



Summary of Community Research Regarding the Grandview Heights City Schools Facilities Issues

May 2017

17-3140

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Research Purpose and Methodology

This report presents the findings of three research projects completed on behalf of the Grandview Heights School District regarding its Facility Planning Process. TRIAD Research worked closely with the Grandview Heights Schools to develop and complete these three research projects. The first was to develop and host an anonymous online survey. The purpose of the survey was to obtain community opinion and feedback concerning the condition of the district's school buildings and several facility plans identified by the district.

Following the schools' community presentation held on May 1, the public online survey became accessible and it was active from May 2 to May 18. The survey was available through the district's website and several other public URLs. The district sent a postcard to all residents informing them of the survey. The video of the May 1st meeting was also available on the district's website.

A public link was used so residents who share a computer at home, use a public computer lab, or took the online survey using a district device would be able to participate. To avoid duplication, we reviewed the IP addresses to help ensure there was no coordinated effort to skew the survey results. With no direct evidence of this occurring, we did not exclude any responses from the analysis.

A total of 597 responses to the survey were received from the public, although not everyone answered every question. Because people could opt-in to participate in the survey, this self-selected sample of respondents likely has more knowledge and motivation to weigh in on the district's facilities issues than the broader community.

The second project was the online survey completed by high school students. Their responses were collected separately and a total of 360 high school students responded.

A third and separate research project consisted of one focus group conducted with 11 residents who, by design, did not currently have children in the schools. This is because online surveys often underrepresent residents who do not have children in the schools. The third section of this report presents the findings from the focus group.

Key Findings

Based on the results of the online survey completed by the general public, the two strongest plans to address the facilities are option 1b to repair and renovate the three existing school buildings and option 2b to renovate Stevenson, replace Edison/Larson with a new building and renovate the high school. There is also some support for making modest repairs to the buildings, but not a complete renovation.

Students were more apt to favor option 1b, repairing and/or renovating the schools.

Focus group participants were divided between options 2 and 3. They clearly showed more support for option 3 to build a new k-8 building on the high school campus and renovate the high school than online survey respondents. They did not seem to have as strong of a connection with Stevenson as online respondents, partly because their children did not go there or it's been long time. Some participants did like and think it was important to keep Stevenson in that neighborhood, but not necessarily as a school.

In option 3, focus group members were concerned about the grade levels being separated in a larger school and that students would have a feeling of 'finishing' elementary school and moving up to middle school.

Reducing the size of the current 890-seat auditorium is not acceptable. Survey respondents and focus group participants think the community needs a large auditorium and it is the size they like. It could be replaced, but not with something significantly smaller like 500-seats.

Many would also like to keep the 3rd Avenue façade of the high school as it is historic, typical small town, frequently photographed, something that identifies the community, etc.

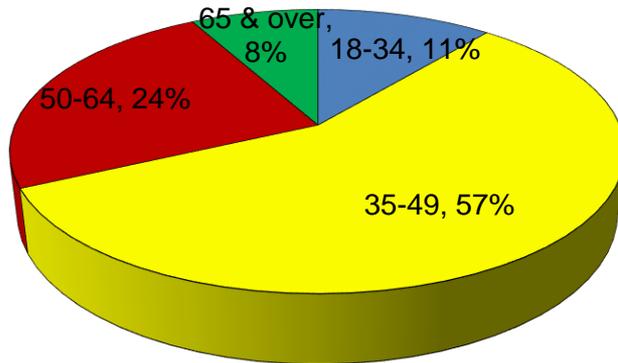
Survey respondents were somewhat mixed on keeping the addition at Edison/Larson, and focus group members did not have strong feelings about this. Some thought of it as being new and others said it's been well used. It may be worth exploring attitudes on this a little more, especially if building a new 4-8 school is a strong option.

While many residents seem willing to support a tax issue for the schools, they are also concerned about the cost and the increase in taxes. Once the district has come to closure on the final option, they should consider testing it in a telephone survey. Some responses could change when there is only one plan.

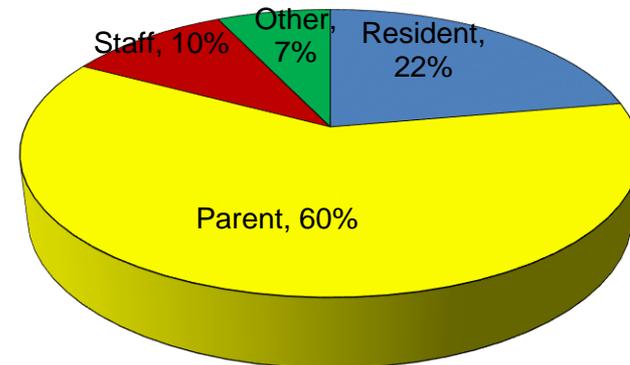
Results of the Online Survey Completed by the Public

While all age groups were represented in the survey, many respondents were parents with children in the schools and between the ages of 35 and 49.

Q25 AGE OF RESPONDENTS



Q26 RESPONDENT TYPE

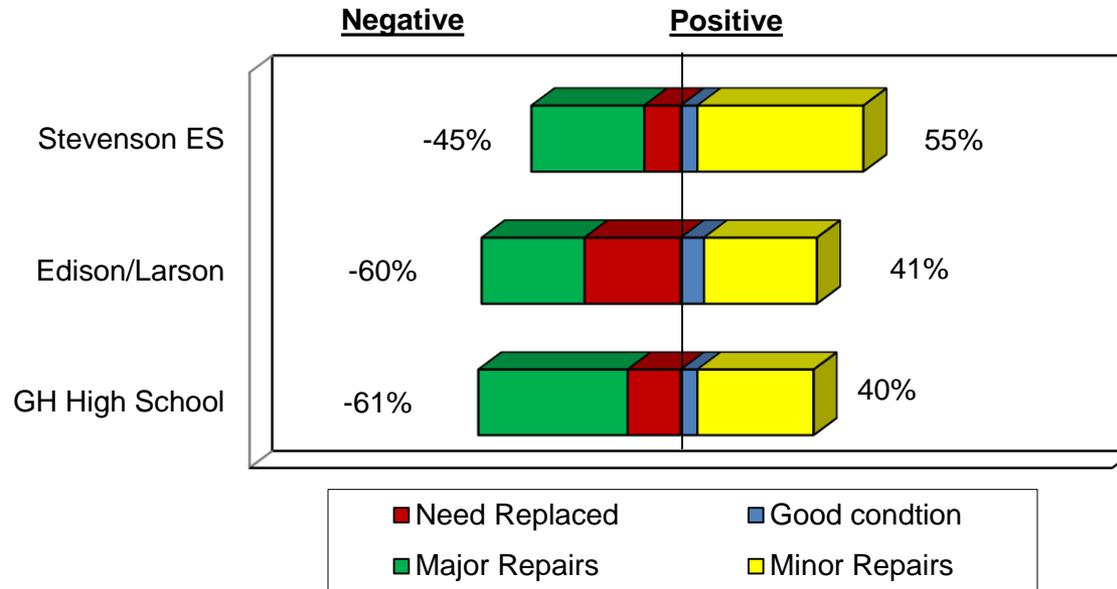


- Compared to the residents overall or voters, respondents to the online survey were more likely to be younger and have children in the Grandview Heights City Schools.
- Overall, half (49%) reported attending one or more facility planning meetings – 13% May 1st only, 21% May 1 and others, 15% previous meetings only. The other 51% had not attended any facility meetings. But parents were more likely to have attended one or more of the meetings (52%) than residents (33%).
- Also, since many respondents were parents or staff members, it follows that 66% have been in one of the Grandview Heights school buildings 10 or more times in the past year. Just a third (34%) have visited the schools visited less often – 5% none, 9% 1 or 2 times, 11% 3 to 5 times and 9% 6 to 9 times.
- Female respondents outnumbered male respondents by a margin of 2 to 1 (65% vs. 35%)

Thus, we might expect that online respondents are more informed about the schools and the facility issues than the average resident.

