



FUTURE-PROOFING USD 303 FACILITIES

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Over the past several years, the USD 303 Board of Education has been assessing the facility needs across our district and planning for the future of our schools.

In a special election on May 6 voters will be asked to consider the following question for improving USD 303 facilities:

Question: Shall we approve a school bond issue in the amount not to exceed \$24 million?

WHY IS THIS NEEDED?

Modern education comes with evolving needs, and the future success of our community depends on the quality of our schools. Looking ahead, we must prioritize long-term upgrades to ensure our schools remain strong for generations to come. Providing a safe and functional environment for students and staff means addressing critical needs, including roof repairs, HVAC, plumbing, electrical systems, classrooms, locker rooms, and more. These proposed upgrades are more than just school improvements—they're a vital investment in our community's future.

WHY NOW?

There's never an ideal time to request funding for capital improvements, but USD 303 hasn't undergone major building updates since 1987. This proposal ensures the district stays on track by addressing current needs while preparing for the future. With rising construction costs and ongoing maintenance challenges, we believe now is the time to take action.

SAVE THE DATE

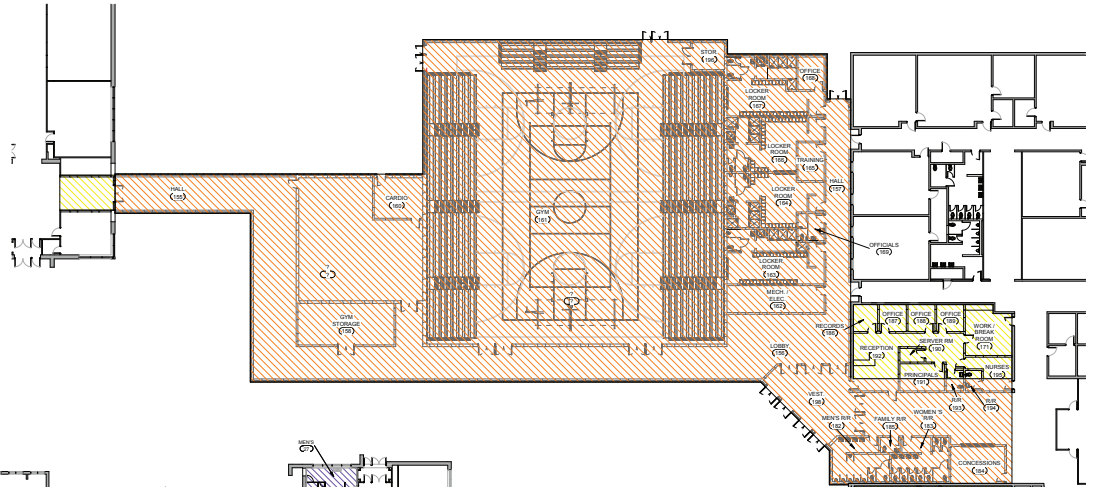
ELECTION DAY:

MAY 6

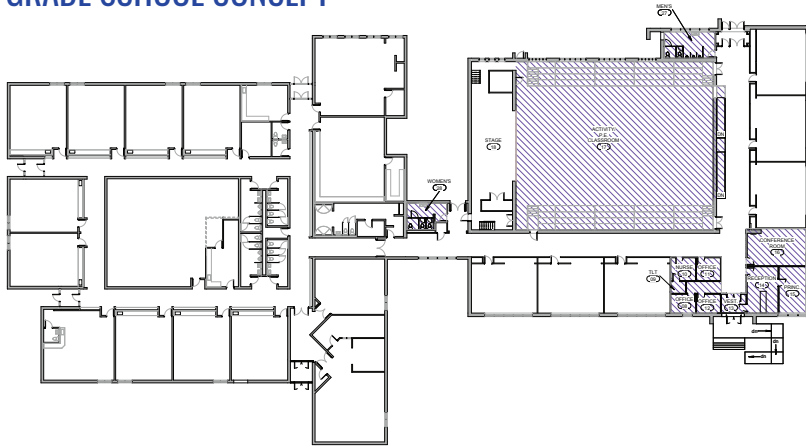
RECOMMENDED SOLUTION

Developed in partnership with Landmark Architects and Wiens & Company Construction, this proposal is designed to “future-proof” the district’s facilities—making them easier to maintain, more conducive to learning, and safer for students and staff. The plan includes critical infrastructure and safety and security upgrades for both the grade school and high school. In addition to addressing the immediate needs of the school district, this project also provide facilities that will serve not only our current students, but the next two generations to come as well.

