**More Questions?**

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**Was the community involved in deciding the specifics of the bond?**

Yes. The district has been continually seeking feedback from the community through facility meetings, community surveys, and strategic planning. In 2023, the district met with community members, and the community feedback identified top priorities:

1. **Fixing the HVAC system**
2. **Improving safety and security**
3. **Expanding opportunities in tech and trades**

This input helped the Board create a proposal that reflects both district needs and community values.

**How was the bond amount determined?**

The bond reflects major projects across the district, including **HVAC replacement at the Jr./Sr. High School**, **secure entries at both schools**, and **modernized classrooms**.  This proposal represents a **25-year investment in the future of Jewell County**. It will provide our students with the high-quality learning environments and opportunities they deserve, while strengthening the long-term vitality and pride of our community.

**How much will my property taxes increase?   What about property tax increases on vehicles and trucks?**

**Calculate an estimate on the impact to your residential, commercial, and land property taxes with the Tax Estimator at** [**usd107.org/bond25**](http://usd107.org/bond25)**.**

The tax implications for this bond include both the **bond principal and interest**. The **annual bond payment will remain consistent for the life of the bond**, covering both the repayment of the borrowed funds and the interest owed.

The projected tax increase will range between 7% and 9%, depending on whether you reside inside or outside city limits.

Vehicle tax increases are based on the countywide average of all taxing entities, including the school district, county, and townships. If all other entities remain revenue neutral, the estimated average increase would be about **$10 per year per vehicle**.

**Can the HVAC system be repaired instead of replaced?**

The existing system cannot be repaired without replacing the piping located above the ceiling, and those repairs would be **more costly than a full system replacement**. After careful evaluation, the Board determined that the most efficient and cost-effective solution is to install **ground-level HVAC units**.

This multi-unit system allows for easier maintenance and upkeep, while also providing flexibility to replace or upgrade individual units as they reach the end of their lifespan.

The district conducted a multi-year review of options for repairing or replacing the Jr./Sr. High HVAC system. To reduce costs, the Board of Education voted **7-0 on November 11, 2024**, to cancel its contract with HTK Architects, resulting in a cost of **$134,550** to the district from the previously approved **$269,100** contract. Then, the board partnered with **SPT Architecture**, whose **$5.3 million HVAC** replacement design was a significant reduction from HTK’s **$7 million** HVAC estimate.

**My student isn’t interested in entering the trades. Will they benefit from the Tech & Trades Center?**

**Yes. The Tech and Trades Center will benefit *all* students—not just those pursuing careers in the trades.** Today’s technology and trade pathways go far beyond traditional ag and vo-tech programs, reaching into fields such as healthcare, science, construction science, and drone technology. These opportunities can be paid for by the State of Kansas while students are in high school.

Through partnerships with post-secondary institutions, students will gain access to **college-level technical education right here in the district**, giving them a head start on future careers or degrees. These programs strengthen essential skills such as **problem-solving, teamwork, and technical proficiency**—abilities that are valuable in any profession.

In addition, the district plans to **create a more student-friendly space** within the facility to support **college-bound students**, providing areas for online classes, study, and expanded learning opportunities.

**Are new secure entrances necessary?**

**Yes. Safety remains one of the community’s top priorities.** All building entrances will receive security upgrades, and the main entries will be redesigned to create secure vestibules that limit access to the rest of the building. These improvements will also allow for an immediate lockdown and quick notification of local law enforcement, buying valuable time in an emergency.

The district has already implemented multiple layers of safety measures using existing funds. However, the **next step in strengthening school security requires facilities upgrades** to ensure our students and staff are as safe as possible.

**How will this bond benefit those in the community who don’t have students?**

**Strong schools build strong communities.** Many of our students will remain in our local area after graduation, becoming the future workforce that keeps our communities thriving. By providing **high-quality educational and technical opportunities**, we’re preparing students to fill essential roles—caring for us in hospitals, repairing our vehicles and farm equipment, and providing vital services that sustain local life.