Only a handful of respondents think the three operating school buildings are in good condition. Most think some kind of repairs and improvements are needed.

CONDITION OF THE SCHOOL BUILDINGS



- Stevenson Elementary Schools appears to be in the best condition (55% good condition or needs minor repairs).
- Grandview Heights High School and Edison Intermediate/Larson Middle School received about the same rating.
- But more said Edison Intermediate/Larson Middle School needs replaced (29%) than said the high school needs replaced (16%).
- Parents with children in the schools think Stevenson is in better condition than residents, but parents think Edison/Larson and the high school are in worse shape than residents.

Survey respondents have some clear preferences with regard to the proposed facility plans.

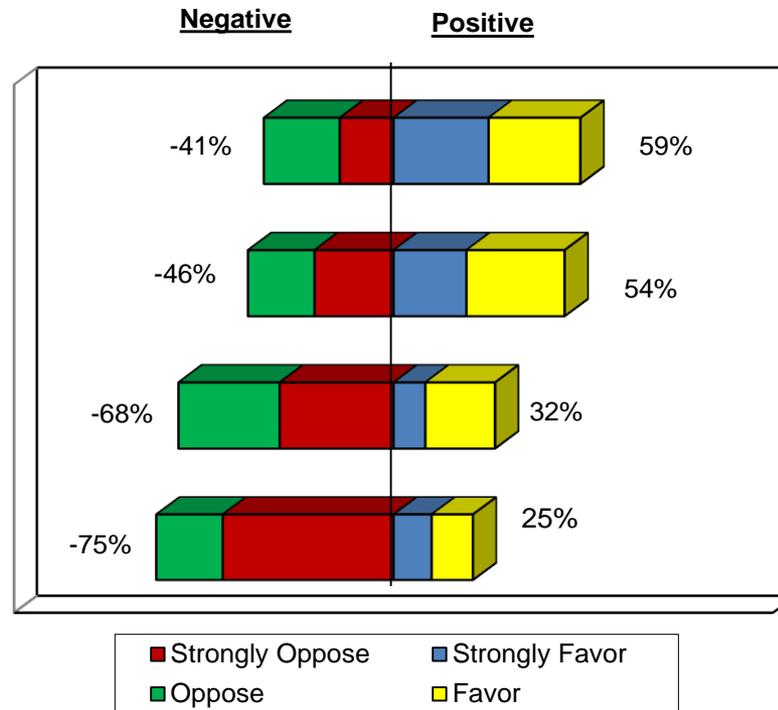
OPINION OF FOUR GENERAL FACILITY PLANS

Repair and renovate the three existing buildings at their current locations. Cost \$50 to \$55 million (Q4)

Repair and renovate Stevenson and build one or two new schools for grades 4 through 12. Cost \$45 to \$50 million (Q5)

Build one new school for all k-8th grade students and renovate the high school. Cost \$50 to \$55 million (Q6)

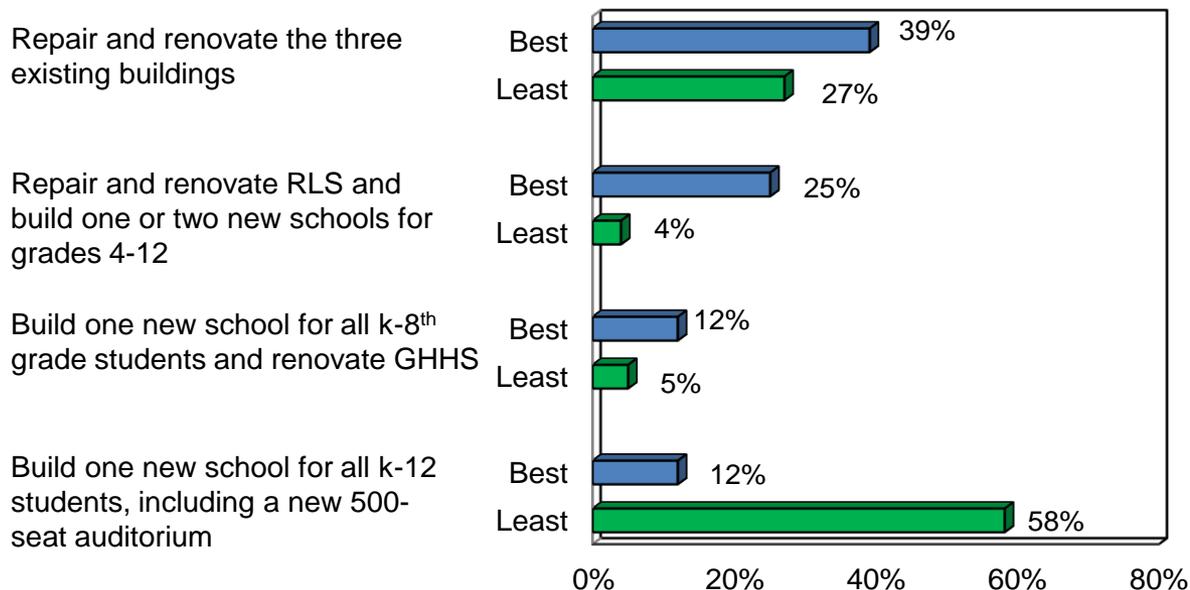
Build one new school for all k-12 students, including a new modern 500-seat auditorium. Cost \$65 to \$70 million (Q7)



- Over half of respondents favored both the plan to repair and renovate the three existing buildings at their current locations (59/41: favor/oppose) and the plan to repair and renovate Stevenson and build one or two new schools for grades 4 through 12 (54/46).
- There was little support for Options 3 and 4 that called for moving the k-3 students from Stevenson Elementary School to the middle school/high school campus. A large majority opposed each one.
- Later in the survey in question 22, 48% of respondents favored spending \$30 to \$35 million to make modest repairs and renovations to all three school buildings, but not fully updating the buildings while 52% were opposed. This is another option for consideration.

Option 4 to build a new k-12 building with a 500-seat auditorium was the plan liked least.

Q8 OPTIONS LIKED BEST AND LEAST



- Two-fifths of online respondents (39%) thought that Option 1 to repair and renovate the three existing buildings at their current locations is the best plan for the district, but a fourth (27%) liked this option the least.
 - Residents were more apt to prefer Option 1 (46%) while parents were divided between Option 1 (38%) and Option 2 (30%).
- A fourth (25%) picked Option 2 to repair and renovate Stevenson and build one or two new schools for grades 4 through 12 as best for the district, and only 4% liked it least.
- Respondents neither particularly liked nor disliked Option 3 to build a new k-8 school and renovate the high school.
- Over half (58%) picked Option 4 as the one they liked least. This is also the most expensive plan.
- There were 66 respondents who suggested another plan or commented on the proposed plans and those responses have been provided to the district.

There is further evidence that it would be better to renovate the high school than replace it.

- Three-fourths of online respondents (77%) are opposed to reducing the size of the high school auditorium from 890 seats to 500 seats. Of these, 44% are strongly opposed.
- Furthermore, by a margin of 4 to 1, respondents preferred renovating the existing 890-seat auditorium (80%) to having a new modern, 500-seat auditorium (20%).
 - This included both residents (21/74) and parents (17/83).
- There was little support for replacing the auditorium with a cafetorium which was described as a large room that would be used as both a cafeteria and an auditorium (84% opposed this, with 51% strongly opposed).
- Over half (54%) think it is extremely or very important to preserve the front of Grandview Heights High school that faces 3rd Avenue.

For option 2, more preferred building one new school for grades 4 to 8 grades than one new school with two separate wings.

