

The Big Picture of the Bond

I am going to explain how the Westville Public Schools district and our community have arrived at this pivotal moment in time for our future.

First, I will go over our past to understand the present and hopefully change our future. The Westville schools district patrons voted NO on 7 bond proposals in the past before finally passing a proposal for \$1.8 million in April of 2015. We built the 5th and 6th grade building that is a beginning to a brighter future. Every time we voted a proposal down we cost ourselves time and money. Meanwhile, other communities all over the State of Oklahoma passed bond proposals and invested in their schools and communities. It puts us and other schools like us further behind the curve of having great facilities. But we are at a pivotal moment in our history. Here is how:

I will detail three major projects in the next few paragraphs. They are separate from each other but work in conjunction with one another to make a significant impact on our students.

The first project is the roof project that was just finished. This project was by the grace of God. Two years ago our community was hit by two hail storms in a 3 week period. So we turned in a claim to our insurance and went to battle with help of a public adjuster and managed to be awarded \$2.7 million dollars to replace every roof in the school except the Ag building and Alt Ed building, because they didn't have damage. The rise in cost made the project increase to \$2.9 million dollars by the time it was finished. Insurance paid all but approximately \$158 thousand dollars. The Board of Education and myself made the decision to lease purchase the remaining amount with our building fund with help from Carson Community Bank. That's a good investment on a \$2.9 million dollar project.

The second project is the expansion and remodel of the elementary gym and Early childhood center. I am currently working with the Oklahoma Department of Education on securing the funding from our ARP Covid money, to build new classrooms and remodel the elementary gym. We have set aside \$1.9 million dollars for this project. It will help us cut down on the number of entrances in and out of our elementary school. We need to secure our school campus. We will be sending out a video of this project when it is fully developed and approved by the SDE.

Finally, the third project is the Bond. The Activity center with seven classrooms, a practice gym, remodel of the Ag building, building a practice field and full size track at the old dairy bar site. \$11,335,000 million dollars over a 20 year period with a construction cost of approximately \$8.7 million dollars. The remainder of the money is the interest paid during the lease term. The ballot has to show the total amount. For example, it would be like you buying a house for \$200,000 for 15 years but you actually paid \$300,000 when it is paid off with the interest. We released Bond FAQs yesterday and it can answer most of your questions.

So how did we come up with this project? Timing, planning and patience. We were set to vote on a bond two years ago when Covid hit and we decided to pull it off the ballot because of the

unknown. So in that time we have been working on a plan to get all we need. Make no mistake we need all of these things included in our projects. These plans came together because of listening and making notes of what we need and how we can accomplish those goals.

I started to work back at Westville in August of 1999. I wasn't expecting to be the Superintendent of Westville Public Schools but this is where God has placed me on my path. I've worked with several board members both past and present for what is best for Westville Public Schools. The current Board of Education has 5 WHS alumni representing you. Our guiding principle has always been "What's best for the kids". I've been blessed to be your Superintendent for 13 years and this is the best thing for kids that I've ever seen. This is a culmination of all of our experiences, conversations and discussions with patrons, staff and students, over the years. We've always had a good reputation for our process of caring and educating our students. We have Westville grads all over the world doing great things. Just recently we had 5 WHS alumni become Medical Doctors. Now is the time to give them great facilities to go along with that great education.

We have proven that we can take care of what we have even if it's old. Our high school building is beautiful, but it was built in 1936. Our gym was built in 1955. It will be used everyday when we finish the other projects just with elementary students instead of High School. We have limped along with the trailers since 1991 and with all of these projects, they will be history. This plan is a culmination of over the past 20 years for all of these projects to come together to help us make this school and community better. All of the failed proposals and all of the comments and ideas and actions that have put us here at this moment.

So ask yourself this question. Is it good for the students at Westville Public Schools? Not only the students walking the halls now but for future generations of Westville students. These projects will last well into the next century.

I'm proud to say I'm the Superintendent of Westville Public Schools.

If you have any questions please feel free to call me at school or set up an appointment to visit. I will answer any questions that you may have.

Thank you,

Terry Heustis
Superintendent