than 66% of the cost of simply building a new facility. They examined many physical features of our buildings, but most importantly: heating systems, roofing, ventilation/air conditioning, electrical systems, plumbing and fixtures, windows, and the overall structure of each school. The table below shows cost estimates for renovation; the entire reports for each school are available on our website, www.parmacityschools.org.

School	Renovation Cost	Renovation v Rebuild Ratio
Normandy	\$43,123,808	66%
Parma Senior	\$72,658,653	72%
Valley Forge	\$60,302,903	78%
Greenbriar	\$25,730,524	88%
Hillside	\$18,925,481	87%
Shiloh	\$18,095,753	79%
Dentzler	\$8,594,388	84%
Green Valley	\$8,470,207	90%
John Muir	\$12,847,725	76%
Parma Park	\$9,281,343	89%
Pleasant Valley	\$18,594,278	87%
Renwood	\$8,148,968	82%
Ridge-Brook	\$6,838,064	93%
Thoreau Park	\$14,063,710	87%
Total	\$325,675,805	-

Fewer is Better: Savings of Tax Dollars and More Opportunities for Students

For decades, probably generations, we have worked to save operating money by stretching our resources, including our staff, thinner and thinner. The result has been the maintenance of 15 separate schools, each with less of a concentration of resources than our students deserve. We recently studied the amount of money that we can save simply by closing a school. We looked only at non-transferable costs such as maintenance, supplemental contracts, utilities, garbage pick-up, etc. The average savings in closing an elementary school: \$368,657, middle: \$850,489, and high: \$1,807,946 per year. Even after factoring in increased transportation costs that arise from needing to transport more students to fewer schools, we still stand to be able to both save operating dollars and allocate greater resources into fewer schools.

Examples of benefits to students when we decrease our numbers of schools:

Elementary: *First Step, Kindergarten Launch, and STEM/design labs at all locations*

Secondary: *Equal elective, college credit plus, and AP courses at all locations, 9th grade and Junior Varsity feeder programs for sports teams, additional extracurricular opportunities (new teams, new clubs, etc.).*



5311 Longwood Avenue
Parma, Ohio 44134

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The Parma City School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or age in its programs and activities.

Connect with Us!

We continue to strive to better connect with our community and offer opportunities to all of our residents, regardless of whether you have children in our schools. Please see the following information and join us as often as possible!

Community Walking Club –

Most Mondays and Thursdays at all three high schools
Now through May 2022 from 6-8 p.m.

Community Open Swim –

Most Saturdays and Sundays at Parma Senior High School
Now through May 2022 from 1-2:30 p.m.

Easter Egg Hunt at Byers Field

April 9, 2022

Summer Movie Nights at Byers Field

July 7, 14, 21 and 28 at 8 p.m.

OPEN NOW

to learn more about
our consolidation and
new schools
construction plan.

We want your input!

Please fill out our
survey located
inside this issue!

Check out all of the great things happening in the PCSD at www.parmacityschools.org!