- By a margin of 64% to 36%, respondents preferred building a new school for grades 4 to 8 and renovating the existing high school to building one new school with separate wings for grades 4 to 8 and grades 9 to 12. This is another indicator of the importance of retaining the current high school and/or auditorium.
 - There was no difference on this question between parents (67/33) and residents (63/37). But 60% of school staff members preferred one new school with two separate wings.

Most respondents do not want Stevenson Elementary School to close.

- 74% are opposed to closing Stevenson and moving the k-3 students into a new building on the high school/ middle school campus, of which 45% are strongly opposed. Only 17% are in favor of closing Stevenson.
- Over half (57%) were still opposed to moving the k-3 students if Stevenson Elementary was converted to a community center for the city.
- Two-thirds (66%) agreed that Stevenson should continue as the district's elementary school because it is historically significant.

Respondents are okay with tearing down the Annex and not keeping the addition to the middle/intermediate school.

- Nearly three-fourths (73%) favored tearing down the small building called the Annex located next to Edison Intermediate School. A fourth (27%) were opposed to this.

They are somewhat mixed on keeping the addition to the middle/intermediate school.

- Half (50%) do not think it is very important to keep the 1996 addition to Edison Intermediate/Larson Middle School if a new school is built. Over a fourth (29%) think it is extremely or very important to keep the addition. A fifth (21%) said it is somewhat important to keep this addition.
 - Just 26% of parents think it is important to keep this addition, while 21% think its somewhat important and half said it's not very important to keep the addition.
 - But 40% of residents think it important to the keep the 1996 addition.

Four of the five reasons tested for considering new or renovated buildings were seen as important by over half of respondents.

Q23 IMPORTANCE OF REASONS FOR FACILITY PLANNING

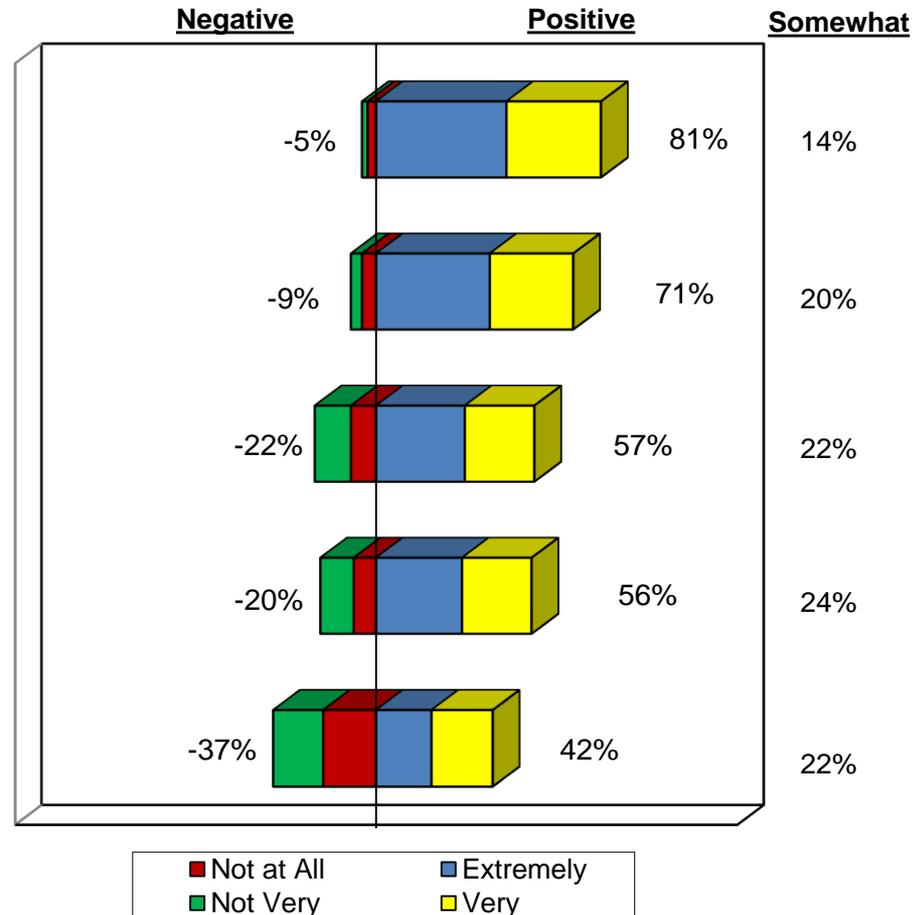
The three school buildings need \$44 million in maintenance and repairs, including new heating, plumbing, electrical and structural improvements, and technology upgrades. (Q23a)

The buildings are not accessible to people with disabilities and upgrades are needed to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. (Q23e)

New or updated school buildings will allow the schools to use its resources better, be responsive to today's active learning and use more instructional technology.

Having a better learning environment that includes new educational equipment, larger libraries, labs and computers will better prepare our students for college and today's jobs (Q23d)

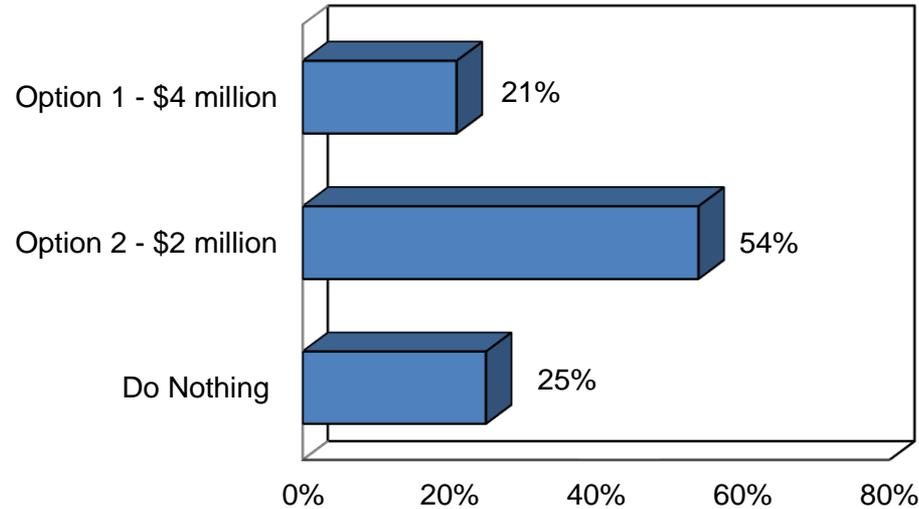
On average, the three school buildings are 90 years old and no longer meet the needs for modern learning (Q23c)



- Knowing that the buildings are an average of 90 years old and don't meet today's needs did not test very strong. This may be because residents have a high opinion of the quality of education. Or perhaps, since many of the homes in Grandview are old, they don't think the age of the buildings is a problem.

By a margin of more than 2 to 1, respondents preferred the less expensive plan to update the district's athletic facilities.

Q24 PREFERRED ATHLETIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

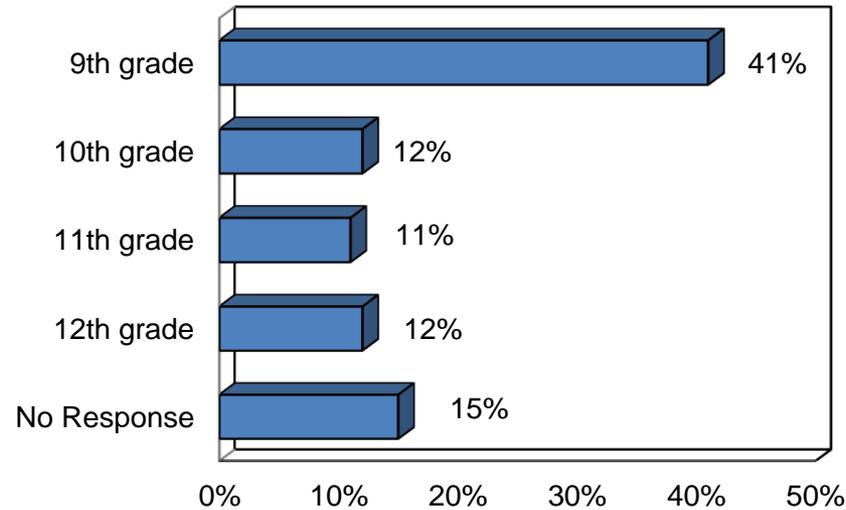


- That is, over half (54%) preferred the \$2 million option to build new locker rooms that are accessible for all sports and provide equal access for boys and girls sports, renovate the restrooms, update the homestands including access for those with disabilities, and repair the existing 6-lane track.
- Just a fifth (21%) think the \$4 million option would be better which includes all of the above, plus replacing the 6-lane track.
- A fourth (25%) didn't think the district should consider either of these plans to improve the athletic facilities.

