



OLATHE PUBLIC SCHOOLS USD 233

# School News

Spring 2022



## 2022 Bond Issue: Upcoming Projects, Funding and Voting

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## A Message From **SUPERINTENDENT DR. BRENT YEAGER**

The second semester is well underway, and in Olathe Public Schools, we remain dedicated to our vision: preparing students for their future. Our incredible staff members continue to do this every day, addressing the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of our students. In order to continue this work, it is time to come together as a district and community to address Olathe’s immediate needs systemwide and create better learning environments for our current and future students through the Bond 2022 election.

I truly believe that we are stronger when we are working toward a common goal, together. This was on full display during the in-person events and online surveys that helped contribute to the Bond 2022 plan outlined in this issue. The proposed bond package was put together through community feedback and in-depth study, and adequately addresses the immediate needs of the district. The Bond 2022 projects fall into four categories: Growth and Reinvestment, Technology and Innovation, Student Experience and Safety.

Throughout this issue, you will read about those specific areas of need that will help both our current and future students thrive, as well as the details on the no-tax increase vote for our patrons.

Beginning in February 2022, registered voters who live within the Olathe Public Schools boundaries will receive a ballot for the election. Due date for this important ballot is noon on March 1. To register to vote, please visit the Johnson County Election Office or [www.jocoelection.org/registration](http://www.jocoelection.org/registration) for more information.

With that said, I encourage you to vote in the upcoming bond election. We look forward to working together to continue our long-standing tradition of providing high-quality education in top-notch facilities. As always, thank you for your continued support of the Olathe Public Schools.

**Dr. Brent Yeager,**  
*Superintendent*

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### Olathe Public Schools

14160 S. Black Bob Road,  
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# Bond Projects Reflect the District Need Thanks to Community Input

Olathe Public Schools is committed to providing top-notch educational experiences from the moment students step foot in our facilities. With more than 100 district schools and support buildings, activities centers, fields and more, the need to improve and maintain these facilities in order to ensure students are learning in high-quality environments has never been more important.

“In the Olathe Public Schools, our vision is to prepare students for their future,” Dr. Brent Yeager, Superintendent said. “One of the ways we can continue to do this is by regularly examining the needs of the district.”

The Board of Education and other district administration created a bond package that adequately addresses the immediate needs of the district to be brought to a vote in March 2022. This bond package was crafted thanks to the community input conducted through an online survey and in-person feedback event that helped prioritize areas of need.

“We are thankful for our community of families, staff, and patrons for giving us their valuable feedback that drove the development of this bond package,” Yeager said. “We are fortunate to have a long-standing history of support within our community, and we invite them to learn more about the projects included in this bond.”

In March 2022, registered voters who live within the Olathe Public Schools boundaries will have the opportunity to vote in a no tax-rate increase \$298.3 million mail-in bond election that would positively impact all Olathe students and their future for years to come. Projects within this bond proposal would touch every student in Olathe Public Schools and would help the district address its needs in the areas of **Growth and Reinvestment, Technology and Innovation, Student Experience and Safety.**



**GROWTH &  
REINVESTMENT**



**TECHNOLOGY  
& INNOVATION**



**STUDENT  
EXPERIENCE**



**SAFETY**

# Bond Funds Can Only Be Used for District Facilities

Every single student will be touched by the March 2022 vote, with the district seeking voter approval of \$298.3 million in bonds. Bond funds can only be used for constructing, equipping, maintaining, and furnishing district facilities. Bond money, however, cannot be used toward operating expenses such as salaries.

John Hutchison, Deputy Superintendent, believes this vote is important for the future of Olathe Public Schools.

“The money from this bond election will be used to create better learning environments for each and every student in the district,” Hutchison said. “With our community’s support, we will continue to provide a world-class environment for dynamic learning to take place.”

