



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. As a home owner that is affected by the traffic at Farley, what is the plan for traffic control to the new middle school?

A. If the bond election passes on April 12, a traffic study for Urish Road will be completed as soon as possible. The study is ready but we did not want to pay for it unless the bond passed.

It is important to note that the property owned on Urish Road is nearly 51 acres which is more than enough land to hold a middle school and related amenities. Therefore, when designing the new middle school which includes entrances, exits, parking, and overall maximization of space, a priority will be to engineer student drop-off lanes and school bus lanes long enough to prevent traffic from backlogging on Urish Road. Discussions have also occurred about gaining access to the school from 29th street which would provide a second entrance/exit.

Q. What is the total amount requested in this Bond?

A. QUESTION 1 is for \$145,000,000. Question 2 is for \$15,000,000. The total included for both questions is \$160,000,000. Complete details can be found in the [Informational Brochure](#) or on the Bond website at <https://usd437.net/bond2022>.

Q. Why did I receive a ballot when I did not request it? Do all parents get to vote regardless of where they live?

A. The Shawnee County Election Office is coordinating the election. All active registered voters who reside in the Auburn-Washburn School District were mailed a ballot and are eligible to vote in the Bond election.

Q. Is there going to be a new wrestling facility built with this bond?

A. Discussions have occurred about the need for additional space at WRHS to meet academic, co-curricular, and athletic needs. As one specific example related to this question, Auburn-Washburn approved girls wrestling as a KSHSAA-approved sport a few years ago and wrestling space for the boys

and girls program has been challenging to manage. Question one on the ballot includes building additional space at WRHS. The term “wrestling facility” implies the single use of additional space would be for wrestling. That is not the case. If question one passes, additional space built at WRHS would accommodate current needs during the school day as well as needs after school which includes additional space for the wrestling program.

Q. What will happen if the bond is not passed. Will the school district seek to raise property taxes anyway to fund the projects covered by the bond?

A. If the bond does not pass, it will be important to seek reasons why it did not pass. After evaluating those reasons, a decision would eventually be made to pursue, or not pursue, another bond election in the near future.

A school district does not have authority to increase the mill levy / property taxes to complete \$145 million of capital outlay projects (question 1) or \$15 million of capital outlay projects (question 2). A bond election is required and the outcome of that election gives the district authority to proceed or not proceed with capital outlay projects.

Q. Is the Bond vote only by mail with no “in-person” voting? If I am registered in Shawnee county, is that all I need to do?

A. The Shawnee County Election Office mailed ballots to all Auburn-Washburn USD 437 residents who are registered to vote in Shawnee County. The Election Office placed ballots in the mail on Wednesday, March 23. The ballots must be returned to the Election Office by noon on Tuesday, April 12. The ballots can be mailed back or dropped off in person at the Election Office located at 3420 SW Van Buren Street in Topeka. More information is available online at <https://www.snco.us/election>.

Q. What are the projected annual operating expenditures for the proposed buildings and how does the district intend to finance these increased costs?

A. The capital outlay budget is used to complete construction projects and the general fund budget is used to pay for monthly expenses needed to operate the district. The bond election will provide the capital outlay dollars necessary to complete construction. The general fund budget will absorb the additional costs of staffing, cleaning, heating/cooling, etc. the additional spaces built. Each year expectations on the general fund shift due to needs and priorities and that would include growing into additional space through 2026 if the bond passes.

Q. Why isn't adding on to the existing Middle School being considered? We already don't have enough educators, staff, bus drivers, etc.

A. Actually, that was an option discussed early in the planning process. The primary concern, however, is the number of middle school students enrolled at WRMS. If a second middle school is built, sixth grade students would transition to middle school which would also reduce student enrollment in our

elementary schools. By building this one new school, student enrollment would be reduced at both our elementary and middle schools.

Specifically, student enrollment at each middle school would be 720 students and each grade level pod (sixth, seventh, and eighth) would serve 240 students. At WRMS today, each grade level pod (seventh and eighth) serves 480 students so the size of each grade level would be reduced by 50%. This approach increases the number of opportunities for middle school students. The three to five classrooms opened up at each elementary school when sixth grade students transition to middle school would be repurposed to better accommodate the learning needs of PreK – Grade 5 students.

We have successfully filled most positions in Auburn-Washburn, not all, but most. We have not been able to hire enough bus drivers to meet our needs for the last 10+ years. The result of the bond election most likely will not have a direct impact on the number of future bus drivers we are able to hire.

Q. Have you done traffic analysis for Urish Road? 33rd and Urish are backed up from both directions waiting to pick up children. Now two blocks north you will have a rather large junior high school with parents again in line. How does this affect the fire departments ability to navigate the street?

A. If the bond election passes on April 12, a traffic study for Urish Road will be completed as soon as possible. The study is ready but we did not want to pay for it unless the bond passed.

