## **What checks and balances are in place to keep the mill levy from going above what the district is saying it will be?**

Mill levies may vary; however, the total tax revenue collected will remain stable to fulfill the required payment. On an individual basis, your taxed dollar amount will remain the same throughout the life of the bond.

## **What guarantees are in place to ensure the project doesn't go over budget?**

The school district has used the CMAR (Construction Manager At Risk) construction delivery method. This ensures competitive bidding and transparency because the district gets to see and approve every bid for every component of the project. The project cost will be set before construction begins. The Construction Manager is “at risk” for any overages in construction once construction begins. The district will maintain regular board oversight and fiscal accountability throughout the process to ensure taxpayer dollars are managed responsibly.

## **Why isn't there a detailed list of planned expenditures?**

The cost estimates for this project were prepared by SPT Architecture and Wiens Construction, both of whom have extensive experience with school bond projects. Their estimates include detailed budgets for all key components. Because bidding will occur after the bond passes, specific bid amounts aren’t yet available. Estimates are based on current market rates to ensure accuracy and completeness.

## **How much have the architects and construction team been paid?**

SPT Architecture and Wiens Construction have not been paid anything for their work on this project. Both firms have donated their time and expertise during the planning phase because they believe in the importance of the proposed improvements.

Their pay is entirely contingent upon the community voting to approve the bond and move forward with construction. If the bond does not pass, they will not receive payment for the work already completed. The proposed fees, should the project proceed, are typical and competitive for school projects of this size and scope.

## **Why weren’t more affordable options presented to the community?**

The school board and project team carefully reviewed multiple options to meet the district’s needs. This plan represents the most affordable and efficient long-term solution to address critical facility issues such as HVAC replacement, safety and security upgrades, and expanded career and technical education opportunities. This plan was designed to meet both current and future needs. The School Board considered smaller sized projects and larger sized projects. This project will be the only bond project a school our size can do for another 20 years. The School Board felt it was important to address safety and security needs, educational needs and facility needs.

## **Why do safe and secure doors cost so much?**

It’s more than just replacing doors. This includes new entry areas where **all visitors must pass through the office**, redesigned offices, and better visibility for staff. At the Jr/Sr High School building this includes renovating part of the building. At the Elementary School a new addition that includes Administrative offices and an entry space with a reception desk/secretary area is included. The upgrades also include **security film on glass** and **new access control systems**.

## **Why are we only making changes to the main entrances of our buildings?**

Security film will be added to the glass at all entrances. All exterior doors have access controls restricted to district staff.  Notification is sent to the administration when a door is opened during the day.  All visitors will be restricted to the main entrance, which will have secure entry areas so visitors cannot have access to the building without going through the administration areas.

## **What security systems have already been put in place?**

The district has made several important security upgrades in recent years. This past summer, new exterior doors were installed across all district buildings. These doors now close and lock properly, with mullion bars that latch in the middle, replacing the less secure magnetic locks previously used. Each door is also equipped with access controls, allowing administrators to monitor when a door is opened, grant entry permissions, and enhance overall building security.

Additionally, the district installed new phone lines in every classroom, providing another layer of communication and safety. The intercom system was also upgraded to ensure clear, immediate communication throughout the building in the event of an emergency or announcement.

Together, these improvements have strengthened the district’s overall safety and communication systems, helping to protect both students and staff.

**The proposed design incorporates our existing security upgrades into the new design so no money will be wasted.**

## **Will local companies have the ability to bid on certain projects?**

The project can be bid out in packages which allow local contractors to bid on the project. For instance, if there is a local electrician that cannot do the whole project but could do part of the project. The exterior light poles can be separated out. If a local concrete contractor does not want to bid on the entire project, but could work on a smaller portion such as the exterior sidewalks, this can be a separate bid as well.

## **Why aren’t we receiving state aid?**

The state changed how state aid is allocated in 2015. The way the state provides financial assistance to school districts has changed dramatically since then. Rock Hills is included in that group that no longer qualifies for state aid because of this change.

## **Has the district managed previous budgets responsibly? If so, how did we end up with so many urgent needs?**

Yes. The district has a strong record of responsible financial management and facility maintenance. For example, the HVAC system at the high school — expected to last 35–40 years — has operated for 56 years due to diligent maintenance. However, the system is now at the end of its usable life and cannot be repaired cost-effectively.

The district has also saved $1 million locally to contribute to the bond project, showing long-term fiscal planning. The Kansas State Department of Education reviews all school district budgets annually, ensuring accountability and preventing excessive fund accumulation.

Some systems, like HVAC and roofs, eventually exceed what a regular operating budget can handle — which is why bonds are necessary for major replacements.

## **Why is it so expensive to build a “metal building”?**

The new Tech and Trades building is much more than a standard metal structure. It includes classroom spaces, mechanical and electrical systems and safety features. **Public school facilities must also meet strict state and federal building codes, which are far more rigorous than residential, commercial, or agricultural structures.** These requirements ensure student safety, accessibility, and long-term durability.

## **Have you budgeted for the additional costs new teachers will add to the school’s budget?**

Yes. The district will have time to plan and budget for any new staffing needs before new programs begin. Many of the new Career and Technical Education classes can be taught by current staff or through partnerships with Kansas technical colleges, allowing students to earn credits without adding staffing costs. The new spaces also give the district greater flexibility to maximize existing resources.

## **Will there be enough interest in the new classes?**

Yes. The six-year average post-graduation data shows that 39.8% of students go directly into the workforce, 21.4% pursue vocational or technical education, 29.6% attend a four-year college, and 9.2% enroll in junior colleges. With over 60% of graduates entering either the workforce or technical training, there is clear and consistent interest in career-focused, hands-on learning opportunities. **This approach keeps learning dynamic, relevant, and responsive to both student interests and community needs.**

## **What will the cost of the new driveway to the school be? Is that included in the bond?**

There is some funding allocated for site work within the bond proposal, but no specific amount set aside for the new driveway itself. We believe this project can be completed more cost-effectively by partnering with local contractors and businesses, allowing us to stretch taxpayer dollars further while still improving safety and accessibility for our schools.