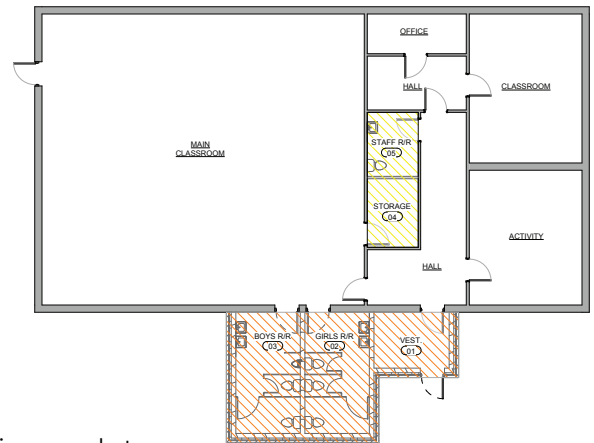
HIGH SCHOOL CONCEPT



GRADE SCHOOL CONCEPT



PRE-SCHOOL CONCEPT



PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK

- A new corridor linking the current Grade School and High School buildings will include locker rooms, a competition gym, and a weight room that will serve as a FEMA-standard storm shelter for both schools.
- **Security & Office Upgrades:** Office renovations will enhance functionality and create secure entries at both the Grade School and High School buildings.
- **Auditorium & Gym Enhancements:** The High School auditorium and stage will be upgraded, while the Grade School gym will receive acoustic and aesthetic improvements, along with an ADA-compliant ramp.
- **Infrastructure Upgrades:** HVAC, plumbing, electrical and lightings improvements will be made at both school buildings, along with new roofing at the High School.
- **Preschool Security Enhancements:** Construction of a secure entry vestibule and FEMA-standard restrooms at the Pre-School building, with existing restrooms renovated for storage and staff use.

FACILITY CHALLENGES

Over the last year, the USD 303 Board of Education and the Community Committee have worked with Landmark Architects and Wiens & Company Construction to evaluate our current buildings and analyze how well these buildings meet the needs of the students and faculty. Through this process, they identified the following facility needs:



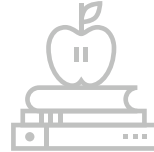
Secure entrances to the Pre-School, Grade School, and High School buildings



Storm shelters that are built to FEMA standards

There is no current shelter at the Pre-School

The Grade School and High School utilize restrooms/locker rooms that are not reinforced or ADA accessible



A comfortable and functional learning environment for the students and staff

Classroom lighting is poor, and HVAC systems struggle to properly heat the buildings. Electrical, plumbing, and HVAC updates are needed in both the Grade School and High School.



ADA accessibility throughout all school facilities

Current facilities do not fully accommodate individuals with mobility issues

HOW WILL THIS BE FINANCED?

The project involves a \$24 million bond to be financed over a 25-year period, funded through a 29-mill increase to the current property tax rate. See below for examples of how this would impact monthly expenses.

ANTICIPATED TAXES FOR \$24,000,000 BUDGET

\$27.79/month

Tax increase on a \$100,000 home

\$18.10/month

Tax increase on 160 acres dry crop land

\$65.19/month

Tax increase on 160 acres irrigated land

\$60.42/month

Tax increase on a \$100,000 commercial building

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: When is the election, and who can vote?

A: The election will be held May 6 and will be open to all registered voters in the USD 303 district. For more election details visit www.nesscountyks.gov/elections/elections-info.

Q: What is the amount of the bond?