It is important to note that the property owned on Urish Road is nearly 51 acres which is more than enough land to hold a middle school and related amenities. Therefore, when designing the new middle school which includes entrances, exits, parking, and overall maximization of space, a priority will be to engineer student drop-off lanes and school bus lanes long enough to prevent traffic from backlogging on Urish Road. Discussions have also occurred about gaining access to the school from 29th street which would provide a second entrance/exit.

Q. What is the current mill levy for bond indebtedness? What is the estimate of what it will be when all bonds have been issued?

A. The majority of bond debt from the successful 2007 bond election will be paid off in 2029. We are currently using seven to eight mills to pay off those remaining bonds. If the 2022 bond passes, we would use approximately seven mills to begin paying 2022 bonds in addition to the seven to eight mills used to pay off 2007 bonds. Once the 2007 bonds are paid off, the mill levy will remain the same but the seven to eight mills that had been used to pay 2007 bonds will be used to pay 2022 bonds. Bonds sold in 2022 will be paid off at this consistent rate by 2044.

Q. Your estimates of monthly tax increases are based off a \$200,000 home. My home is worth \$300,000. How much do my taxes go up?

A. Ballot question 1 will not exceed \$145,000,000. On a home valued at \$200,000, the property tax impact per month is approximately \$13.81 per month. Therefore, proportionately speaking, a home valued at \$100,000, the property tax impact per month is approximately \$6.91 per month. On a home valued at \$300,000, the property tax impact per month is approximately \$20.71 per month.

Ballot question 2 will not exceed \$15,000,000. On a home valued at \$200,000, the property tax impact per month is approximately \$1.42 per month. Therefore, proportionately speaking, a home valued at \$100,000, the property tax impact per month is approximately \$0.71 per month. On a home valued at \$300,000, the property tax impact per month is approximately \$2.13 per month.

Q. Will any of the additional technical classes duplicate those already available through Washburn Tech. If so, why?

A. WRHS has a wonderful partnership with Washburn Tech and there is absolutely no interest in competing with them for programs. Our goal is to build an industry-standard Career and Technical Career Center at WRHS that will provide new and expanded opportunities for students to gain skills and experiences that can be applied in the workforce.

Q. If a new junior high or middle school is built in the interest of utilizing both the new building and the existing building currently serving is the only Junior High School in the district, how would the district determine which of the two schools each 6th grader is directed to? What impact might it have on students who have established strong friendships, bonds established over potentially 5 years of grade school? Has anyone considered the potentially profound effect it could have on a person entering adolescence to be potentially cut off from a number of peer supports, were this to eviscerate years of friendships if they started their education and kindergarten at a specific grade school?

A. A decision has not been made on which students will attend each middle school but the following factors will be considered:

- Balancing student enrollment at each middle school
- Avoid changing elementary boundaries so friends can remain together
- Location - distance traveled from home to and from school each day (this would include bus route efficiencies)
- Balancing at-risk student needs which will assist with staffing efficiencies

Q. If the pool was approved how much time would the community get? I have seen promises like this before in other places and the community gets like 2 hours a day. Would you also teach all kids how to swim? That would be considered much more of a life skill than a swimming sport.

A. During the school day, the pool would be used by physical education classes and students with special needs. After school, it would be used by the Washburn Rural High School swimming teams during swim seasons. When not in use by the district, it will be open for use by the public. Conversations have occurred about providing swimming lessons and access to youth swimming teams and water activities for senior citizens. Availability should exist in the evenings, weekends, and during the summer months.

Q. Are there already classes at the high school that are tailored to learn about specific industries? If so, why are we adding more, shouldn't we be teaching more of a broad learning to these industries?

A Yes, Washburn Rural High School currently offers Career and Technical Education classes. That said, however, industry trends and job market skill sets have changed significantly over the years and our goal is to provide industry-standard space so students are well-equipped and prepared to enter the workforce after high school if that is the path they choose. Local employers are struggling to find trained and skilled workers and we would like to partner with local businesses to help keep local talent right here in Topeka.

Q. To my knowledge preschool is not required... So why are we opting to add so many more classrooms, especially when there are requirements to apply? There are no income restrictions or learning disability requirements for public k-12 so why should the public pay for a preschool that does have requirements.... Does that make it less public?

A. We have seen over the years that not all five year-old students are ready for kindergarten. Many communities have advocated for more structured learning opportunities for three and four year-old kids. The State of Kansas has recognized this as well and have provided funding to early childhood programs. Auburn-Washburn currently serves about 200 early childhood students but we see great value in having more attend. We currently turn families away each year. The benefits of early childhood pay huge dividends to students choosing to participate in them.

