

# MAY 16 BOND UPDATE

## Q&A with Mr. Dodge



With less than a week to go before the May 16<sup>th</sup> bond election for our schools, I wanted to do a Q&A with the questions that you've brought to us in case other parents and community members may have similar questions.

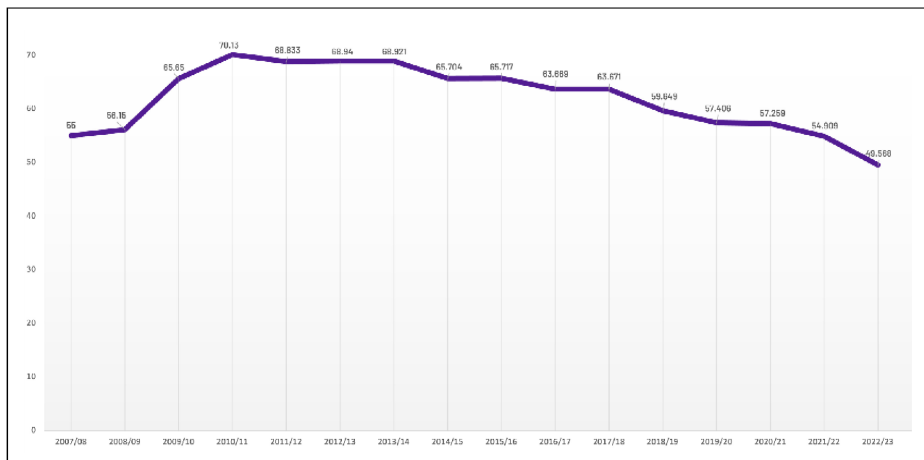
**When I was at BHS we didn't have very many kids in shop classes. Is there more student interest in these classes now?** Career & Technical Education classes are in demand, not just in Baldwin but in districts across the state because of the real-world job training that kids can receive and because many students thrive in a more hands-on learning environment. About 70% - 280 BHS students - are enrolled in at least one Career & Technical Education (CTE) class.

Altogether, the district has 1,393 student enrollments in CTE classes right now, which accounts for students who are enrolled in more than one CTE class. The proposed CTE Center would roughly double our CTE teaching space and allow us to transition out of the current shop space, which is no longer conducive as a classroom due to its limited size, water problems and ventilation issues.

### **What is the plan for the track & field, and what are the limitations of our current situation?**

Baldwin is the only 4A district in the area that does not have lighting, turf or a regulation track. A few of the limitations that creates ... Without lighting, we can only host day-time events, which typically cuts games short and prevents many parents from being able to see their students compete due to work schedules. Without turf, use of the field is limited and impacted by weather. Without a regulation track, Baldwin is unable to host regionals and other events which draw people into our community and help fuel our local businesses. Many of you have also brought to us the safety concern of our current situation because students are walking across 56 Hwy to get to the leased field for games and events after school. Overall, the bond plan is to make the most efficient use of what we have by making the improvements needed for our track & field to be a multi-use space for the district and the community. That includes soccer practices & games, football practices & games, track events, grade school field days & field trips, band events, PE classes and Recreation Commission activities.

**Is the majority of the bond for athletics and a weight room?** No, the majority of the bond – two-thirds of it – would be dedicated to safety and education improvements. The remaining one-third would be dedicated to athletics improvements. There is not a weight room in the bond plan so no dollars would be spent on that.



**I heard that the school mill levy has increased year after year. Is that true?** No that is not true.

Actually, the school mill levy has gone down. Over the years, the school board has intentionally released mill levies in times when projects and improvements were not needed. I've included a graph showing USD 348's mill levy rates over the past 10 years. You can download and view a larger file of the graph at [usd348.com/bond](https://usd348.com/bond).

**Parking and drop-off/pick-up are a disaster at the Intermediate Center. Will the bond allow the district to address that?**

Yes, parking, the amount of congestion around the school, and the safety issues associated with drop-off and pick-up at the IC are a part of the bond plan – and one of the issues that parents have said they are most excited about resolving. Under the bond plan, a new traffic flow pattern would be developed along with the parking and space needed to execute a more efficient, less congested, safer drop-off and pick-up process for our students and their parents and grandparents.

**The bond question lists several safety and security upgrades. One of them is a crisis response system. What is that?**

The crisis response system would allow any teacher or staff member the ability to call for assistance from a crisis team (Principal, School Resource Officer, Nurse, Counselors). A second function of the system would be to trigger a building lockdown, and notify the appropriate help, such as a crisis response team and first responders.

**If there's a new CTE Center, would the old shop building still be used?** Yes, the district aims to make the best use of what we have so the shop building would be repurposed as a maintenance facility for the district. It would also be used to house small engine parts and other items that our shop classes need to store.

**What is the exact question on the ballot that we'll be voting on and what is the amount of the bond?**

Here is the language that will be on your ballot. A "yes" vote would approve the school improvements. A "no" vote would oppose the improvements. The language specifies that the bonds cannot exceed \$25 million.

Shall Unified School District No. 348, Douglas County, Kansas (Baldwin City), issue general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$25,000,000, to pay the costs to acquire, construct, equip and install (a) renovations and improvements to the district high school and junior high school buildings, including a career and technical education facility with enclosed walkway, (b) safety and security improvements to the high school, including site work, parking, roadway and satellite locker room improvements, (c) outdoor learning and activity improvements to the district football, soccer and track and field complex, (d) renovations and improvements to other district facilities, including intermediate center parking and traffic flow improvements, paving and netting improvements to ballfields, junior high and high school locker room improvements, and crisis response system and transportation fleet additions, and (e) make all other necessary and related improvements (the "Project"); 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.*?

**We are out of town on May 16 and aren't sure if we'll make it home to vote before the polls close.**

**Are there other ways to vote?** The polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 16. If that day does not work for a voter, you can also vote early in-person at the Douglas County Election office. Early in-person voting is open this week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Monday, May 15 from 8 a.m. to Noon. Their office is at 711 W 23rd Street #1 in Lawrence. **The last chance to vote early in-person is at Noon on May 15.**

**How do I find out where to vote?** Here are the polling places where you can vote on Tuesday, May 16 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Remember to have your driver's license or ID with you.

**Lumberyard Arts Center** - 718 High Street  
**Lighthouse Baptist Church** - 700 Chapel St  
**Vinland Community Church** - 1724 N 692nd Rd  
**Willow Springs Township Hall** - 303 E 1100 Rd



**Please remember to vote on Tuesday, May 16!**

You can find more information about the bond at [www.USD348.com/bond](http://www.USD348.com/bond).

Don't hesitate to contact me personally with any questions at [mdodge@usd348.com](mailto:mdodge@usd348.com) or 785-594-2721.