

How much debt does Franklin have now compared to other Warren County districts?

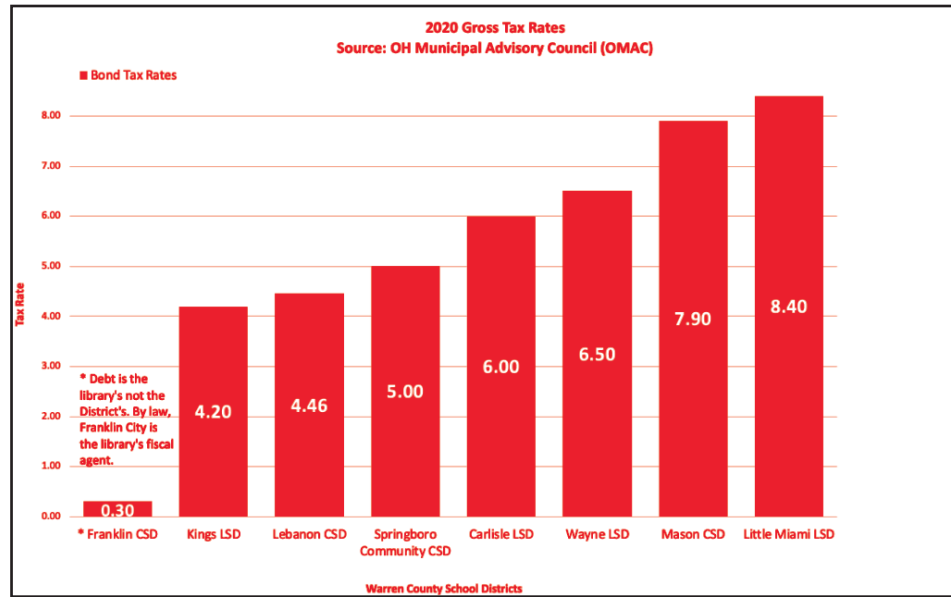
Franklin City Schools has no current debt. The .30 on the chart is actually the debt for Franklin-Springboro Public Library. In Ohio, libraries can't issue debt, so schools were legislated to do so for them. These funds pass through our books to the library system. The chart shows the current debt of the eight Warren County districts.

Why are the HS and MS being built first?

A new high school is the most expensive building in a master plan. Construction costs rise year over year so it's important to build the most expensive building first and get the maximum benefit out of our construction dollars. Additionally, bond interest rates are currently low so we're fortunate to be borrowing at this time.

Our current 99-year-old junior high building is very expensive to operate and maintain and we want to replace it with a new energy-efficient building as soon as possible. It's nearly impossible to get parts for the building's boiler, and as Carlisle was preparing to demolish their old Carlisle Middle School (a building of similar age to our FJHS), they invited our maintenance crews to strip their boiler of any and all usable parts.

By starting with the high school, more students will have the opportunity to enjoy a brand new building sometime in their



Franklin career. We anticipate the new high school would open in the fall of 2023.

How much is the total project?

The entire project is about \$130M, which is one of the larger recent capital projects in Franklin. It is the largest capital investment that Franklin City Schools has ever undertaken.

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Wildcat Community News

News from Franklin City Schools | October 2020

District has incredible opportunity to update facilities

Franklin voters will see Issue 11 on their ballots this year, as the district takes advantage of the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission's offer to help upgrade our classroom buildings.

"Our district has a fantastic opportunity to upgrade our buildings with the state of Ohio paying for 57% of the cost," said Dr. Mike Sander, superintendent of schools. "This is a wonderful opportunity to invest in our children and in the community!"

The Board of Education voted last year to enter into the ELPP program with the state of Ohio; the district will pay the local share of the construction project first, and the state will pay its share later.

The district has never been offered such a favorable cost split. An opportunity to build a new high school a decade ago had the state paying only 35% of the project.

"There's one contingency that voters need to be aware of," said Sander. "If the bond issue to fund the local share fails, we won't receive the state money. If we fail to take advantage of this opportunity, our agreement with the state would basically go dormant, and it would be many years before FCS would be offered another chance to participate in this program."

"New buildings will be much more energy efficient. Those savings, combined with reducing eight classroom buildings to five will save operating expenses and potentially delay the need for future operating levies," said Sander.

Since this is a two-part project, district voters will see Issue 11 on their Nov. 3 ballots, which asks voters to fund the local share. Passing the issue kicks off several years of construction, starting

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

64 Average age of our buildings

Franklin JHS	99 years
Anthony Wayne	70 years
Hampton Bennett	64 years
Schenck	61 years
Gerke	58 years
Hunter	58 years
Pennyroyal	51 years
Franklin HS	51 years

44 National average age of school buildings (nces.ed.gov)

57% Percent of base cost of our project paid by the state of Ohio

2023 Year the new Franklin HS will open in the fall

1 Area districts without updated facilities = **Us!**

with a new high school and the full renovation of the current high school into a middle school. The state money, arriving later, will fund the construction of three new elementary buildings at no cost to voters. The elementary buildings will be at the Hunter, Gerke, and Schenck sites.

