



November 2024 Bond Levy Frequently Asked Questions

August 2024 Revision

Q: Why does the district need a bond issue?

A: Districtwide enrollment has nearly doubled since Monroe's main campus was completed, from 1,515 students in 2004 to more than 2,900 students today. According to a facilities analysis conducted by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC), the capacity of Monroe's main campus (grades 2-12) is 1,955 students. In reality, this campus is now home to more than 2,400 students, or more than 120% of its capacity.

Over the years, Monroe's student enrollment has continued to grow leading to overcrowding in our classrooms and common spaces. In addition, the lack of available space and the repurposing of gyms, media centers, meeting rooms, hallways and storage spaces has limited potential class offerings and learning opportunities for our students and staff.

Q: Will the school district receive any funding from the state?

A: Monroe Local Schools began working with the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) as early as 2015 to address overcrowding in our school buildings. In April of 2024, after nearly 10 years of waiting, the district was notified by the OFCC that it was eligible to participate in the Classroom Facilities Assistance Program (CFAP). This partnership provides Monroe with \$25.3 million in state funding for the construction of a new school building, but is contingent upon the school district raising its local share through a ballot initiative.

Q: How/when will this impact my property taxes?

A: Although a 3.49 mill bond issue for a new high school will appear on the November 2024 ballot, under the current funding plan there will be no change in taxes until 2029, at which point the community will see a slight net decrease in taxes due to the existing 3.50 mill main campus bond being paid off. This is

made possible through the fiscal responsibility of the district and school board and the use of new state and existing local funds to bridge the gap during construction.

Monroe's expiring 3.50 mill bond equals \$123 annually per \$100,000 of appraised home value, while the proposed 3.49 mill bond equals \$122 annually per \$100,000 of appraised home value.

Q: What is a mill?

A: Property taxes are charged as "mills." One mill is one-thousandth of a dollar - this equates to one-tenth of a cent, or \$0.001. Therefore, each mill generates \$1 of taxes for every \$1,000 of a property's assessed value.

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Q: If the bond levy passes, what is the timeline for construction?

A: If the bond levy passes in November, the district will immediately enter the planning and design phase for a new high school. This will last approximately 12 months, with an estimated 24 months of construction to follow.

More information regarding a construction timeline and completion date will be shared as it becomes available.

Q: What is being done now to address capacity issues?

A: The district is in the preliminary stages of a planned renovation of the auxiliary gym (commonly referred to as the "jail gym") that would add up to eight new classrooms to Monroe's main campus. This project would provide new classroom opportunities for teaching staff, allow some common and repurposed spaces in the building to return to their original intended use, and alleviate various scheduling and logistics challenges that have resulted from a lack of available learning spaces.

Additionally, the district has been working closely with the Ohio Department of Transportation, Butler County, Lemon Township and the city of Monroe to evaluate the potential for a second driveway on Yankee Road to alleviate traffic congestion and make Monroe's main campus more accessible.

Q: Does Monroe offer open enrollment?

A: Monroe has not accepted new open enrollment applications since 2021. Students who were open enrolled prior to this date are permitted to complete their education at Monroe. As of the start of the 2024-25 school year, there are less than 20 open enrolled students districtwide.

This does not include non-resident students of Monroe staff members who are permitted to enroll as a result of collective bargaining.

Q: How was a new high school decided?

A: During the 2022-23 school year, an advisory committee consisting of more than 100 members of the Monroe community began meeting monthly to provide input and explore options to address our growing facilities concerns. Last summer, a smaller group of members from this committee met to discuss the possibilities in more detail and make facilities recommendations.

Presentations and minutes from each of these meetings are located at www.monroelocalschools.com/district-info/facilities-planning.

Q: What is the reprogramming plan for Monroe’s existing school buildings?

A: While a decision has yet to be made, the school board and district administrators are currently exploring various options to reconfigure existing school buildings and the placement of grades preschool-eight.

Q: Will community members have an opportunity to ask questions or provide feedback on the project?

A: Yes. As fall approaches, the district will announce several opportunities for community members to meet with district representatives, ask questions and provide feedback. If the bond passes, additional opportunities will be provided for community input regarding design and planning of the new building.

Q: What happens if the bond levy fails?

A: If the bond levy fails, Monroe will begin implementing stop-gap measures that could include the addition of modular (portable) classrooms to address building capacity and class size issues. These measures are not currently a part of Monroe’s five-year financial forecast and could have lasting impacts on the sustainability of the district’s general fund.

Q: What is the difference between a bond levy and an operating levy?

A: A bond levy is similar to a mortgage for the schools, except instead of borrowing from a bank, the district finances the cost of long-term projects using money collected from property taxes. Bond proceeds are used to purchase or construct new buildings, renovate and modernize existing buildings, add or upgrade infrastructure systems, and purchase additional equipment.

An operating levy asks voters to agree to a tax that will collect a set dollar amount for a specific number of years. Local levies are used for operational costs and capital improvements, and bridge the gap between state funding and the true costs of operating a school district. Through fiscal accountability and changes in the state funding formula, Monroe currently boasts a strong five-year forecast without any new operating levies since November of 2016.

Q: Does this have anything to do with the city of Monroe’s master plan?

A: While Monroe Local Schools and the city of Monroe often work together, they operate completely independent of one another and have separate master planning processes.

To learn more about the work of our Facilities Advisory Committee and Monroe’s facilities master planning process, please visit monroelocalschools.com/district-info/facilities-planning/.

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