A: The bond request is not to exceed \$24 million.

Q: What is a school bond issue?

A: A bond is a state-approved funding process for a set scope of projects. When voters approve a bond, the school district sells bonds in the authorized amount and uses the proceeds of the sale to pay for those projects in the bond. In many ways, the bonding process is like a homeowner obtaining a mortgage and making payments over a period of years. School bond elections require a simple majority to pass (50 percent plus one).

Q: How can bond funds be used?

A: Bond funds can only be used for constructing, equipping, maintaining and furnishing district facilities. This makes bond funds different from the district's operating funds that are used to pay salaries, textbooks and other day-to-day expenses. Bond funds can only be used for brick-and-mortar projects and cannot be legally used for anything else. This is an important distinction to remember. Bond funds and operational/salary funds are separate, and according to state law, these funds cannot be used interchangeably.

Q: Why is a Bond Issue happening? Why do we need a Bond Project, and how did we come to this point?

A: The HVAC systems in both the Grade School and High School have exceeded their useful lifespan, frequently failing or requiring reinforcement. Additionally, there is a significant need for electrical upgrades, roof replacement, door and window replacements, and minor masonry repairs. The Board also recognizes concerns regarding ADA accessibility, the absence of proper storm shelters, and the deteriorating condition of the locker rooms in both buildings. In response, the Board of Education established the Community Committee to assess these needs and provide recommendations for pursuing a Bond Issue to address them.

Q: What factors and findings led the committee to this recommendation?

A: During their initial meeting, the Committee conducted a facility tour to assess existing conditions. Beyond the identified infrastructure and safety concerns, the committee recognized that the gym space is inadequate for its level of use. Additionally, the Committee determined that the current weight room is overcrowded and unsafe.

Q: Are the current storm shelters not adequate?

A: The Pre-School does not have a dedicated storm shelter, requiring children to cross an alley to reach the Grade School during a storm event. At the Grade School, students take shelter in main floor restrooms, which lack reinforcement for severe weather protection. The High School relies on the north locker rooms, which are not handicap accessible and are located below grade, making them vulnerable to flooding.

Q: What is covered under "Infrastructure Updates"?

A: This project will address / replace the following general and "Infrastructure" items: A) HVAC replacement & reinforcement at the Grade School and High School; B) Plumbing upgrades at the Pre-School, Grade School, and High School; C) Electrical and Lighting upgrades & additions at the Grade School and High School; D) Replacement of older Windows & Entrance Doors at the Grade School and High School; E) New Roofing at the High School Gym, Auditorium, and Library; F) Add ADA seating at the existing Gym; G) Structural and finish modifications as required for "Infrastructure" upgrades.

Q: Do we need another gym? Why not just update the existing Grade School gym?

A: This project will update the existing Grade School Gym with HVAC, lighting, sound attenuation, a handicap accessible ramp, and aesthetic improvements. However, the current gym spaces are not sufficient to accommodate the needs of all USD 303 students. Between high school, junior high, and recreational teams, there is not enough time or space for students to practice at appropriate hours. Additionally, adding an additional gym allows our community to better host tournaments and community events, creating opportunities to attract visitors, boost revenue for businesses and stimulate the local economy.

Q: Will the Grade School gym continue to be used?

A: Yes, the Grade School gym will continue to be used for PE, assemblies, recess in poor weather, etc., as well as a back-up facility for youth recreational team practices if scheduling requires. Improvements, including significant acoustical dampening, will make that space much more pleasant to use.

Q: How would the academic areas of the facilities be improved?

A: Several key upgrades would enhance the academic spaces. The HVAC, electrical, and plumbing systems at both the Grade School and High School would be replaced or upgraded. Classrooms and offices in the 1941 section of the Grade School would be modernized, while select areas of the 1987 building would receive functional and aesthetic improvements. Secure entrances and storm shelters would be added to the Pre-School, Grade School, and High School, enhancing student safety. Original windows and exterior doors in both buildings would be replaced, and sections of the High School roof would be updated. The Auditorium would undergo renovations to maintain excellence for future generations. Overall, these improvements would enhance comfort, security, and aesthetics while extending the lifespan of the facilities for years to come.