"We know students, families, and other voters have many questions such as where the buildings will be, how much this will cost, and the timeframe. The district has a website, building-franklinsfuture.com, dedicated to the construction project and it will be updated as the project proceeds," said Sander.

Franklin's buildings are 64 years old on average, with the current junior high approaching its 100th birthday. The district's last new buildings opened in January 1969. Aging buildings bring a myriad of maintenance headaches and issues.

A review of some frequently asked questions

Why build now?

First, the district's growing student population is creating the need for more space; our buildings house more students than they were constructed to hold. In some cases, we're using the buildings' stages as classrooms.

Second, our money will go farther. Interest rates are low and construction costs are down 17% from 2019; they're expected to go down more this year. Bottom line: taxpayers will get more for their money.

Third, the state of Ohio will pay 57% of the project. With our local share being 43%, we're getting five new buildings at a 57% discount. For homeowners, this equates to five new buildings for approximately \$14/month for a \$100,000 house.

What are the benefits to new buildings?

We'll have safer buildings with controlled access points and fewer entries. (continued on page 2)

Senior Citizen Activity Passes

Senior citizens (age 62+) living in the Franklin City School district may pick up a pass in the Superintendent's office that will allow them to attend school-sponsored activities, including sporting events and arts performances, at no charge.

Follow our district on its social media pages for news, pictures, and updates. Twitter handles are:

@HunterElemNews	@GerkeElementary
@PennyroyalElem	@AdminsFHS
@AnthonyWayneEle	@FJHSOH
@Schenck_Elem	@FCSWildcats (District)

Instagram: fcswildcatpride (District)
Facebook: facebook.com/FranklinCitySchools/
Website: franklincityschools.com

News from Franklin City Schools

(continued from page 1)

We'll have modern facilities with the latest technology and flexible spaces to ensure that our students are college and career ready.

We'll have healthier, efficient buildings that will eliminate heating, cooling, plumbing, drainage, flooding, and electrical issues and save operating costs.

Our current buildings are also facing many expensive maintenance problems such as nearly \$3.5M in roof repairs: Schenck: \$611,300; FJHS: \$544,200; FHS Area D: \$70,500; Pennyroyal: \$206,400; Hampton Bennett Main kindergarten hall, office, and gym: \$213,700; Anthony Wayne (everywhere but the gym): \$406,400; FHS auditorium: \$43,000; Hunter: \$633,600; and Gerke: \$764,400.

New buildings and a fully renovated JHS building will be designed with high-efficiency LED lights, energy-efficient windows, and modern HVAC systems among other features; all these save the district operating dollars in the long term and potentially delay the need for future operating levies .

Where did the plan come from?

The district formed a steering committee in February 2019 to create a master facilities plan, created a Community Advisory Team (CAT), and held public forums to gather community input and feedback throughout the process. 56 community members served on the CAT. They spent six months working with the district to develop options they believed the Franklin community would support; that met the needs and goals of the district; and that took full advantage of the state's funding offer. In March 2020 the district conducted a community survey for residents to vote on the three plans recommended by the CAT.

What will our new and renovated buildings look like?

That depends on what the public wants. Following passage of the bond issue, the district will continue its commitment to community engagement meaning members of the public will have a chance to shape the buildings' designs.

What's the difference between a bond and a levy?

A bond can **only** be used for construction projects. A levy is primarily for operating costs, but can also be used for building improvements and maintenance. The Ohio School Boards Association provides a detailed explanation of the difference. See their website, www.ohioschoolboards.org, and search for a document called Understanding School Levies.

How long is the bond for?

Home mortgages are typically 30 years and most Ohio school bond issues are for 37 years. FCS' bond is for a maximum of 37 years, and like a home mortgage can be repaid earlier if funds are available.

For further clarification, contact the interim district treasurer Robert Giuffre at rgiuffre@franklincityschools.com or (937) 743-8603.

Why does the ballot say 6.52 mills but the district says it will collect less than 5 mills? How much will my taxes change?

The number on the ballot, 6.52 mills, was determined by our county auditor Matt Nolan. The formula Matt used is dictated by Ohio Revised Code Section 133.18, which assumes that a district's property valuation does not change.

However, Franklin's property values have increased over the years – up 33% over the past 18 years. We expect these increases to continue over the next 37 years of the bond repayment.

Based on those anticipated property value increases, and by scheduling when we issue the debt, the district will be able to keep the millage we need at 4.95 mills.

When we talk about scheduling when we issue debt, we're saying that we may not issue it all at once. For example, we may not issue the debt to renovate the high school to a middle school until the new high school is near completion.

There are several ways that districts can structure debt repayment. Under two of those, the millage changes over the years. However, Franklin has chosen the method that keeps our millage the same for all 37 years, which in this case keeps it under 5 mills.

For you to personally determine how much your own tax obligation would be, follow this formula, which is based on a \$100,000 house. $\$100,000 \times .35 \times .00495 = \$173.25/\text{year}$ which is about \$14/mo. You'll see that figure on the bond issue materials the district has mailed and posted, and which the campaign committee is using.

If you have questions about our millage, feel free to call Interim Treasurer Rob Giuffre, or contact Warren County Auditor Matt Nolan.