Q. Why is there such a large amount of funding set for maintenance? What does our maintenance schedule look like now?

A. Nearly all capital items have an expected operational cycle so we have created a 20-year replacement cycle plan for all capital items. Specifically, we know how long carpet, HVAC, asphalt, buses, ceiling tile, generators, classroom furniture, mowers, computers, roofs, field turf, etc. are expected to last, so when we purchase these items for a school, we add their "end of cycle" date to the 20-year replacement cycle plan. The 20-year replacement cycle plan helps us plan for upcoming maintenance costs. We are able to effectively manage ongoing maintenance needs but many years we do not have additional dollars to complete capital projects that schools would like to complete. For example, we are currently moving to LED lighting. We have a plan to convert a certain number of classrooms per year. If the bond passes, we would re-evaluate the pace of this project and may consider converting more classrooms per year to LED lighting. This is just one example of how bond dollars could be used to support the 20-year replacement cycle plan.

Q. Will the bond decrease the class sizes on an elementary level that have gotten too large and unmanageable for teachers?

A. The guidelines for elementary class sizes have not changed in eight years. Guidelines are in place for kindergarten, grades 1 - 3, and grades 4 - 6. Here is a table that illustrates class size guidelines:

Auburn-Washburn Staffing Guidelines						
Range of Enrolled Students Per Section and Grade Level						
	1 section	2 sections	3 sections	4 sections	5 sections	6 sections

Kindergarten	0 - 21	22 - 42	43 - 63	64 - 84	85 - 105	106 - 126
Grades 1 - 3	0 - 23	24 - 46	47 - 69	70 - 92	93 - 115	116 - 138
Grades 4 - 6	0 - 26	27 - 52	53 - 78	79 - 104	105 - 130	131 - 156

Q. Where or how can I register to vote?

A. The Shawnee County Election Office can provide complete information on voter registration. [Click here to access their website](#). You can also call them at 785-251-5900 or email them at electionoffice@snco.us. The Election Office created a document with information specific to the Auburn-Washburn 2022 Bond Election available by [clicking here](#).

Q. What are the terms of the bonds, interest rate, duration, total cost to taxpayers?

A. Based on estimates provided by Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, future bonds amortized over 20 years with approximately equal payments. Conservatively, future bonds issued at a rate of 3%, property tax delinquency rate of 2%, and assessed valuation growing annually at a rate of 2%.

Q. How many years will the Mill increase last? A slide shows it will be staggered. Can you explain?

Future bonds will be amortized over 20 years. So, bonds issued in 2023 will be paid off by 2043, bonds issued in 2024 will be paid off by 2044, and if bonds are issued in 2025, they will be paid off by 2045. In summary, the mill levy increase will last 20 years from the time bonds are issued.

Q. How many years will the extra Mills last?

A. The bonds to fund the proposed construction will be sold between 2022 and 2027 as the projects are carried out and completed. It is anticipated that each series sold will have a 20 year repayment schedule.

Q. Where will the new middle school be built?

A. The new middle school will be built on property currently owned by the district on SW Urish Road near SW 33rd Street ([see map](#)).

Q. How will the district address traffic in the area?

A. The district is already working with Shawnee County officials to evaluate the traffic impact of a new school in the area. The school will be built with a goal of minimizing the impact. There are things that could be done for this purpose including turning lanes, creating access from SW 29th Street, keeping cars

and buses separated, and long pick-up/drop-off lanes on the school site that allow a large number of vehicles to quickly move off of adjacent streets.

Q. How will the bond affect my property tax?

A. Below is a table showing the impact on property taxes. More information is in the [Master Facility Planning Overview & Bond Proposal](#) & [Informational Brochure](#) at usd437.net/bond2022.

Anticipated cost for owner of \$200,000 home:				
	Bond Amount	% of Total	Mill Levy	Property Taxes
QUESTION 1	\$145,000,000	90.625%	7.207	\$13.81 per month
QUESTION 2	\$15,000,000	9.375%	0.746	\$1.42 per month
COMBINED TOTAL	\$160,000,000	100%	7.953	\$15.23 per month

Q. Has the district considered increasing substitute teacher pay to address substitute teacher shortages that will only be worse when new facilities are opened?

A. The district recently implemented a plan that has greatly improved the situation with substitute teachers. However, any issues related to substitute teaching staff will not be significantly impacted by the facilities being proposed. The overall number of teaching positions will not increase significantly due to the fact student enrollment will not change significantly.

Q. When are the community information meetings taking place?

A. Four community information meetings have been scheduled at the following times and locations:

- Tuesday, January 25, 6:30 pm, [WRHS](#) Library Media Center
- Thursday, February 10, 7:30 am, [Shuler Education Center](#) Board Room
- Thursday, March 3, noon, [virtual meeting](#)
- Thursday, March 24, 6:00 pm, [Shuler Education Center](#) Board Room