Results to the Online Survey of Students

Students in all grades were represented in the survey, but two-fifths of student respondents were freshman.

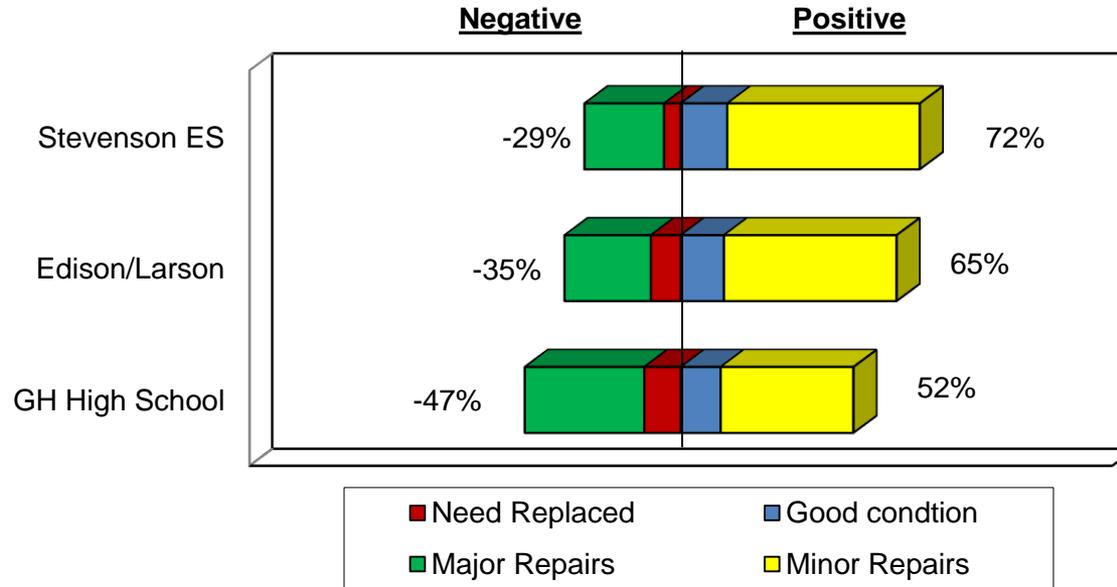
Q25 GRADE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT RESPONDENTS



- There was a nearly even split between male (47%) and female (53%) students who responded.

Student responses to the survey were similar to the general public, but their perceptions of the conditions of the school buildings were more positive.

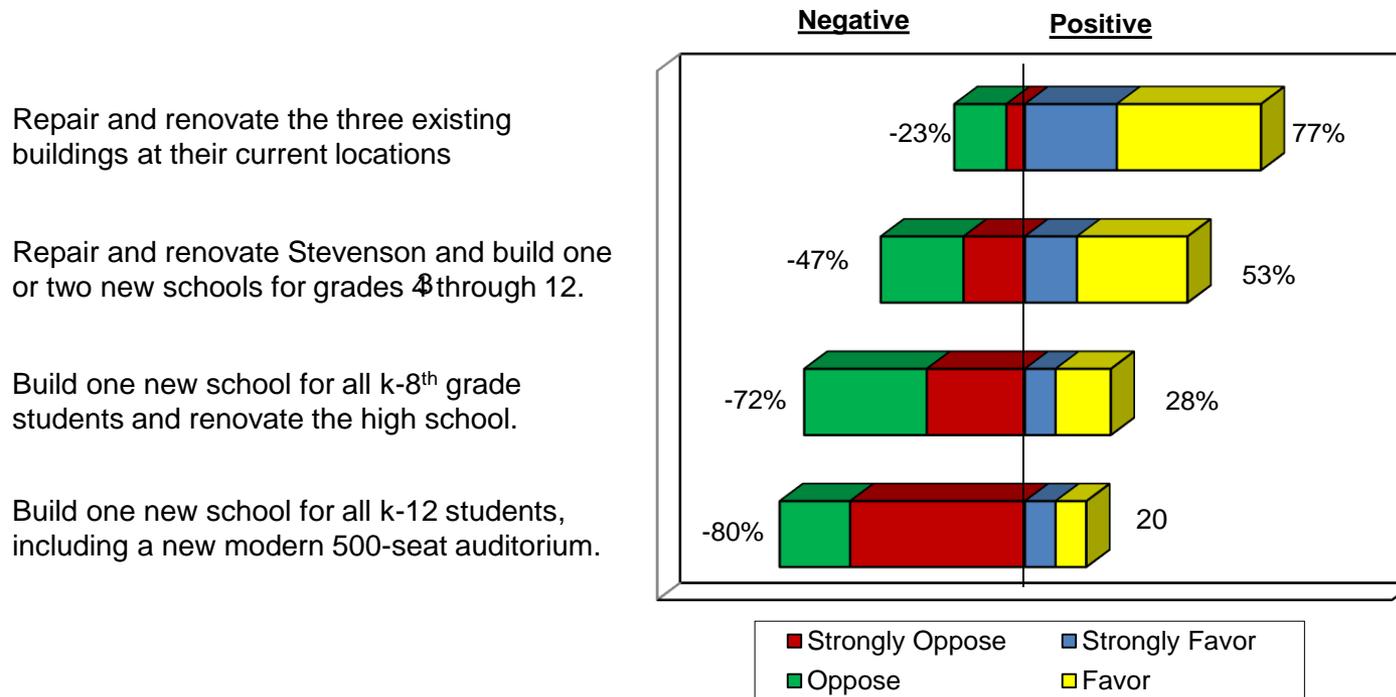
CONDITION OF THE SCHOOL BUILDINGS



- Nearly three-fourths of students (72%) think Stevenson Elementary School is in the good condition or only needs minor repairs compared to 55% of the general public online survey respondents.
- Two-thirds of students (65%) think Edison Intermediate/Larson Middle School is good condition or needs minor repairs, which is also higher than the public (41%).
- High school students think Grandview Heights High School is in the worst shape of the three buildings, with 47% saying it needs major repairs (36%) or replaced (11%). But 61% of the general public online respondents indicated that the high school needs major repairs (45%) or needs replaced (16%).

Students expressed a stronger preference for Option 1.

