

Commentary

A Newsletter for the Residents of the Westlake City School District

Facts about the bond issue

Westlake expects excellence in every aspect of community life, but today our public school buildings have been classified as in dire need of updating. From outside the walls our schools may look fine, but within and behind the walls they are inadequate in terms of safety and space.

The problems are well documented:

- 93% of our building systems [electrical, roofs, windows, HVAC, security, etc.] were as-

essed to be below adequate.

- \$66 million cost just to repair those deficiencies and bring our schools up to standard by fixing leaking roofs, broken pipes and windows, antiquated heating and circulation systems and other structural problems.
- Students are taught in trailers, converted bathrooms, hallways, closets and cafeterias.
- Access for handicapped and special needs students fails today's standards.
- Patching immediate problems

would cost an additional \$9 million per year just for the next 5 years, or 20% of the annual school operating budget. A stop gap plan to patch only the worst emergencies would cost \$3 million per year and would take critical dollars away from education, while not even addressing the core problems.

Problems and costs will only compound if we temporarily patch or do nothing.



EXAMPLES OF FACILITIES PROBLEMS IN OUR SCHOOLS

Above: Alternative learning spaces for students was added to Parkside Intermediate School this year
 Right: Continual roof leaks at Lee Burneson Middle School



Summary of Existing Westlake City Schools Facilities

Below is a summary of the Westlake Schools' facilities ratings according to state standards for educating students. **PLEASE VISIT WWW.WLAKE.ORG/FACILITIES FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION**

Key:

-  Excellent
-  Good
-  Adequate
-  Fair
-  Poor

	Bassett	Dover	Hilliard	Holly Lane	Parkside	LBMS*	Westlake High School
Heating							
Roofing							
Ventilation/Exhaust							
Electrical							
Plumbing/Fixtures							
Windows							
Foundation							
Walls/Chimney							
Floors/Roof							
General Finishes							
Interior Lighting							
Emergency Exit Lighting							
Fire Alarm Strobes							
Handicap Access							
Site Condition							
Exterior Doors							
Fire Suppression System							
Emergency Generator							
Technology							
Tutoring Space							
Adequate Classroom Space							
Special Education Space							
Overall Condition							
Energy Efficiency/Green							

Solution based on data-driven process

The solution is well reasoned, vetted and recommended. To address the problem, our district launched a comprehensive, data-driven, 26-month planning process engaging Westlake citizens and professional facilities experts. The result was an in-depth needs analysis and a phased, cost-effective plan to address our needs. While numerous alternatives were considered, the 20/20 Citizens Committee, the experts and the district all agreed that these problems must be addressed now.

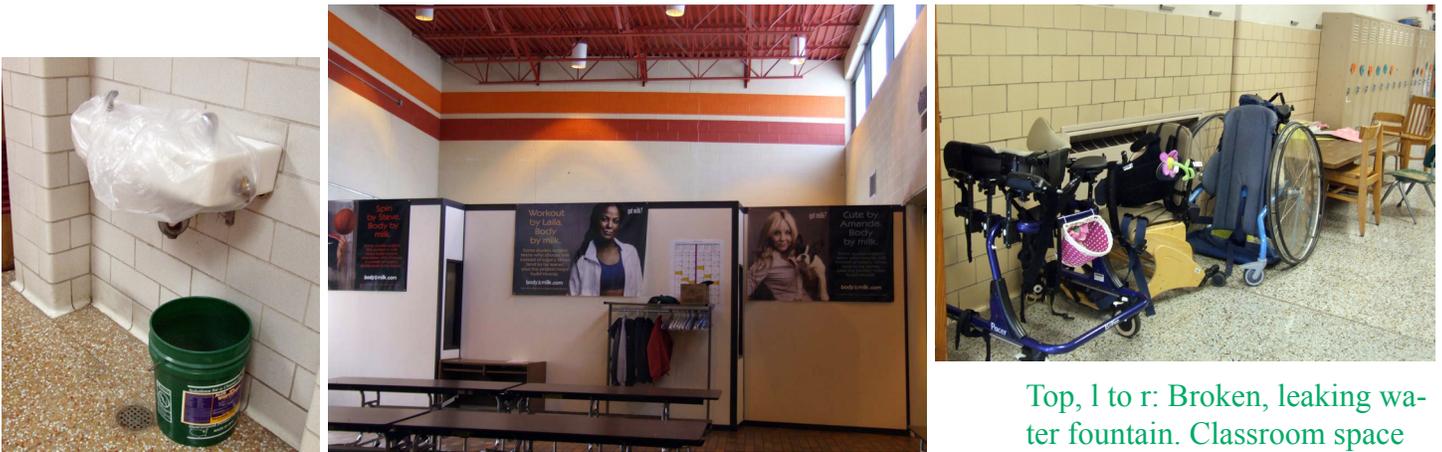
- Problems and costs will compound dramatically if we try to avoid the problem, do too little or fail to start now.
- Continuing to simply “patch” the schools won’t address pressing needs and cost far more than doing the job right.

- The plan is efficient, effective and educationally sound.
- The most cost-effective way to deal with these problems is to start now, especially given today’s lower construction and 50-year low financing costs.

The Plan to Protect Our Schools and Taxpayers:

- Make the essential repairs and upgrades to our declining building systems;
- Renovate and add space at Lee Burneson for an intermediate school for grades 5-6;
- Build a new middle school for grades 7-8 near the existing one; and
- Rebuild an extensive portion of Westlake High School while preserving the additions made in 2005.

The 3.4 mill bond issue will fund the first phase of improvements and will cost \$8.68 per month per \$100,000 of property value. The bond issue will raise sufficient funds to bring our buildings up to code and provide a learning environment to keep our schools excellent and our community top-rated in the 21st century. This incremental plan solves the problem once and for all, saves hundreds of thousands in operating costs annually, and is fiscally responsible. It is not a Cadillac solution—more like a solid Chevy. The plan provides a responsible approach to fix an urgent problem that will grow to unmanageable levels without action now. This amount of millage for this issue allows Westlake to retain its position of being in the bottom 25% of school taxes in the county.



Top, l to r: Broken, leaking water fountain. Classroom space partitioned off of LBMS cafeteria. Special needs equipment often stored in hallways.



Left: Alternative classroom space added at Lee Burneson Middle School this year

Our facilities are failing



Leaking roofs and failing pipes are mounting problems for the Westlake City Schools

The Westlake City School District is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action agency and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, political affiliation or disability.

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The Westlake City School District is a member of the Westlake Chamber of Commerce. Please forward comments to Kim Bonvissuto, communications coordinator, 27200 Hilliard Blvd., or call (440) 250-1258. Or email bonvissuto@wlake.org

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