

# School district meets with staff, community on new building plan

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(Photo: Craig Shoup/The News-Messenger)  
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FREMONT - With two design firms and construction companies hired to oversee the building of five new schools, Fremont City Schools welcomed suggestions from district residents, teachers and community leaders on what they want to see in new school buildings.

Voters in May approved a \$58.6 million levy to construct four new elementary buildings and one new Ross High School as part of a facilities plan to upgrade building quality and technologies as the district moves into the 21st century of education.

Among the biggest concerns from district residents were expanding technology and internet capabilities, better heating and cooling and expanded space and storage for students and faculty.

Around 100 community residents who are either teachers, business or community leaders voiced positive and negative comments about the school district during a community meeting at the Neeley Center at Terra State Community College.

"The one thing that stuck out to me today is that our staff is ready to use new facilities and technology for our students," Fremont City Schools Superintendent Jon Detwiler said.

One concern Detwiler shared with many in the meeting was air quality in the current buildings, and the lack of efficient air conditioning and heating.

"We really want to address the air quality in our new buildings," Detwiler said. "Far too many people said today they had their windows open in the winter. It's not good to pay that natural gas bill and have our windows open."

Each table brainstormed positive and negative aspects of the school, and while heating and cooling were a major concern, many expressed concerns over storage and space being used.



**Denise Hirt, director of curriculum, assessment and staff development for Fremont City Schools, discusses district needs for new elementary buildings and Ross High School to be built in Fremont. (Photo: Craig Shoup/The News-Messenger)**

Nancy Sloma, a fifth grade teacher at Hayes Elementary, said many educators would like to see improvements made to the security of new buildings.

"We'd love to see a media center, more outlets and better security, like a key FOB entry and no more keys," Sloma said.

Sloma said libraries in elementary buildings and Ross High School seemed to be an afterthought, with Hayes' library currently housed in the portable extension of the school.

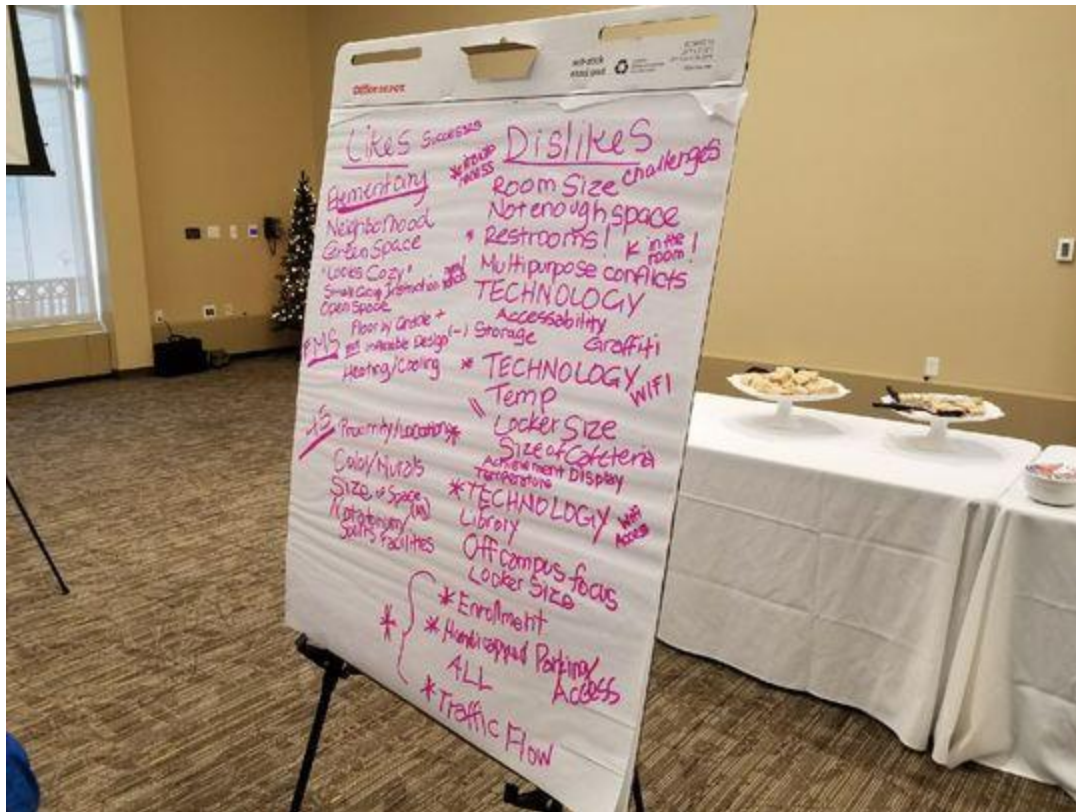
Detwiler said the district will be able to learn from the mistakes of outdated elementary buildings, but also learn from the district's newest building, the middle school, which was built in 2008.

"It's like when you build a new home, and you wish you could have done something that you didn't," Detwiler said. "The middle school will be a good example of what can work for new buildings."

Among the features community members like about the middle school is the open floor plan, inviting lobby and the centralized library and media center.

Detwiler said feedback from the community and district workers will only benefit the district as it moves forward with the building project.

"Right now the goal is to fix the problems in the district and move forward," Detwiler said. "It's really important to get a different viewpoint, and there was a lot of enthusiasm towards this meeting. We could have had 1,000 people here but we were limited by space."



Fremont City School District residents and staff were invited to brainstorm ideas about what new school buildings should include when they are built in 2019. (Photo: Craig Shoup/The News-Messenger)

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