



USD 105 RAWLINS COUNTY

School Rebuild Survey Results:

Answers to Questions and Concerns

Thank you to everyone who completed our survey, we have **420 responses!** Your input is a tremendous help to us in understanding what our community wants to see from our school district as we move forward. It is great to see the community support for our schools!

The survey results are very clear that a K-12 configuration has overwhelming support; 74.64% of the responders support a K-12 building. The survey results are posted on the district website for everyone to view. We have closely reviewed the survey comments and the following comments address the questions and concerns voiced in the survey.

How Accurate is the Survey?

We determined that some people may have completed more than one survey. Surveys are not perfect, but they can provide good information. In this case, the results were very clear that the community supports a K-12 school configuration. For those who completed more than one survey, (in fact, one person voted twelve times!), we have reviewed the results and allowed the first two votes per IP address, which allows two persons at the same IP address to complete the survey. However, if the second vote had the same comment(s), it was deleted. We had a good response from the community, and here are the results:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ▪ Option 1 - 7-12 Building | Yes 29.32% No 70.68% |
| ▪ Option 2 - K-12 Building | Yes 74.64% No 25.36% |
| ▪ City Sales Tax | Yes 84.24% No 15.76% |
| ▪ County Sales Tax | Yes 87.75% No 12.25% |
| ▪ Both Sales Tax | Yes 83.98% No 16.02% |

Initially, there was miscommunication about the survey being mailed out. It was never intended to be mailed out due to the cost of printing and postage. Once we heard this was an issue, we extended the time to return the surveys. If anyone feels they were not given the opportunity to fill out a survey, we will still accept surveys and will add them to the result. All surveys that were completed on paper and delivered to the school district were emailed to the architect's office where the data was manually entered into the survey. This was done to ensure the surveys remain confidential.



Take the Time and Do This Right

Several survey comments state the importance of taking the time necessary to “do this right.” The district administrators, the board of education members, and the design team are definitely mindful of this, and we will get this right.

As we develop the timeline, we do have one consideration; the insurance company has agreed to only pay for the portable classrooms until August 2025. After that it will cost the district \$16,092 per month to lease them. We are pushing the insurance company to extend this time, but have not been successful thus far. The school district initially inquired about purchasing the portables, but were informed that purchasing was not an option. The district contracted with Boxx Modular as their quote was significantly less expensive and more sustainable than the other companies that were engaged.

Insurance Funds

We have received two settlements from the insurance company, and a third settlement is in process, as follows:

- a. Building replacement funds: \$8,500,000 has been received.
Funds will be used to replace the building and will reduce the cost of the bond project. The district has received most of these funds from the insurance company. They are currently in a short-term certificate of deposit (CD) and are accruing interest.
- b. Demolition funds: \$749,000 has been received.
Funds have not been included in the bond project. These funds will be used for demolition of the building(s).
- c. We will receive funds for the replacement of some of the fixtures, furniture, and equipment (FF&E) in the building. We do not have a settlement from the insurance company for these items yet. There is money in the bond project for these items. If the insurance settlement covers the cost of the FF&E, the bond amount can be reduced.
- d. Temporary facilities – as mentioned above, the insurance company will pay for portable classrooms until August 2025; we are trying to get this date extended.

Other Possible Location & Affordability

Several comments suggest that we should build a new school at a new location. We do not have another location to consider. The main concern with this option is the extra cost it would take to make this work. We also have several comments that stress the need to manage costs to keep this project affordable. Our goal is to do this right and manage the costs. The challenges with a new location include:



- a. Finding property and the cost of the property
- b. The cost of replacing the areas that do not need to be replaced, such as the gym.
- c. Depending on the location, getting new utilities to a new site can be very expensive.
- d. If we only use the current site for a sports complex, we still need to have locker rooms, concessions, and public restrooms at the site. This would also cause our sports facilities to be at a different location than the schools which causes transportation issues for practices. Other school districts make this work, so while it is possible, the inconvenience is a consideration.
- e. In total, this could add over \$10 million to the project. Depending on the proposed sales tax, this could make the project unaffordable. This would cost over \$10 million dollars more than what is currently being proposed. This would push the overall mill levy to over 100 mills, which is not affordable.

