

SCHOOLnews

Summer 2022



Inside this Issue

www.usd437.net 

From the Board & Superintendent.....2	Staff Awards7
Bond Projects Approved 3	2022 Retirees 7
Points of Pride 4	Online Registration 8
School Highlights 5-7	Years of Service Recognition..... 8

From the Board

Michael White, Board of Education President



One main reason that I chose to run for the Board of Education five years ago was because I knew the Auburn-Washburn school community was approaching the need for a bond election. Through feedback received from two years of strategic planning meetings, it became clear that 2022 was the perfect time to pursue Innovation. Opportunity. Excellence. On behalf of the Board of Education, thank you for supporting this extremely important work, not only for students, but for all in our school community. It was an honor serving as the Board President during the 2021-22 school year. I am proud of the work we accomplished and excited about the bond projects that will be completed over the next four years.

With the bond election passing in April and design and construction partners selected in May, discussions on bond projects have moved from a 30,000-foot view to a very detailed, ground-level view. During a ground-level (literally) discussion on building the second middle school, the following question surfaced, “Will a new middle school (now) and a new high school (distant future)

fit on the 93-acre plot of land the school district owns located on the northeast corner of Auburn Road and 29th Street?” In 2007 when the school district purchased that land, the original purpose was to build only a new high school on that property. Our design partners have confirmed that a new middle school and a new high school, along with the necessary amenities and athletic fields, can fit on this 93-acre piece of land.



As a result of this updated information, we are analyzing the pros and cons of building the second middle school on Auburn Road and 29th Street or on Urish Road just south of 29th Street (51 acres) as we had initially planned. School district leadership will share factual updates as they become available and opportunities for patron input will be offered if indeed both properties are viable options. It is possible that the Board of Education will confirm a decision on site selection for the second middle school late this summer. ★

From the Superintendent

Dr. Scott McWilliams, Superintendent of Schools



Thank You! Thank you very much for the high level of engagement and support shown throughout the bond election. Your support of early childhood education, a second middle school, Career and Technical Education, and additional or renovated spaces in each school will provide tremendous benefits to students for many years to come. Over the next four years of construction and renovation, we will do everything possible to seek efficiencies, remain on or ahead of schedule, and complete each project in a way that our community will be proud to support. Again, thank you!

In Auburn-Washburn, we take a “what is in the best interest of students” approach to nearly every decision made. That approach will be taken with each bond project as well. In

seeking what is in the best interest of students, we will look through the lens of Innovation. Opportunity. Excellence. Specifically, what new or innovative strategies and educational spaces can be created to provide more opportunities for students. When students have more opportunities to engage, explore, create, be part of a team, and learn, educational excellence can be attained. It is a very exciting time for the Auburn-Washburn school community. Let’s get to work!

For details about the next steps with the bond projects, see the article on the next page. ★



Bond Projects Approved and Moving Forward

Because of tremendous support shown by our school community, Auburn-Washburn will engage in \$145 million of capital projects that will be completed over the next four years. Specifically, the school district will pursue the following projects:

- Build a second middle school
- Expand the early childhood program
- Build a Career and Technical Center
- Add and/or repurpose spaces at each school to best meet student needs

Frequent updates will be shared so all in the Auburn-Washburn school community remain informed and engaged on each capital project. In addition to these updates, the district website (www.usd437.net) has a page dedicated to bond projects, and it will serve as a great place to go for current and factual information.

At this time, we are excited to share the following five updates:

1. Two architect firms have been approved to partner with Auburn-Washburn on bond projects. HTK Architects, located in Topeka, will be the design team working on all elementary school projects and all WRHS projects. Multistudio Architects, located in Lawrence, will be the design team working on WRMS renovations and upgrades and Middle School 2, which will be built on district-owned property.
2. Three construction companies have been approved to partner with Auburn-Washburn 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.

3. Due to the scope of work, complexity, and length of time to complete, work on the following four bond projects will begin immediately:
 - a. Design work for Middle School 2 and renovations and upgrades to WRMS.
 - b. Design work for WRHS which includes a CTE center, renovations of numerous classrooms and spaces, and additional space for student activities.
 - c. Design work for Pauline Central which includes a six-room early childhood center and significant building upgrades.
 - d. Design work for additional space for student activities that will also serve as a storm shelter at Tallgrass.
4. Construction will not begin on any of these 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.
5. It is anticipated that all bond projects will be completed by August 2026.

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

Thank you again for your support! ★



POINTS of Pride

Auburn Washburn Unified School District 437

Theatre

The Washburn Rural High School presentation of the play, The Book of Will has been selected to for a mainstage performance at the International Thespian Festival in Indiana University.