Where will the new schools go?

The high school will be on the current junior high property on 6th St. The current high school will be renovated into a grade 6-8 middle school, with one wing being renovated to house the district's central offices. The current auditorium and gym will be retained but the rest of the building will be completely renovated.

Why was the Schenck site chosen over Pennyroyal?

The Pennyroyal site would cost the district more than \$1.2M extra because it lacks sufficient infrastructure. It would require upgrades to the road, gas, and sewer. This additional cost is not part of the bond calculation so money would have to be reallocated from either the general fund or cuts in the building design to cover the expense.

How long will it take?

Once the bond issue passes, the district can start designing the buildings immediately. We anticipate one year of design work and two years of construction. The new high school could welcome its first freshman class in fall 2023, and the middle school could welcome its first 6th-grade class in fall 2025. (continued on page 4)

Learn more at www.buildingfranklinsfuture.com

News from Franklin City Schools

Students benefit from Catalyst Counseling's on-site mental health services

Catalyst Counselor Bridget Petri said this about the on-site mental health services provided to Franklin City Schools' students: "It's hard work, but it's worth it to see the kids click and reach goals."

Catalyst Counseling, LLC, based in West Chester, is a private practice under contract with FCS to provide school-based mental health services. The partnership with FCS is in its third year; it's expanded from one classroom building (Franklin Junior High) to all eight. The firm's reach has also grown; they began in Edgewood and have expanded to 13 districts including Lakota, Ross, Madison, Springboro, and Butler Tech. Catalyst accepts most insurance plans and has private pay options. Petri noted that Catalyst wants to start a nonprofit foundation to raise funds to close the gap for students who don't have insurance and can't pay out of pocket.

"We originally had one counselor for the whole district," said Petri, "but have moved to being full time in each building." She explained that being embedded in the buildings wove counselors into the school community and allowed daily interaction with teachers and students. Petri noted that a selling point for students to take advantage of the services is having a safe place -- someone they can go to and talk to without judgement. She added that during COVID, kids are struggling with isolation; they may not have access to WiFi, and they are grieving about missing their friends.

Referrals for services may come from teachers, family, guidance counselors (especially at the junior high and high school levels), and from students themselves. "We've streamlined the paperwork," said Petri. "It's all online now; it makes it easier and gets kids set up quicker."

Jim Rhoades, principal of Anthony Wayne Elementary, said

having counselors on-site is valuable for a number of reasons. "It's less time that students are out of the building for those appointments," said Rhoades, "ensuring that students are not missing important classes. It also allows the staff to work with therapists to meet a client's needs." He added that if there's an emergency such as a death in [a student's] family, that emergency services were available and that therapists were also available to offer education on mental health issues to teachers and classes.

Dr. Mike Sander, superintendent of Franklin City Schools, emphasized the value of ready access to mental health services, "These services put our students in a better state of being ready to learn and allows them to be focused on getting an education instead of worrying about other issues." He echoed Jim Rhoades' appreciation of having counselors on-site. "It's a great way to make sure that students can make their appointments."

Petri noted that in the education field, there's been a shift in thinking about the value of counseling; "If kids know how to cope with anxiety, they have skills to be able to function better in school." She cited the example of a high school senior who had a lot of anxiety and no confidence. "[The student] didn't know how to problem solve; once they knew they had a support system they almost became a different person, they graduated, attended college, and are doing well in life."

In addition to in-school counseling, Catalyst also offers a hybrid model of counseling via telehealth, home-based, or within the community. In addition to meeting students' needs, they also provide services to community members, parents, and district staff. Franklin parents, staff, and students who have questions should reach out to the therapist in their building, or contact district's lead counselor Bridget Petri at bridgetpetri@catalystcounselingllc.org or 937-210-9754. Catalyst Counseling may also be reached at (513) 360-8205.

Board honors students for achievement

The Franklin Board of Education recently recognized a number of students for achievement. Students honored for earning 10 quarters of straight As were Landon Middleton, Andrew Jenkins, Emma Morgan, Levi Moyer, Spencer Blair, Elijah Koss, Jonah Williams, Kendra Allen, and Isabella Barker. Two Schenck students were honored for the year-end awards they had received: Callen Johnson (Eli Nardi Award) and Ariyanna Blackstone (Ronnie Charles Award). Two students were honored for having

won the Archie Griffin Award at FJHS: Sophia Aldridge and Carter Black. Eli Alanis and Audrey Sove were honored for being the 7th Grade Wildcats of the Year; Kensington Black and Jacob Eyink were honored for being the 8th grade Wildcats of the Year. Franklin established the Student Achievement Award in 2001 to honor students who have demonstrated exceptional achievement in academics, community service, or character. Hundreds of students have been honored since the award's inception.



Front row, from left: Ariyanna Blackstone, Andrew Jenkins, Emma Morgan, Elijah Koss, Spencer Blair, Landon Middleton. Back row: Levi Moyer, Callen Johnson, Jonah Williams.



Front row, from left: Carter Black, Kensington Black, Kendra Allen, Audrey Sove, Isabella Allen, Eli Alanis. Back row: Jacob Eyink, Sophia Aldridge.