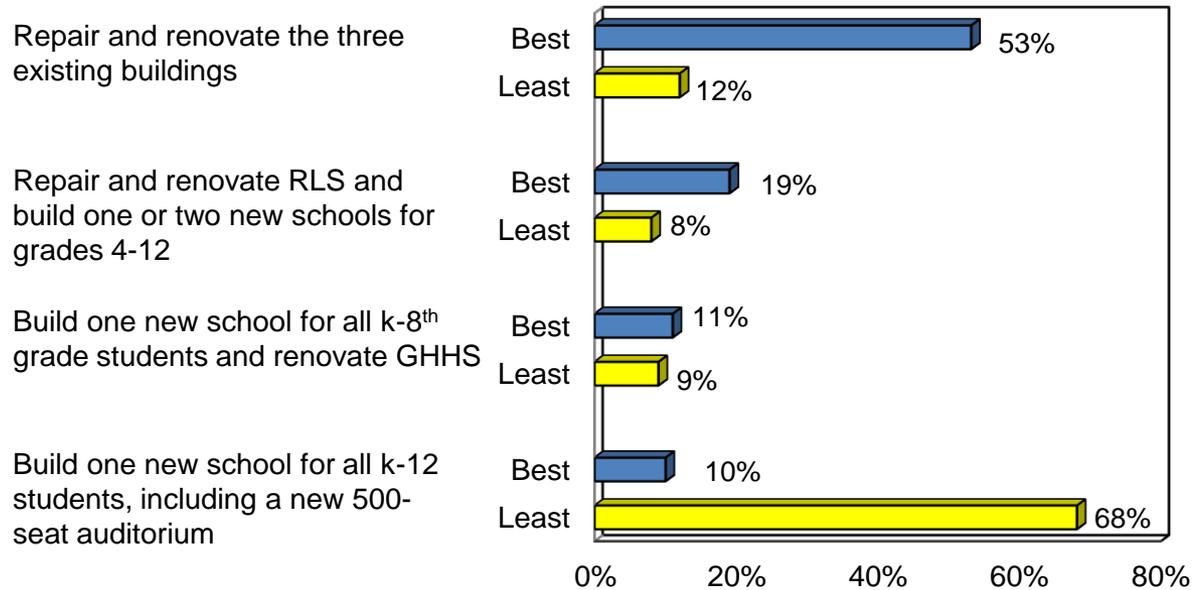
OPINION OF FOUR GENERAL FACILITY PLANS



- That is, 77% students preferred the plan to repair and renovate the three existing buildings at their current locations compared to 59% of the general public
- Also, in question 22, more student respondents (69%) favored spending \$30 to \$35 million to make modest repairs and renovations to all three school buildings, but not fully updating the buildings. Just half of the adults who responded to the online survey (48%) favored this option.
- Similar to the general public, half of students were in favor of repairing and renovating Stevenson and building one or two new schools for grades 4 through 12 (53/47). And a large majority opposed both Option 3 (72%) and Option 4 (80%) that would move the k-3 students from Stevenson Elementary School to the middle school/high school campus.

Students also liked Option 4 to build a new k-12 building the least.

OPTIONS LIKED BEST AND LEAST



- Students were more likely to think Option 1 to repair and renovate the three existing buildings is the best plan for the district (53%) than parents (39%). And only 12% of them chose it as the plan they like least (vs. 27% of parents).
- Two-thirds (68%) chose Option 4 as the one they liked least.
- Student respondents neither particularly liked nor disliked Options 2 and 3.
- Keep in mind that these students have a more positive opinion of the condition of the buildings than adult respondents.

Students overwhelmingly want to keep the current auditorium and half think the 3rd Avenue façade of the high school should be preserved.

- 91% of students are opposed to reducing the size of the high school auditorium from 890 seats to 500 seats. Of these, 56% are strongly opposed.
- Students also overwhelmingly preferred renovating the existing 890-seat auditorium (91%) to having a new modern, 500-seat auditorium (9%).
- And 86% were opposed to replacing the auditorium with a cafetorium which was described as a large room that would be used as both a cafeteria and an auditorium (with 57% strongly opposed).
- Half (50%) think it is extremely or very important to preserve the front of Grandview Heights High school that faces 3rd Avenue. A fourth (25%) think this is somewhat important. Just a fourth (25%) said it not very important or not important at all to keep the 3rd Avenue façade.

In option 2, more preferred building one new school for grades 4 to 8 grades than one new school with two separate wings.

- 70% of students also preferred building a new school for grades 4 to 8 and renovating the existing high school. Only 30% preferred building one new school with separate wings for grades 4 to 8 and grades 9 to 12. This too indicates the importance of the keeping the existing high school is that

Most students also don't want Stevenson Elementary School to close.

- Just a fourth (25%) are in favor of closing Stevenson and moving the k-3 students into a new building on the high school/middle school campus. 75% are opposed, of which 44% are strongly opposed.
- Two-thirds (65%) were still opposed to moving the k-3 students if Stevenson Elementary was converted to a community center for the city.
- About four-fifths (79%) agreed that Stevenson should continue as the district's elementary school because it is historically significant.

Student respondents favor tearing down the Annex.

- Two-thirds of students (66%) favored tearing down the Annex which is located next to Edison Intermediate School.

Students are also somewhat divided on keeping the addition to the middle/intermediate school.

- Only 28% think it is extremely or very important to keep the 1996 addition to Edison Intermediate/Larson Middle School if a new school is built. Slightly more (35%) said it not very or not important at all to keep the addition. 37% said it is somewhat important to keep the addition.

Students rated of the five reasons for facility planning about the same as adults.

Q23 IMPORTANCE OF REASONS FOR FACILITY PLANNING

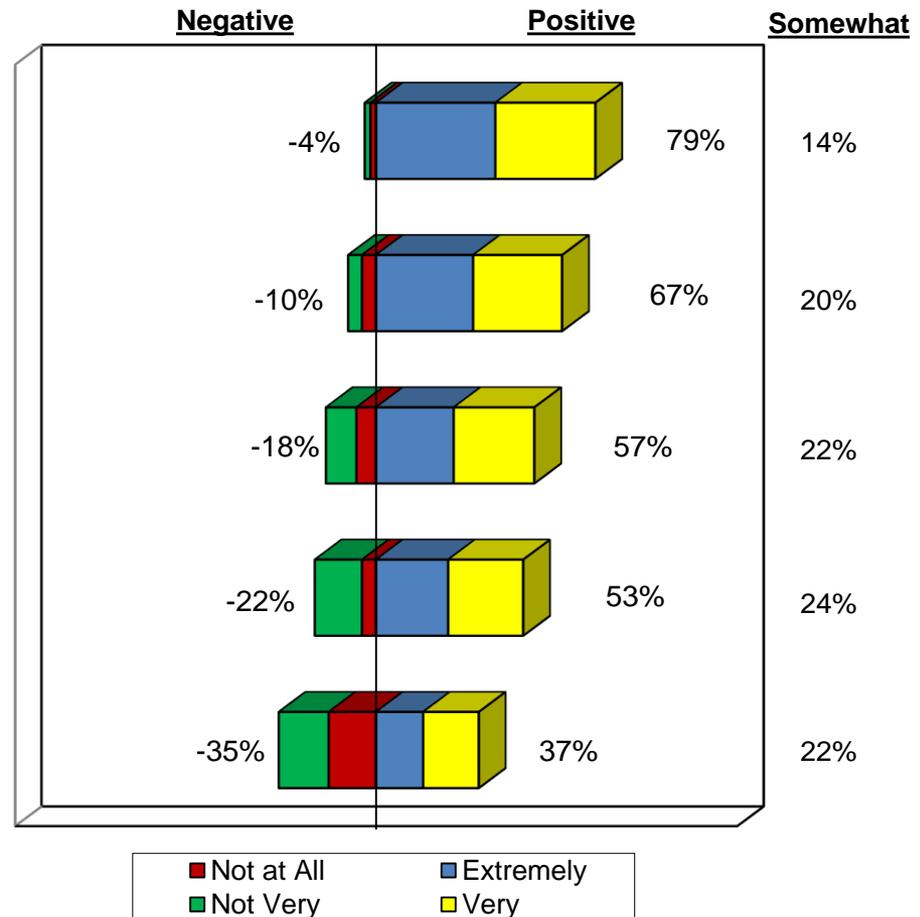
The three school buildings need \$44 million in maintenance and repairs, including new heating, plumbing, electrical and structural improvements, and technology upgrades. (Q23a)

The buildings are not accessible to people with disabilities and upgrades are needed to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. (Q23e)

Having a better learning environment that includes new educational equipment, larger libraries, labs and computers will better prepare our students for college and today's jobs (Q23d)

New or updated school buildings will allow the schools to use its resources better, be responsive to today's active learning and use more instructional technology.