6A State Champions – Washburn Rural High School



- 4-Speaker Debate – Sonya Doubledee, Donna Jalosjos, JiYoon Park, & Zach Willingham
- 2-Speaker Debate – Karissa Kromminga & Lauren Reed
- Dance Team
- Girls Basketball
- Boys Wrestling Team and Individual Champions Aiden Boline & Austin Fager

Spelling

Shawnee County Spelling Bee
First Place

Prajeet Akula, Grade 5, Indian Hills

State Art Competition

State Scholastic Art Competition
National Visions Nominee (Best of Show)

Annah Brighton

Washburn Rural High School

Niche Award

Auburn-Washburn ranked Niche #1 in district in Shawnee County and #5 in Kansas



District Rating

Auburn-Washburn ranked #3 on the Kansas Top 25 list by Ingram's Magazine.



Staff Recognition

2022 Milken Educator Award

Ryan Pfeifer
Washburn Rural High School
Science Teacher



2022 Kansas Horizon Award

Ivan Torres
Washburn Rural High School
Spanish Teacher

Speech and Debate National Champions

Policy Debate
JiYoon Park and Zach Willingham

National History Day

Seven Washburn Rural Middle School students (five projects) qualified to compete in the National History Day.

- Jadyan Barnett and Lucy Hundley with project Mary Church Terrell: Lifting as We Climb
- Sophie Heinen with project The American Plan: The Forgotten War on Venereal Diseases
- Haley Reiff with project Frances Perkins: Making Deals with Great Zeal
- Audrey Appuhn and Campbell Hight with project Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Tree: Penelope Laingen and the Yellow Ribbon Project
- Rebecca Reed with project The Games Must Go On ★

National Merit Scholars

Finalists (top 1% in nation)



Karyna Cheung



Victoria Wagner



Om Watson

Commended Scholars (top 5% in nation)

Donna Jalosjos
Rishiraj Pandya
Zachary Willingham

Gorata MacKenzie – African American Program Scholar

Landen Lobatos-Dick – Hispanic Program Scholar

Alex Sanderson – Hispanic Program Scholar

Victoria Wagner – Indigenous Program Scholar



Washburn Rural High School

Washburn Rural High School Theatre's presentation of *The Book of Will* has been selected to for a mainstage performance at the International Thespian Festival in Indiana University this summer. The festival is described as the national championship of high school theatre. The play was initially performed at WRHS in November. "I think it's been really affirming for the students involved, because once we were selected, they finally saw in themselves what I've seen in them all along," said WRHS Theatre Director Maeghan Bishop.

The show includes 18 in the cast, and over the course of the year, nine crew members. The faculty and staff includes Bishop along with Technical Director/Designer Nick Beasley and Costume Supervisor Linnea



Hoyos. In addition to their two performances at the Festival, the group from WRHS will have the opportunity to attend workshops led by industry professionals. "Everything from how to audition for a role with an accent, to theatrical dance, to technical theatre and design," Bishop said "Our technical theatre students will be competing in a 'Tech Olympics' team event, and we'll also have opportunity to attend the other shows being performed."

Bishop hopes their success this year will inspire those in our district and community to take advantage of the WRHS Theatre productions next year, and even to

get their own children involved in the performing arts in any way they can.★

Washburn Rural Middle School

Charlie Stoltenberg has been named Principal of Washburn Rural Middle School. He is taking the place of retiring Principal Mark Keopsel. "I'm excited to join WRMS and the Auburn-Washburn school district because of the community," Stoltenberg said. "The reputation the district has of having supportive parents and community is excellent." Stoltenberg has been the Principal of Ottawa Middle School for the past five years. He has also served as an assistant Middle School Principal and English Teacher. "I have been a true middle school educator throughout my entire career," Stoltenberg said. "I view WRMS as one of the premier middle schools in the state." Stoltenberg plan to focus on building relationships during his first year. "Staff, students, and community members will see me in classrooms, in the hallways, and at events regularly," Stoltenberg said. ★



Auburn Elementary

This year Auburn Elementary focused on building connections with the community. The sixth grade partnered with the Lions Club to prepare the Auburn Cemetery for Memorial Day. The students picked up trash, raked, planted grass, cleaned up around the tombstones, and laid out mulch. "The students were amazed at how much work goes into maintaining a cemetery," said Sixth Grade Teacher Laura Harrison. "It was fun to help out," said Sixth Grader Caleb Schwartz. Harrison said the students were able to find some tombstones from the early 1800s and learn some history about the people who were buried there. "I felt like I had accomplished something and was proud to be able to help the community," said Sixth Grader Grace Reece. ★



School News is published by the
Auburn-Washburn Unified School District
5928 SW 53rd Street, Topeka, KS 66610
www.usd437.net
Mary Napier, Editor
Martin Weishaar, Director of Communications

On the cover:

Students from Pauline Central Primary School pose with signs expressing thanks for the support from the Auburn-Washburn community in planning and approving the 2022 Bond projects.