We are looking at other plan options and studying their cost implications. With the results of the survey, the district and the design team have a much better understanding of how the community feels about a 7-12 building or a K-12 building. With the survey showing overwhelming support for a K-12 school, we can now focus on a K-12 option and design the plan to accommodate the K-6, Junior High, and Senior High classrooms.

Existing Site Concerns

There is concern that there isn't enough room at the High School site to include the elementary grades, along with concerns about how the parking, playground areas, and bus drop-off will work. Since the community meeting, we have developed site plan options to address these concerns and show how this can work. We have enough land at the existing site to make a K-12 building work, with room for future expansion, if needed. The site plans shown at the 01/24/24 board meeting show parking areas that will accommodate over 150 parking spaces and additional street parking. They also show a drop-off area for elementary students. These plans are available on the district website for the community to review.

Planning for Future Growth

We have two ways to accommodate future growth. Our new classrooms are designed to accommodate larger class sizes. In the elementary school, the classroom sizes will be the same as the existing. Our Junior/Senior High classrooms will be larger than our previous building. Our class size is typically around 30 students. We will have about 15 students in each classroom. We can keep our class sizes at a very manageable size by increasing each class to up to 22 students. This will allow us the potential to increase by 168 students without the need for more classroom space. We currently have 360 students in our school district, and this would allow for a 46.6% increase in our schools. We are also trying to include two to three additional classroom spaces.



Elementary School

If the district decides to combine the K-12 schools, there is concern for what will be done with the elementary school. This will require a lot of discussion to determine the best and most cost-effective plan. Suggested options include demolishing the building and selling the land for new housing, or demolishing the classroom wings and keeping the district office, cafeteria, and gym so the community could use the building; the gym space would benefit the school and the community. Both options are being discussed, and we welcome any ideas for what would be the best plan for this building.

K-12 Students in One Building

Some comments voice a concern about elementary students in the same building as older students. Based on the first half of the school year, this has worked very well and it has been a positive experience to have our students together. There are several Kansas school districts that are a similar size that have K-12 configurations and every district reports that they haven't had issues with having the students one building. In fact, they report the positive impact this has on all students. The safety of our students is always of utmost importance to this district, and elementary students are always supervised in any situation. With the floor plan configuration we are looking at for the K-12 building, the elementary students will be in a separate area of the building most of the day. The shared spaces include the cafeteria, band, and music rooms. We can accommodate separation of grades though scheduling.

We had the opportunity to tour the USD 422 Kiowa County K-12 school in Greensburg. After a tornado destroyed their school 13 years ago, they changed to a K-12 building. They have only positive things to share about the K-12 configuration, and have not had any issues with elementary, middle school, and high school students being together in the same building.

Gymnasium

Comments question the need for such an expensive gym, and prefer emphasis on classroom space, not sports. What some people may not realize is that the gym is the most used classroom space in the building. It is used by every grade level during the school day as an educational space, and is in constant use. Sports activities are scheduled after school, which is what the community sees. This gym configuration also allows for community use. The benefit of our site is that it naturally accommodates a top-loaded gym because of the grade change we have. If we build a traditional gym, we would still need two new courts and the cost would be similar because of the site grading that would be required.

BUFFALO STRONG

★ **UPDATES** ★



Other Funding Possibilities

Several comments mention the use of available grant funds to pay for some of the costs, including FEMA funds. Since the community meeting on January 10, we have reached out to FEMA. They do not currently have any funds available, but they will contact us if funds become available in the next few months. We will also reach out to the Dane G. Hansen foundation. We will keep you updated as we know more about grant options.

01/26/24