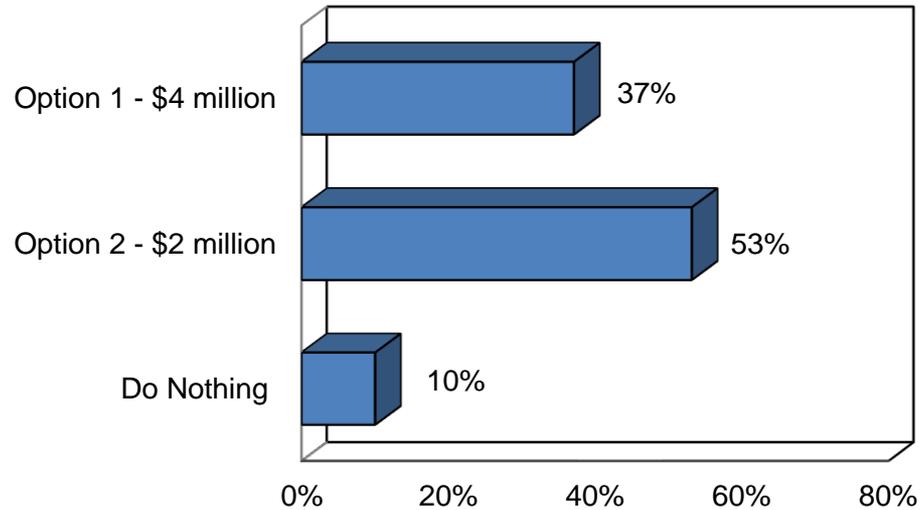
On average, the three school buildings are 90 years old and no longer meet the needs for modern learning (Q23c)



- Students rated having a better learning environment higher in importance (57%) than being able to use resources better in new or updated buildings (53%). The opposite was true in the online survey of the public.

Students were more likely to support doing something to upgrade the district's athletic facilities.

Q24 PREFERRED ATHLETIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN



- Here too, half of students (53%) preferred the \$2 million option to build new locker rooms that are accessible for all sports and provide equal access for boys and girls sports, renovate the restrooms, update the homestands including access for those with disabilities, and repair the existing 6-lane track.
- Nearly two-fifths (37%) think it would be better to spend \$4 million to do all of the things above, plus put in a new 6-lane track.
- Just a tenth (10%) indicated that the district shouldn't do anything to improve the athletic facilities.

Focus Group Findings

Background and Purpose of the Focus Group

This section of the report presents the findings gathered in one focus group conducted by Triad Research Group on behalf of the Grandview Heights School District.

Because residents who do not have children in the public schools are often less likely to respond to online surveys that are accessed through the school website, we conducted one focus group of residents who do not have children in the schools currently to explore their opinions of the buildings and get their feedback on the different facility plans that have been proposed.

Of the 12 residents invited to the focus group, 11 attended. Ten of the 11 participants were age 50 and over, while one was under age 50. About half of the participants were women (n=6) and half men (n=5). And while many of them had children in the Grandview Heights Schools in previous years, by design, none of them currently have children in the schools. The younger participant was a graduate of the schools, and several others never had children in the schools. A few had attended one of the community meetings, but most had not, although nearly everyone said they were aware of the district's facility planning efforts.

The focus group was held May 9, 2017.

A word of caution is warranted here. Because of the exploratory nature of focus groups and because only a small number of people are invited to attend, focus group findings are not projectable to the entire community and the findings should not be interpreted as quantitative data.

Quotations from participants are shown in italics.

Top-of-Mind Perceptions and Quality of Education

The group began by asking participants to mention the first thing that comes to mind when they think about the Grandview Heights Schools. This question is an important one, because it provides insight into the perceptual framework in which participants are operating prior to discussion.

Virtually of the responses were positive. Many related to the quality of schools or their experiences with their own children in schools or the schools' importance to property values.

- *Pretty good quality schools.... Good for resale value*
- *Real close, tightknit. We had great teachers, taught use well, always had time for us*
- *Like it because it's small. My kids were well prepared for college*
- *Small community. Social pressures were more modest...*
- *Both (kids) got a very quality education*
- *Smallness of the school, almost private school size with a public school orientation*
- *Very satisfied with the Grandview schools*
- *Very pleased with what Grandview offered*
- *Wonderful school system... great education*

Some other important comments that came out early in the discussion included:

- *You see all these beautiful buildings in these outlying areas where thousands of homes and the tax base keeps growing and, you know, you get a little jealous. I love the character of our buildings but I know they're just – they need help.*
- *I think it's Stevenson that's over by the park over there. There's something that adds to the character of the community. About the small town feel in a major metropolitan area.*
- *A really strong commitment, for some of us, to the arts.*
- *I think the responsiveness – you know, even though it may not be agreeable to everybody is at least very – and I hate using the word “transparent,” that's overused right now, but it's – it is being done so that we know what's happening and they know they're going to hear from somebody one way or the other probably.*

Weaknesses for the District

Only a few participants mentioned a weakness for the district. And many of the comments referred to something that occurred in the past. The different things mentioned were:

- *Not enough advanced placement classes when my kids were in school but that number has increased and language classes have increased.*
- *When my kids were in school some (kids) had a hard time in math when they got to college.*
- *For a small school, ... I think the budget and the size only allow for so much.*
- *Apparently earlier there was a time when eighth grade was mixed in with high school.*

One person brought up the condition of the buildings at this point, saying ...

- *I didn't know it until I went to the school meeting last week and saw the pictures of the infrastructure and how much damage has occurred over the years. It sounds like they are – it's in pretty dire of need of major repairs or improvements.*

School Communications

It seems that most participants feel at least somewhat informed about the schools, but some admitted that they don't keep up with the schools as much since their children have graduated.

Many get their information from the Tri-Village newspaper. But they did say that not everyone gets it in the community (like they used to).

When asked if they read about the schools online one person said, *"No, I don't remember to look. Because I don't have kids anymore."* Another person commented that, *"I'd say I'm a little bit out of touch."* And no one acknowledged going to the schools' website for information.

One participant said they get their information from the Grandview Facebook page. Although it didn't sound like this is an official city or school page.

Someone else said *"you can you can drive by the school and see what's happening that day."* But another person added that *"they don't update it very often."*

A few mentioned or seemed to be aware that the superintendent does a quarterly newsletter or that he holds a coffee on Friday. One person had attended a coffee.

When asked if there are things they would like to know about the schools, there were two replies:

- *I'd like to know about activities.*
- *I'd be interested in hearing about their developing educational philosophy. The things you mentioned about increasing AP classes. What they're doing with language and why. How they figure that the schools fit in civilization really and what this school system is doing as part of that.*

They were all interested in hearing about the facility planning process

Opinion of General Building Options

Everyone indicated that they are aware of the current facility planning process for the schools. One person attended the May 1st meeting, another watched part of it online, and one other had done an Internet search about new school buildings. But most participants did not have much knowledge about the options being considered.

A sheet listing the four general options being considered was passed out to participants and they were asked to mark the plan they thought would be best for the district and the plan they liked least. While reading through these options, one of the group members said “*Can I tell that the current auditorium seats almost a thousand? Just wanted to get that out there.*” In reply, another participant asked “*Are they’re going to shrink it to 500?*” A brief conversation followed making it clear that the auditorium is top consideration.