The **Tech & Trade Center** will play a key role in developing the next generation of skilled professionals, ensuring our communities continue to grow, prosper, and remain strong for years to come.

**What can a bond pay for? Does it include increases in staff pay?**

A bond can only be used for capital improvements, such as building renovations, new construction, safety upgrades, and major facility repairs.

Some equipment expenses are included. However, the school has capital outlay funds that can be used for equipment. It is not good to include things like computers that will not last 25 years in the bond amount because they will not last for the 25-year duration of the bond financing, so Rock Hills would be paying for things that have had to be replaced. **We will have other funds available to equip the project fully. Some of this equipment will also come from trade partners that donate equipment to tech and trade programs.**

By law, bond funds cannot be used for staff salaries, classroom supplies, or daily operations.

While the bond doesn’t directly fund salaries, investing in updated, efficient facilities helps stretch the district’s capital outlay funds, allowing more resources to support classrooms and student programs.

**How would the school improvements help attract and retain teachers?**

There is a teacher shortage in Kansas. Teachers want to work in schools where they have safe, modern classrooms and up-to-date resources. Teachers have a choice of where to go. USD 107 needs to keep improving its schools to attract and retain good teachers.

**If the bond doesn’t pass, will it get repacked for a future vote? Why wasn’t it presented as a two-part bond?**

The district will continue to provide the best learning environment possible within its current facilities and will pursue additional capital improvement options as funding allows. However, several major challenges will remain: the **HVAC system must be replaced, secure entries are needed at both schools, and space is limited at the Jr./Sr. High School.**

If the HVAC system fails before it can be replaced, the district would need to find temporary locations to continue classes, causing an unavoidable disruption to learning, though every effort would be made to minimize the impact on students.

Because the district does not have the available funds to address these critical needs, **a future bond election will be necessary**. If it does not pass, a future board will need to determine what should be included in a new plan.

This is a **single-question bond election** because the board felt strongly that this proposal should address not only the **HVAC system**, but also **student safety and expanded educational opportunities** to best serve the needs of our district now and in the future.

**Is there certainty that the school will outlive the length of the bond? Is there enough current and projected enrollment?**

**Enrollment is currently higher** than it was when Rock Hills was established in 2006. Among the 112 Class 1A school districts in Kansas, Rock Hills ranks as the **30th largest**, meaning **82 districts are smaller**. We currently have **over 20 more** students this year than we did in 2006.

Our schools have had stable enrollment for the past twenty years. There is no reason to think our schools will not be here for the duration of this bond.

**When will construction begin and finish?**

It is anticipated that construction will **begin in Spring 2026** and be **completed for the 2027-28 school year**. Some projects can be completed over the summer and be ready for the 2026-27 school year. A November vote is ideal for the most efficient construction timeline with **minimal impact on learning**.

**Why fund these improvements through a bond that increases taxes?**

The **Board of Education has demonstrated its commitment** to the students and staff of USD 107 by allocating **$1 million from the district’s capital outlay reserve** to help reduce the financial impact on taxpayers. The board remains mindful of its financial responsibility to residents, striving to balance maintaining existing facilities with making the necessary improvements that keep our schools **safe, efficient, and equipped for modern learning**.

**USD 107 has not had a mill levy tax for a bond project since the district was formed**. This proposal represents a **25-year investment in the future of Jewell County**—one that will provide our students with the high-quality learning environments and opportunities they deserve, while strengthening the long-term vitality and pride of our community.

**Have you investigated other sources of funding other than property taxes?**

The district explored the possibility of using sales tax revenue, but that option is not available to us. Some potential grants and partners may help with **equipment, furnishings, and other contents** within school facilities.

**Why can’t existing capital outlay funds cover these improvements?**

Capital outlay funds are used to support ongoing maintenance, repairs, and equipment needs across the district. In recent years, these funds have been invested in **school safety improvements**, including the installation of **new exterior doors, upgraded access controls, additional security cameras, and phone lines in every classroom**.

