



**Auburn Washburn Passes Bond Election Focused on Innovation. Opportunity. Excellence.**

The 2021-22 school year will forever be memorable in the Auburn-Washburn School community. After reviewing feedback collected from 30 stakeholder group meetings throughout our school community, the Board of Education unanimously approved the calling of a bond election. A two-question ballot was mailed to all registered voters residing in the Auburn-Washburn School District by the Shawnee County Election Office.

In Question 1, not to exceed \$145 million, the following main projects were included with a brief statement as to why they are important for our school community?

Early Childhood Education

Why? We currently serve 200 age 3- and 4-year-olds in our early childhood program but aspire to serve over 400 students. We need additional space to meet this need. Research indicates the benefits of early childhood education to the U.S. gross domestic product are more than three times greater than the initial investment needed to provide the service.

Build a Second Middle School

Why? WRMS is the largest middle school in Kansas. By building a second middle school and transitioning sixth grade students from elementary to middle school, we will have two ideal-sized middle schools. More opportunities will be provided to students at each middle school and much of our curriculum is aligned PreK – Grade 5 and Grades 6 – 12.

Career and Technical Education Center

Why? An innovation-focused and industry-standard center would provide new and expanded opportunities for students to gain skills and experiences that can immediately be applied in the workforce following high school graduation. We will seek partnerships with local businesses geared to fill future employment needs in and around Topeka with our graduates that have obtained marketable job skills.

Space and Capacity Upgrades

Why? At the elementary level, sixth grade classrooms and other areas identified in each school would be repurposed to include collaboration spaces and areas dedicated to meeting academic and emotional student needs. At WRMS, approximately 50% of the school will be renovated or updated to meet the expectations of having two middle schools. At WRHS, space will be added and updated to accommodate academic and co-curricular needs.

In Question 2, not to exceed \$15 million, the following project was included with a brief statement as to why it was important for our school community?

### Multiuse Community Pool

Why? During the school day, the pool would be used by physical education classes and students with special needs. After school, the pool would be used by the WRHS swim program for practices and competitions. After hours, it would be available for community organizations (swim lessons, swim teams, senior citizens, etc.). To address district opportunities that consistently surfaced during 30 strategic planning meetings from various stakeholder groups throughout the Auburn-Washburn school community, the Board of Education approved a two-question ballot bond election. The spirit and intent of the bond projects best summarized by the following three words: Innovation. Opportunity. Excellence.

Because of tremendous support shown by our school community, on April 12, 2022, question one passed with 61% voter support which will allow Auburn-Washburn to engage in \$145 million of capital improvements.

Since the bond passed on April 12, the following steps were completed through July 31, 2022:

- One, at the May 2 Board of Education meeting, two architect firms were approved to partner with us on bond projects. HTK Architects, located in Topeka, will be the design team working on all elementary school projects and all WRHS projects. GouldEvans Architects, located in Lawrence, will be the design team working on WRMS renovations and upgrades and Middle School 2.
- Two, at the May 16 Board of Education meeting, three construction companies were approved to partner with us on bond projects. MCP, located in Topeka, will be the construction partner working on Middle School 2. Loyd Builders, located in Ottawa, will be the construction partner working on all elementary school projects, WRMS renovations and upgrades, and the Tallgrass addition. McCown-Gordon, located in Manhattan, will be the construction partner working on all WRHS projects.
- Three, due to their scope of work, complexity, and length of time to complete, work on the following projects will begin immediately:
  - Design work for Middle School 2 and renovations and upgrades to WRMS.
  - Design work for WRHS which includes a CTE center, renovations of numerous classrooms and spaces, and additional space for student activities.
  - Design work for Pauline Central which includes a six-room early childhood center and significant building upgrades.
- Four, construction will not begin on any of the projects listed above until late Spring or Summer 2023. It is important to spend the time needed for design teams to engage with staff and other stakeholders to gain a clear understanding of detail for each design.
- Five, it is anticipated that all projects will be completed by August 2026.

Each bond project will be approached with the following in mind: Innovation. Opportunity. Excellence. needs.