Most focus group participants were divided between choosing Option 2 to repair and renovate Stevenson and build one or two new schools for grades 4 through 12 (n=4) and Option 3 to build one new school for k-8 on the main campus and renovate the high school (n=5). One person each liked Option 1 and Option 4 best. **Focus group participants were more likely to favor Option 3 and less likely to think option 1 is best compared to online survey responses.**

Eight of the 11 participants chose Option 4 to build one new school for grades k-12 with a new 500-seat auditorium as the plan they liked least. Two people chose Option 1 as the plan they like least and one person chose Option 2.

Participants were then asked why they chose the plans they did as best for the district and the one they liked least.

Option 1 – Reason for Saying Best (n=1 participant)

- *It seems to me that that keeps the schools relatively small scale, for smaller children. And the move from a small first grades to a larger thing – there’s an actual physical move. So that it’s an adventure, it’s a change, it’s a life stage sort of thing. It’s pretty obvious in here.*

Option 1 – Reasons for Liking Least (n=2)

- *Think renovating all of them isn’t a good idea. It depends, I suppose, on the structure of the building, on the bones of the building.*
- *There’s \$44 million needed for maintenance, that they’d have to be taken to a shell, and retrofitting these buildings for educational concepts, might just be a true challenge beyond success.*

Option 2 – Reasons for Saying Best (n=4)

- *... keep that idea of having the smaller schools like #1 did. But it gave a chance to have some maybe different – a little bit different configuration. I've always sort of wished that the high school and the middle school really weren't sharing a campus so closely. I almost wish they were a little bit further apart. So, you can still have that sort on this one. "Now I'm graduating to this one, now I'm graduating to that one." So, that's why I chose #2. Because I feel like it could be even stronger, that sort of neighborhood and small school feel that leads up to the high school.*
- *You have the (kids) starting out at Stevenson like they do now, and then graduating to the middle school, and then to the high school. So, I like that. And also it's the least expensive option. Which appeals to me as a tax payer.*
- *I just like Stevenson. You can have your little kid years protected.*
- *I liked that you got at least one new school and it was the least expensive. And let's face it, right now a lot of people, you can tell whose child is a senior and is graduating because their child graduates and their "for sale" sign goes up the next week. Because they can't afford – they look at the taxes and they go, "For the amount of taxes that we're paying we could live someplace a lot more cheaply." I love Grandview. I truly do. But, honestly, if the taxes go up any higher it might be a deal breaker.*

Option 2 – Reason for Liking Least (n=1)

- *When reading this, is that you're talking about one complex. ... It's the lack of separation on that. It's not necessarily the buildings but it's the way the kids are being put together. I mean there's different psychological things for kids. They see themselves moving up. You know, if we're all in the same building, you know, there's no psychological, "Oh, something is new and different."*

Option 3 – Reasons for Saying Best (n=5)

- *I like the idea of having a new school where the current middle school is. What I learned at the meeting last week is that middle school is probably in the worst shape of all the schools and probably would be the most expensive. And we probably could use a middle school there. And I really would like to see the current high school saved in some way. It's so – it's quintessential small town America. That we should save it.*
- *I picked that one even though I do like Stevenson because I went there myself. It would be nice to see a new school if they were able to kind of keep the younger and older grades separate. And I like – of course I like the high school from a historic factor.*
- *...renovating the high school also because it's historic and, yeah, on a main street and gives our community a look. And it's cheaper than the last option. So, I'm thinking money is going to be a factor and there's no way around it.*
- *.... for a new school you will get that all completed and everything.*
- *I wouldn't want to put the renovation for the high school off because of how bad it is.*

Option 4 – Reasons for Saying Best (n=1)

- *With the community being a pedestrian, student community having everything centralized certainly is a benefit for people who live at one of the end or the other and may have students in the elementary, the middle school. Some even had elementary, middle school, and high school. So, you know, that adds a convenience factor for the community.*

Option 4 – Reason for Liking Least (n=8)

- *The most expensive one. And kind of the same thing, talking about one building for K through 12. Just doesn't seem like it fits that well.*
- *With Option 3 the auditorium would be preserved. Option 4 would reduce the size of the auditorium in my understanding. And I don't like the idea of one giant school for all kids.*
- *My kids went to Stevenson and we loved Stevenson.*
- *The traffic would be a nightmare.*

Summary of General Building Options

To summarize some of the comments

- While some participants have some affinity for keeping Stevenson as the elementary school, it wasn't as strong as perhaps as in the online survey of the general public. At the end of the group some said that this may be because they are further removed from their child's early days at Stevenson.
- Many group participants talked about the importance for students to be able to actually move from school to school, or finish something, i.e., finish at one school and then move on to the next building.
- Some brought the concern that they don't think it's a good idea for Kindergartners to be in the same building as older students. They clearly do not understand that the different grade levels would be separated, the start times might differ, they wouldn't eat in the cafeteria all at the same time, or even be dismissed at the same time. *"Would be scary to go to school with 18-year-olds at (age) 5."*
- Cost is a concern for many participants. Several chose a plan because it was less or least expensive. They are aware that taxes are high in the Grandview Heights, but they also know that good schools are important to being able to sell their home. There were also a few comments during the groups about new schools in New Albany, Upper Arlington and Worthington, and alluded to the need or desire to stay competitive.

Other Issues

Stevenson Elementary School

Some participants like the idea of keeping Stevenson as an elementary school.

- *I'd rather see Stevenson stay as a school than a community center. I love the building, I love the purpose. I would rather see a community center at Wallace Carson or someplace.*
- *It is for the young kids.*

Others would be okay if it became a community center for the city. But one member wondered if then the city would need money to renovate it.

- *I like the idea of saving the building itself.*
- *It's another iconic building associated with Grandview. If they can make it a community center I'd be fine with that.*
- *That means renovating Stevenson in addition to this ... Tax payer issue ...As in Grandview city ...Yes.*

Later several participants said they didn't have any experience with Stevenson, and maybe they would feel differently if they did.

- *We never had an experience with Stevenson.*
- *Right. We didn't either.*
- *At the time our kids were there, both Edison and Stevenson were elementaries.*
- *I was upset when Edison went to the middle school.*

K-8 Building

Even though many participants thought Option 3 is best, they didn't have much to add about a new k-8 building on the high school/middle school campus. One person said "that makes sense." Others were okay with this as long as the grades were separated. Another thought this might be the place to do a cafetorium as it would save money.

Other Issues

The Annex

Most participants seemed to okay with tearing down the Annex. Some mentioned that the Annex might be a good location for a new elementary school.

One person mentioned that the Annex is or was being used for Science Olympiad and was concerned about where this program would be moved.

Keeping the Addition to Edison/Larson

Group members did not seem to have strong feelings about keeping or tearing down the 1996 addition at Edison/Larson. Some weren't very familiar with it saying ...*Is that the big meeting room?*

Others thought it has served its purpose saying, "It worked for its purpose." "It's been used, and used, and used, and used."

While some think it's new, saying "It's pretty new." "Newer than 90." "Brand spanking new."

Other Issues

The Auditorium

None of the participants came out in favor of reducing the size of the auditorium. They like that graduation is held there and that it's good for all of the performing arts. And it's the size they like, not the facility.

Several suggested seeking corporate sponsorships for the auditorium. A typical comment was that ... *"I would like to see a corporate-sponsored performing arts center that is connected to the school campus, could be used for community events, and would be used for the school. We can name it whatever you want to name it. I don't care. And then that could be taken off the table and more money be used on the school itself."*

But at least one person said *"I'm not a big fan of corporate sponsorships when you look at things like if you go to Ohio State, Wexner Hospital all the time, and you start seeing the names Abercrombie & Fitch and all these other things. I mean these are businesses that disappear. It just really takes away."*

And when asked, no one thought that keeping the current auditorium is a good reason not to build a new high school, they just want another large auditorium if the high school is replaced.