**However, the district’s needs have grown beyond what those limited annual funds can cover.**

We are using some capital outlay funds. To address the larger, long-term issue, the district must look to the community through a bond. This provides the broader support needed to make lasting upgrades.

**How has the Jr/Sr High School run out of usable space when enrollment has remained steady?**

**The way students learn has changed.** Modern education places more **focus on hands-on, collaborative instruction** rather than traditional lecture-style teaching. Modern learning requires **more flexible spaces** than USD 107’s current facilities offer. It is not just about the size of the classes but the way we teach.

**With widespread teacher shortages, will it be possible to find teachers for the new classes that could be offered?**

**These programs can be taught by current Rock Hills teachers** who receive additional training through our college partners. Postsecondary institutions can certify local educators to teach specific courses or oversee the hands-on portions of hybrid programs.

When a class requires specialized expertise, the college provides instruction remotely while local teachers or mentors support students on-site. **This model allows the district to use its existing staff while still expanding learning opportunities.** This model has been used in several districts across the state for 9+ years.

**Why not just send students to Fort Hays Tech NC in Beloit instead of constructing a new building?**

Offering opportunities locally allows **more students to participate** by reducing travel time and keeping them connected to their school community. Local programs also provide **greater safety and oversight**, ensuring students spend their time learning rather than traveling between here and Beloit.

Because **Fort Hays Tech NC does not support all the career pathways** we’d like to offer, having our own space creates new possibilities. It allows the district to **partner with additional technical colleges**, such as **WSU Tech** and **Cloud County Community College**, expanding the range of programs and opportunities available to students right here at home.

**Will there be enough student interest to enroll in the new classes that could be offered? What would class sizes be?**

Yes, student and community feedback and enrollment trends show strong interest in hands-on and career-based programs. Teaching is becoming more individualized. We may use one teacher to oversee several students learning different subjects at the same time to maximize our students’ interests.

**What are the benefits of adding windows to the Jr/Sr high?  Is this expense necessary?**

Having natural light in classrooms helps **create a better learning environment**. The cost of these windows is minimal compared to the benefits received.  **Less than 1% of the project budget is for adding windows.** The windows will be built in a way to minimize any safety concerns.

**What is the projected increase in utility and insurance costs?  Have those been budgeted for?**

There would be some new costs for insurance. However, the efficiency that can be gained with new HVAC and LED lights should offset most of the utility increases.  Energy costs are included in the district’s annual budget, with an anticipated increase of 10% each year.

**How will the location of the new Tech & Trades Center affect parking and traffic flow?**

The district owns land to the north and west that connects to N. East St., allowing for the construction of a new entry drive. This new entrance would improve both safety and traffic flow. The driveway expense is included in the site work line item of the bond budget.

**What was the bond election timeline?**

To place a school bond election on the November ballot, several steps must occur. The Board of Education must pass a resolution by the August 13 meeting. The district then held a bond hearing with KSDE on August 21, followed by approval from the State Board of Education at the September Board Meeting held on September 9. Once these steps are complete, the bond will be officially placed on the November ballot.  Holding the bond election in November is the most effective timing. If the measure passes, the architect and construction teams can use the winter months to finalize drawings, scope, and project phasing, which allows construction to begin in the spring.

**Why aren’t landowners who live outside of Jewell County allowed to vote?**

Voting eligibility for a school bond is based on residency within the school district boundaries, based on state election laws. Only registered voters who live within the district can vote on the bond issue.

**Vo techs are also having difficulty filling positions.  How do you expect to leverage their instructors if they are unable to fill all their open positions?**

Current Rock Hills teachers can receive specialized training and certification from post-secondary partners to teach or support courses on-site. When specialized expertise is needed, college instructors can provide remote instruction while local teachers supervise hands-on activities. This hybrid model allows the district to expand learning opportunities even if external instructors are limited.