Q: Why haven't the maintenance issues been addressed previously?

A: Maintenance issues have been addressed as they arise, and outside consultants have affirmed this. However, normal maintenance budgeting does not provide for sufficient capital to replace major components when they are at end of life, and a capital project is required.

Q: The High School recently received a new HVAC system – why is it needing replaced?

A: The classroom HVAC system at the High School was installed in 2015 and utilizes Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) technology. However, this system has generally struggled to provide adequate heating for the local climate. Additionally, it does not introduce fresh air into the building, a concern that has become even more significant since COVID. The proposed project includes supplementing the VRF system to enhance heating capacity and integrating fresh air ventilation to improve indoor air quality.

Q: Are the roofs on the buildings being replaced?

A: The Grade School roofs were replaced recently and still have many years of use remaining, so they do not require replacement. However, at the High School, the Gym, Auditorium, and Library roofs have reached the end of their lifespan and are included in this project for replacement.

Q: Why does this project require the street to be closed?

A: Building on the street addresses several needs:

1. Allows for one tornado shelter to be shared by the Grade School & High School, instead of one at each location.
2. Connects the buildings allowing travel between them under one roof, providing a more secure facility.

Q: What updates will be done at the Pre-School?

A: The Pre-School will receive a secure entrance, new kids' toilets restroom that will double as a storm shelter, and renovation of the adult's restroom.

Q: Will the construction phase interfere with students' learning & activities?

A: While some adjustments will be required, the Contractor will work closely with the District to ensure they are minimal. Additionally, there will be opportunities for the students to tour the site and see how their studies can be applied in a construction career.

Q: How long will the project take to complete and when would it start?

A: After the bond is passed, the first phase is Design Development/Construction Engineering, and Bidding/Contracting which should be complete by March of 2026. Construction would then commence and be complete in August of 2027.

Q: What will be the impact on my taxes?

A: A mill is \$1 of tax on each \$1,000 of assessed valuation on property in the District. The bonds will require a mill rate estimated at 29 mills—added taxes on a \$100,000 home of \$27.79 per month. For more information on how the bond would affect residential, commercial, and agricultural property, see the full Taxpayer Cost Analysis at [USD303Facilities.com](https://www.usd303facilities.com).

Q: Will the Board of Education and Bond Steering Committee be available for questions?

A: Yes, please contact them anytime by either reaching out directly or submitting questions on the contact page at [USD303facilities.com](https://www.usd303facilities.com).



LEARN MORE AT [USD303FACILITIES.COM](https://www.usd303facilities.com)



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PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Ness City, KS 67560

PRSR STD
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
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EDDM RETAIL

IMPORTANT DATES

April 10: Ness City Schools Community Tours

May 6: Election Day –
Your typical polling location

Local Resident

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Contact a member of the Board of Education
or Facility Steering Committee.

Learn more at USD303Facilities.com

BALLOT QUESTION

Question: Should the following be adopted?

Shall Unified School District No. 303, Ness County, Kansas (Ness City), issue general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$24,000,000, to pay the costs to acquire, construct, equip and install additions, renovations and improvements (a) to the district junior/senior high school building, including HVAC replacement, roof repairs and improvements, a new physical education and competition gymnasium, locker room, weight room and K-12 FEMA storm shelter addition that connects to the elementary school building, secure entry improvements, renovated office space, and auditorium renovations; and (b) to the district elementary school, including HVAC replacement and electrical system improvements, secure entry and other office area improvements, renovations to other areas, and improvements to accommodate the connecting addition to the junior/senior high school building; pay the costs to make related site and utility improvements and all other necessary and related improvements; and pay financing costs of issuance and capitalized interest affiliated with the general obligation bonds; all pursuant to the provisions of K.S.A. 10-101 et seq., K.S.A. 25-2018(f), K.S.A. 72-5457 and K.S.A. 72-5458 et seq.?

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