A Cafetorium

No one liked the idea of a cafetorium in place of an auditorium. Some reasons given for this were:

- *It seems very like elementary school-ish.*
- *You lose the quality of the arts.*
- *We use the auditorium for so many things.*
- *Even the lower schools could use the auditorium for performances.*

Reasons for Facility Planning

We presented participants with five reasons why the Grandview Heights Schools District is looking at their buildings and developing a facilities plan and asked them to choose the two most important reasons to them.

Five chose the first reason as most important to them. It read: **The three school buildings need \$44 million in maintenance and repairs, including new heating, plumbing, electrical and structural improvements, and technology upgrades.** Some reasons given as to why they chose this were:

- *It seems to be the thing that's staring us in the face the most.*
- *If we're spending money to renovate and we need to spend a little more to make new then I'd say, because of all these other reasons about upgrading the facilities for better learning environment, I think it's worth it.*

Eight people chose the second reason - **New or updated school buildings will allow the schools to use its resources better, be responsive to today's active learning and use more instructional technology.** And five picked the fourth one - **Having a better learning environment that includes new educational equipment, larger libraries, labs and computers will better prepare our students for college and today's jobs.** A number of participants said these two reasons were similar or liked them both.

- *Better labs. And, you know, when you talk about lab safety, even though middle school kids don't have access to things that are too dangerous, but having worked in a lab you're used to.*
- *Just needs to come into modern times with all of this. The libraries, the labs, computers, and everything. I'm sure that all needs upgraded. Definitely a need in modern times.*
- *I like #2 because it's more loose and allows for flexibility.*
- *I think that #2 is a stronger argument than #4 because I know that labs are important. I would want those in with "instructional technology." And "resources better" to me means it's a better use of your money, your time, your space. And "being responsive to active learning."*
- *I think one of the things that #2 provides over #4 is part of what we deal with is not really the children's expectations but the parent's expectations. And Grandview parents expect their kids to go to college.*
- *Because #4, I mean, how much room does a tablet take up? You know, if I've got my iPad, you know, I've got it in my hand. I don't need huge amounts of space for computers anymore. And you've got millions of books on your tablet.*

Just three people chose the reason number 5 as most important to them. It read: **The buildings are not accessible to people with disabilities and upgrades are needed to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

This is not because they don't think it is important. When reviewing the reasons, one person said "*Could we just leave #5 out of the consideration since that's not even optional, is it?*" Others agreed saying ... "*It's the law.*" "*It's required.*" "*That has to be done.*" Later participants said "*It really is a given.*" "*We have to do it.*" "*It's a have-to.*"

But we should add that some people were not aware that the school buildings do not fully meet ADA standards. Someone said they didn't think there was an elevator in the middle school.

One person related a story the superintendent had shared in a community meeting about how they moved a class because a student who was hurt in a sporting event was seen sitting on the steps going up one step at a time, because of the lack of an elevator. Many participants seemed surprised by this lack of access.

In addition, many of these non-parents have not been in the schools in the past year or two. Some had but it seemed limited to the auditorium.

Value of Facility Improvements to Non-Parents

The moderator also pressed the group on whether the facility improvements are really needed since the students seem to be doing so well and why, as empty nesters, they would want to support the schools. Some cited property values, community pride, right thing to do for kids and teachers, need to be competitive with other school districts.

- *We just have to be competitive and times are changing.*
- *New Albany has beautiful schools.*
- *I also wonder what kids and other parents think of our school buildings when they stop. I mean I'm sure the conversations are jaw dropping.*
- *They're not impressive.*
- *Even the Columbus schools have renovated some of their really old schools. Some of their schools are actually better than what we've got.*

- *Well, it's your community. It's the community. We have a responsibility.*
- *Property values. But I want to live in a community with great schools.*

- *When our corporate headquarters and our homes look pretty good and the schools are falling apart it says something about what we actually think about where the whole mess is going.*
- *We have to keep not just our homes and the streets and everything up to snuff but presentable schools, schools that we can proud of.*

- *We have to show that we value our children and give them a good place to be educated.*
- *You've got people working in those buildings that are professionals and these are their careers. And to house them in something that is not respectful, or nurturing, or whatever you want to say, I mean that makes a huge difference for the people that are employed there.*

These reasons could also be tested to determine their community-wide appeal.

Support for a Bond Issue

All group members think the district should continue exploring its options to renovate or rebuild the schools. Many would consider voting for a \$45 million bond issue. Recall that only one person was in favor of the \$60 million plan.

They did raise some questions about money from Grandview Yard and possibly the loss of TPP money, although they didn't refer to it as that. One person questioned, *"Since we're losing school funding are we making that up with input from the Yard?"* Others asked: *"Will the school district have to come for an operating levy and a building levy?"* *"At what point will the Grandview Yard be replacing the other?"*

In response to being told that a \$45 million bond issue would cost about \$20 a month more in taxes or \$17 a month once the 2.9 mill issue expires, many still said they would support a bond issue, but some expressed some reservation about others in the community as evidenced by the following conversation.

- *I think it's a responsibility. If you want to have a great community you have to have great schools. And I personally am willing to pay the taxes that are required to have great schools.*
- *Me too. But we are a tiny community.*
- *And we have the highest taxes.*
- *That's the tough part. And not everybody in the community probably can do that.*

It was clear that these residents think supporting the schools is good for property values.

- *I know the homes on my block have doubled in value since we bought our house. ... The reason is because of the schools.*
- *The schools are critical. That's why people don't live in Columbus when they have young kids. They want to live in Grandview or Upper Arlington.*

They also said that the issue is about more than the buildings. It's *"supporting our children."* *"It's supporting a system of education that works and is thriving. Despite the crumbling buildings."*

When asked if there would be pushback in the community given the possible cost, they said *"yes, there will always be pushback."*

Opinion of Athletic Facility Improvements

Participants were also asked to read to options to update the athletic facilities. No one chose the \$4 million option to **Build new locker rooms that are accessible for all sports and provide equal access for boys and girls sports, renovate the restrooms, update the homestands including access for those with disabilities, put in a new 6-lane track, and build a new softball field.**

Most chose the \$2 million plan which did not include replacing the track.

A few members did not favor either one. And several people thought that perhaps donors could be found to pay these improvements, saying ...

- *I'm actually where I'd rather have private money for that. I'd rather have donors."*
- *Private money would be great.*

But there were a number of questions about the need for these improvements or the timing.

- *Is the softball field bad? I don't know. I haven't been on it.*
- *Is there a reason the softball field is not up to regulation down at Pierce?*
- *I thought they just renovated (the stadium or locker rooms). Because I went in there and the locker rooms were brand new.*
- *I thought they were keeping it up.*
- *I don't think any of us have the impression that the current facilities are terrible.*
- *You know, I think this is one of those situations that if they're going full tilt on the school, the instructional side of this, this might be something that lays to the side for a little while.*

If the district decides to include any athletic facility improvements in the bond issue, the community will need information about the condition and need for the upgrades. They did acknowledge that the public restrooms may not be up to par.

Closing Comments

To wrap up the discussion, all participants were asked to give some last comments about the building option they thought was best for the district. Most still liked the plan they originally chose, but there were some remarks to keep in mind.

They referenced the cost or financing, the auditorium, the design of the buildings, and renovating old buildings

- *Whether we spend \$55 million or \$70 million, I don't know. I would like to see somebody get very creative with financing and really find outside sources of money on top of what the community can bear.*
- *A new auditorium would be great but it needs to be bigger than the 500 seating.*
- *If there's one big building are there separations? Are there wings?*
- *90-years-old you've got to tear it down? Well, is somebody going to buy my house that's almost 100-years-old and tear it down? No. They're going to fix it, they're going to renovate it, and they're going to make it look beautiful.*
- *If they can modify the layout I'd like to see it renovated. Because, after all, the Sistine Chapel is still standing.*