Projects within the bond proposal will not increase the mill (tax) rate currently levied to pay off bonds. With the approval of voters, school districts sell bonds to investors to fund the construction of new schools and other facilities, as well as the purchase of equipment, or to pay for renovation of existing buildings.

Throughout this issue of School News, voters will see that the funds will go toward brick-and-mortar projects. According to state law, any money raised through an approved bond issue cannot be used to pay for additional teachers or to lower class sizes. However, the funds can go into the structure of the schools and classrooms, providing a safe and innovative environment for students to learn.

The last bond election in Olathe was passed in 2016 for \$156 million. Proceeds from the 2016 bond cannot be stretched any further. The district is requesting additional bond funding that will tend to the pressing needs of the district, while maintaining the same mill (tax) rate currently levied to pay off bonds.

“We know that historically our patrons have supported the education that we provide our students through their reinvestment into our district,” Hutchison said. “Not only do our students gain from this reinvestment but so does the greater community through a well-educated workforce and strong property values.”

## How to VOTE

Starting Feb. 9, 2022, registered voters who live within the Olathe School District boundaries began to receive their ballots in the mail. Voters who are currently registered do not need to register separately for the Olathe Public Schools 2022 Bond Election.

Ballots must be returned to the Johnson County Election Board office either by mail using the enclosed postage-paid envelope or by dropping the ballot off at the election office (2102 E. Kansas City Rd., Olathe, KS) by noon on March 1, 2022.

**February 9:  
Receive ballots in  
the mail**

**March 1  
at Noon:  
Deadline to VOTE**

# Growth & Reinvestment



One of the focuses of the 2022 bond election is investing in high-quality learning environments. Schools are the epicenter of educating Olathe’s future generations – from classrooms to theatres to playgrounds to activity centers and more. Many of the Olathe Public Schools facilities were designed to meet the needs of the past. With that in mind, the Board of Education and administration listened to feedback from the community about the growth and reinvestment measures that can be taken now to ensure success in the future.

“We are very fortunate to have a community that supports the improvement of our current buildings in order to educate our students for *their* future,” Travis Palangi, Executive Director of Facilities and Operations, said. “With the 2022 bond package, we will be able to reinvest in and provide routine preventative maintenance to our buildings to continue to provide the best learning environment for our students and staff.”

Santa Fe Trail Middle School (SFTMS) is one of those buildings that is no longer adequately serving the staff and

students due to the outdated layout and insufficient classroom space. One of the major 2022 bond projects would include building a new school for the Santa Fe Trail Cyclones. The students would remain in their current school while a new SFTMS is constructed on the same property.

Districtwide, other aging facilities need to replace HVAC systems, roofing, asphalt, flooring, and lighting, as well as renovations to classrooms. Throughout the system, there is furniture that also needs to be replaced. These items are necessary and will help keep the students ready to learn and staff ready to educate.

Additional projects include the construction of a new Operations Service Center and renovation of the current facility to be used as a second bus and transportation center. The 2022 bond projects not only touch every single school but will impact staff that help the district run smoothly every single day, while supporting Olathe’s mission of educating every student for *their* future.

# Technology & Innovation



In today's ever-changing world, updated technology continues to prove its importance in students' educational experience. With devices reaching their end of life, the technology department and community provided feedback on the need for refreshed technology to the Olathe Public Schools administration and Board of Education.

"In the past few years, we have seen just how much of an impact technology can have on keeping us connected, learning, and prepared for the future," said Matt Vrlenich, Chief Technology Officer. "The 2022 bond projects, if passed, would help our team continue to prepare students for an increasingly digital world."

Not only does technology enhance education and instructional experiences, it also helps students to be prepared for post-secondary life by providing them with the knowledge they need with the latest technology so they can excel in college, career, and beyond.

This will also ensure that all students are equipped with the latest technology to better meet their educational needs and will provide an equitable experience for any graduate of Olathe Public Schools.