Farley Elementary

There will be some new faces in the leadership staff at Farley Elementary this fall. Katie Sonderegger (pictured) is joining Farley as Dean of Students after spending the past six years as an Instructional Coach and Building Principal in Topeka Public Schools. She previously taught in Auburn-Washburn at Pauline South and Indian Hills. “I am so very excited to be returning to the district, and I am even more excited to be joining the Farley staff as Dean of Students,” Sonderegger said. Isabella Turell is the new Counselor at Farley Elementary. She has served as a kindergarten and special education para. “I can’t wait to make a difference in the lives of the Farley students,” Turell said. Zuleika Reynoso will begin as Social Worker. She previously worked in Topeka Public Schools. “I am excited to start working with the students, the staff, and the families at the school,” Reynoso said. ★



Services. Cromwell began in Auburn-Washburn as a Third Grade Teacher. She was a First Grade Teacher and Instructional Facilitator at Jay Shideler and was most recently Instructional Facilitator and Dean of Students at Indian Hills. Cromwell says Jay Shideler is incredibly fortunate to have amazing teachers that pour everything they have into their students. “We also have an amazing parent community who are willing to partner with our teachers to support their work in the classroom,” she said. ★

Indian Hills Elementary



Inspired by Indian Hills third grader Brayden, Counselor Hanna Kemble and Special Education Teacher Stephanie Harsin created a program called Pawsitively Pawesome. “Brayden was always coming up with ideas for items to create for our Therapy Dog Piper,” Kemble said. “So we decided to make these ideas

a reality with the help from the Auburn-Washburn Foundation.” Students created products while focusing on social-emotional learning and curriculum-based standards. Through research, students found that snuffle mats are a great way to help exercise a dog’s brain. “So much of this project was directed by the students,” Harsin said. “We tried to build upon their interests, give them choices, and let them take the lead.” In the end, students were able to make and donate 20 snuffle mats to Helping Hands Humane Society. ★

Jay Shideler Elementary

Sandra Cromwell is returning to Jay Shideler this fall to serve as Principal. “My family and I moved to Topeka in 2012 when we bought a home in the Jay Shideler area,” Cromwell said. “From the first day of kindergarten I knew Jay Shideler was a special place.” Dr. Sarah Lucero has served as Principal since 2018 and will be transferring to the district administrative staff to become Director of Title

Pauline Central Primary

After a year of writing letters back and forth, students in Anne Hawkins’ third grade class at Pauline Central finally got to meet their Brewster Buddies in person for the first time recently.



The project, made possible by a Classroom Grant from the Auburn-Washburn Public Schools Foundation, connected the students with residents at Brewster Place in a year-long, intergenerational literacy experience. “The kids grew their brains and their hearts in this learning project,” Hawkins said. “I can’t express how excited the students have been all year – like, holiday-level excitement – with cheering and dancing every time they received a letter from their Brewster Buddy!” ★

Pauline South Intermediate

With the goal of getting more books to students, Pauline South had a Book Blast in January. “It was an opportunity for us to get books into our students’ hands that might not otherwise have this chance,” said Library Media Specialist Lisa Duncan, who along with Library Clerk Kathy Henry, coordinated the event. To participate, each student sought sponsors by sending emails to family and friends. Sponsors helped students earn up to 10 books for their home library.



All students were guaranteed to receive at least one book from the program. The books were distributed in an all-school assembly right after Spring Break. “Every single student in our school got something that day,” said Duncan. ★

Wanamaker Elementary

This spring Theater Club was launched at Wanamaker which culminated in a performance of the play Jungle Book. Assistive Technology Aide Dakota Mumford and Third Grade Teacher Anna Hinthorn co-sponsored the club. Mumford has served a high school technical director and has volunteered extensively at Topeka Civic Theatre. He wanted to share his love of theater with students at Wanamaker. Students in grades 4 to 6 were able to join the



club. Rehearsals began in January and the show was performed May 19 at the school. “The students who joined did a wonderful job of participating and were very enthusiastic about what we were doing,” Mumford said. “We are excited that the Wanamaker Theater Club will be back next year.” ★

Distinguished Staff Awards



Mary Howard
PS Instructional Facilitator
Distinguished Certified Support Staff



Marcie Warner
PC Grade 2 Teacher
Elementary Teacher of the Year (2021)



Di Roney
WRMS Science Teacher
Secondary Teacher of the Year (2022)



Joni Burkett
JS Paraeducator
Classified Support Staff



Jamey Thomas-Andrews
IH Kindergarten Teacher
Elementary Teacher of the Year (2022)



Brian McFall
WRHS Business Teacher
District Master Teacher



Julie Simpson
District Head Custodian
Distinguished Operations Support Staff



Melinda Armstrong
WRMS Art Teacher
Secondary Teacher of the Year (2021)

The Teachers of the Year and the Master Teacher go on to represent the district at the state level. ★

2022 Retirees

Tracy McCoy – Assessment Data Manager – 23 Yrs of Svc

Alan Hug – Bus Driver – 19 Yrs of Svc

Denny Uhler – Maintenance Foreman – 36 Yrs of Svc

Joan Petrel – WE Elementary Food Service – 5 Yrs of Svc

Lisa Jurgensmeier – WE Paraeducator – 18 Yrs of Svc

Joy Lester – WE Grade 4 Teacher – 34 Yrs of Svc

Susan Vitt – PS Food Service – 24 Yrs of Svc

Connie Lollar – PS Head Secretary – 23 Yrs of Svc

Kelly Jackson – PS Grade 4 Teacher – 36 Yrs of Svc

Dawn Tush – PC Instructional Facilitator – 13 Yrs of Svc

Linda Kahre – JS Food Service – 9 Yrs of Svc

Elizabeth Henley – JS Food Service Manager – 30 Yrs of Svc

Shelley Copeland – JS Secretary – 25 Yrs of Svc

Maria Shepler – IH Paraeducator – 18 Yrs of Svc

Dennis Blackmore – AE Music Teacher – 25 Yrs of Svc

Deborah Kidder – WRMS Paraeducator – 19 Yrs of Svc

Tammy Phillips – WRMS Secretary – 11 Yrs of Svc

Brian Soderberg – WRMS VPL Lab Teacher – 22 Yrs of Svc

Mark Koepsel – WRMS Principal – 19 Yrs of Svc

Nancy Warren – WRHS Paraeducator – 19 Yrs of Svc

Diane Morse – WRHS Custodian – 11 Yrs of Svc

Tamara Beyer – WRHS Attendance Secretary – 31 Yrs of Svc

Gerald Vandervort – WRHS Agriculture Teacher – 32 Yrs of Svc

Krystal Grady – WRHS Spanish Teacher – 9 Yrs of Svc

Kirk Drager – WRHS Math Teacher – 14 Yrs of Svc

Kevin Hedberg – WRHS Social Studies Teacher – 31 Yrs of Svc

Sandy Hardesty – WRHS Social Studies Teacher – 32 Yrs of Svc

Penny Lane – WRHS Athletics/Activities Director – 32 Yrs of Svc ★



2022-2023 Online Registration is Now Open

Online Registration is the first step for returning and new students to sign up to attend an Auburn-Washburn school for the 2022-2023 school year. The registration process will vary slightly, depending on your circumstances. After Online Registration, you will be notified if there are further steps you need to take.

Returning Families - You are a returning family if one or more of your children attended an Auburn-Washburn school during the previous school year. If you are a returning family, you can log into Campus Portal (campus.usd437.net) any time to start or continue your registration.

New Families - You are a new family if none of your children attended grades kindergarten through 11 at an Auburn-Washburn school during the previous school year. Start the process at www.usd437.net. Look for the Registration link.

Washburn Rural High School

All students, including those attending WRHS, will need to register online. There are additional steps that students attending WRHS may need to take prior to the start of school. This includes having their pictures taken, purchasing a parking permit, or ordering a yearbook if desired. High school students may also need to meet with their counselor to make changes to their Fall Semester schedule. (Counselors will be available to make Spring Semester schedule changes and discuss other issues at a later date.)

Washburn Rural High School will communicate directly via email with parents who have registered with details about steps that need to be taken prior to the start of school.

Preschool

Auburn-Washburn offers a limited number of preschool slots for children who meet specific criteria. More information is available at usd437.net. Preschool families, including those who are returning, can complete Online Registration but must call the Early Childhood Center at (785) 408-8378 or email pridemar@usd437.net to finalize registration.

Fees

Once fees are posted, they may be paid online through Campus Portal or at your student's school. ★

Years of Service Recognition

35 Years of Service

Ryun Bayless – Maintenance
Mechanic

Shelley Copeland – JS
Secretary

Rita Deer – Bus Driver
Brian Hensyel – WRHS Social
Studies Teacher

30 Years of Service

Russell Barnell – WRMS
Technology Teacher

Dee Ann Hobelman – WRMS
FACS Teacher

Heidi Eichkorn – JS Grade 5
Teacher

Marlene McDaniel – WRMS
SPED Teacher

Elizabeth Henley – JS Food
Service Manager

Lisa Perkuhn – IH
Paraeducator

Susan Holmes – WRMS
Counselor

Melinda Thomas – IH Food
Service Manager

25 Years of Service

Dennis Blackmore – AE
Music Teacher

Jennifer Wilcox – WRMS
Math Teacher

Reene Wittenbach – Payroll
Specialist ★