Olathe Public Schools' highly educated staff have continued to implement technology within their instruction, and in order to keep up with these innovative lesson plans, the district will need updated devices. With old devices being sold back to companies, the district will be able to recoup some of the value from the end-of-life technology that is currently in its classrooms.

"This is the perfect opportunity to enhance our student's learning environment by providing the tools they need to be successful," Vrlenich said. "We want all students to thrive by continuing to innovate and explore the possibilities of not only what our seniors today will need, but the class of 2023 and beyond."

In addition, bond funds would be used to update the district's infrastructure, which supports the largest network of devices in the Kansas City metropolitan area. If passed by voters, the bond 2022 technology projects would reach throughout the district's 6 million square feet, helping students to learn and staff to teach with as little interruption as possible.

# Student Experience



The student experience in Olathe Public Schools extends beyond the four walls of the classroom. The Board of Education and district administration took into consideration the feedback voiced by the community about enhancing all aspects of student life.

“The proposed bond would provide funding to support students’ time in our buildings from Pre-K through post-secondary,” Jim McMullen, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, said. “Our current elementary playgrounds, district fields, and district activity centers are in need of improvement so that we can effectively serve all of our students districtwide.”

Learning does not just occur in a traditional classroom setting. With the passage of the 2022 bond, funding would be available to update all elementary playgrounds with ADA-accessible surfacing and state-of-the-art equipment that will provide all students with the benefit of learning and playing.

Both the high school media centers and middle school auditoriums will be renovated with the passage of the 2022 bond projects. Also, the district’s Career and Technical education program would receive funds, positively impacting

the district’s high school and middle school students’ futures.

“Our Career and Technical education program and facilities are thriving, which are exciting, but we want to stay ahead,” McMullen said. “The 2022 bond issue will allow for funds to be earmarked for those programs and facilities that are giving our students opportunities post-graduation.”

Extra- and co-curricular activities are key to a valuable school experience for students as well. Funds will be delegated for additional lighting at district activity centers for the students, staff, and community’s benefit. In addition, district fields will need turf replacement, as the current turf has reached its end-of-life use. Both projects will contribute to the safety of both the users of the facilities, as well as the visitors.

Olathe Public Schools is committed to reimagining the student experience and providing students future-ready learning opportunities that meet the needs of all students in the classroom and beyond. The 2022 bond proposal was crafted to fulfill this commitment to current and future students.



# Safety



The safety of staff and students is of the utmost importance to the Olathe Public Schools administration and Board of Education. Because of this, safety is one of the most prevalent themes in the proposed project list of the 2022 bond election.

Brent Kiger, Director of Safety Services, firmly believes trusted relationships are at the heart of the district’s work around safety, but for those trusted relationships to thrive, it is important to support a comprehensive approach, including physical safety measures.

“Our department is dedicated to safe schools and safe students,” Kiger said. “We know that when students feel safe at school and have a trusted adult they can turn to, they are able to learn and reach their highest potential. However, we know that there are safety needs that our staff cannot meet alone and require the support of high-quality physical safety measures in our learning environments.”

The 2022 bond election brings an opportunity to purchase additional physical safety measures across the district including updating the access control system at all schools, additional cameras at elementary schools, additional cameras at sports

complexes, and a districtwide radio upgrade.

With the passage of the 2022 bond election, the new and improved safety measures would positively impact each and every student and staff member.

“Not only are we maintaining the innovative safety standards that are keeping our students and staff safe today, but we are preparing to keep the next generation safe,” Kiger said. “Our team is ready to do everything we can to promote our mission of safe schools, safe students.”

Additional cameras at both the elementary schools and sports complexes will expand security for students, staff, families, patrons, and guests in order to prevent issues and solve problems. With a much-needed update to the access control system at all schools and the districtwide radio system, staff will be able to continue keeping buildings secure and communication lines open. These bond projects provide the physical measures needed for the Safety Services team to maintain the high-level protection they implement at the buildings.

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