



Why does Weatherford Public Schools need a bond now?

Weatherford is growing, and our schools are feeling it. Elementary buildings are reaching capacity, and the middle school is aging. As new industry invests in our city and enrollment continues to increase, the district must plan so facilities can support students today and adapt for future needs. This bond allows Weatherford Public Schools to manage growth responsibly, maintain reasonable class sizes, and provide students with the space they need to learn and grow rather than reacting later with short-term fixes.

What's in the bond?

Proposition No. 1 – New High School Complex including but not limited to the following:

- Classroom Building including rooms for band, choir, theatre, aviation, cafeteria, and courtyard
- Competitive gymnasium
- Practice gym
- Wrestling room and safe room
- Vo-Ag classroom and shop
- Practice field

Bond Amount: \$201,035,000

Project Amount: \$82,184,419

Proposition No. 2 – Pupil Transportation

Bond Amount: \$500,000

Why is there another practice field?

The plan includes **one** new practice field on the new high school campus that will support multiple programs, including football, band, cheer, pom, and PE. This shared field allows students to remain on campus during the school day and improves scheduling and daily use across programs.

As the current high school building is repurposed for middle school use, middle school students will practice at the existing football stadium on that site, using a quality facility already in place. The existing practice field will remain available and is well suited for Peewee football and youth activities.

The new practice field is **not** a stadium. While the site plan shows space for a **possible future** stadium, that element is not part of this bond and is not needed at this time.

This approach expands opportunities for students, improves flexibility, and reduces transportation needs, while focusing on practical, shared spaces.

How did the district develop the plan for the bond?

The plan was developed over the last year through stakeholder input, committee meetings, and a shared vision of the board of education and district administration. District leaders also toured other school facilities and reviewed multiple options, including renovations, additions, and different campus configurations.

As part of this process, the district also evaluated how best to use the land that voters approved in the previous bond election specifically for future school growth. After weighing all options, with students, taxpayers, and long-term planning in mind, the district selected the plan that provides the most practical and responsible long-term solution.

Why not do it in phases?

Building in phases would not save money.

Weatherford's elementary school cost about \$275 per square foot just a few years ago. Today, similar construction exceeds \$400 per square foot, a 45% increase in six years.

That means a \$40 million project in 2020 would cost nearly \$59 million today. Completing the project at once helps the district avoid higher long-term costs, repeated disruption to students and staff, and the need for future bond elections to finish the same work.

What will happen to the current facilities?

The district will explore selling the current middle school. The existing high school will be repurposed to serve as the new middle school for grades 6–8. Elementary schools will realign to better balance enrollment and use space efficiently.

Example of future grade alignment:

- WECC: Pre-K
 - Burcham Elementary School: Grades K–1
 - Stafford Elementary: Grades 2–3
 - East Intermediate School: Grades 4–5
 - Middle School: Grades 6–8
 - High School: Grades 9–12
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Is the proposed site located in a flood zone?

No. The site has been reviewed through engineering and feasibility studies, including topographical analysis. While temporary stormwater ponding was noted in portions of the property, no reports identified the site as being within a FEMA-designated flood zone. Stormwater management would be addressed through standard design practices.

What is the estimated property tax impact?

The bond is estimated to result in approximately a 10% property tax increase, raising the school district's sinking fund from 26 mills to 36 mills.

For a homeowner currently paying about \$3,000 per year in property taxes, a 10% increase would equal approximately \$300 per year, or about \$25 per month. This property tax increase would begin appearing on the 2027–2028 tax roll.

This estimate is based on conservative financial assumptions. Over the past five years, the district's assessed valuation has increased with community growth, averaging approximately 4.9% per year. Over the past 25 years, the district has averaged 5.47% annual growth. For planning purposes, the district used a conservative estimated growth rate of 4.6% when calculating the projected property tax impact. In addition to managing growth, the district is focused on remaining competitive and continuing to attract families, students, and new residents. Quality school facilities play an important role in supporting that goal.

When compared to similar school districts in size and within the region, the district's property tax rate for the sinking fund remains competitive and in line with peer districts. The bond is structured to balance needed facility improvements with responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Homeowners can find their specific property information on the [Custer County Treasurer's website](#).

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 26
CUSTER COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
(Weatherford Board of Education)

Taxpayer Cost Analysis
\$10,615,000 Combined Purpose Bonds of July 1, 2026; 3-Year Issue
(First Tax Year: 2027-2028)

Estimated Overall Tax Increase				
Taxing Entity	2025-2026	2027-2028	Millage	Percentage
	Millage	Millage	Change	Increase
Custer County	20.56 *	20.56	0	
EMS District	0 *	0	0	
Technology Center	12.31 *	12.31	0	
Weatherford Schools	66.96	76.94	9.98	
	<u>99.83</u>	<u>109.81</u>	9.98	10.00%

* Millage rates are based on 2025-26 levies and assume no change from 2025-26 through 2027-28.

Impact To Taxpayer			
2025-2026	2027-2028	Annual	Monthly
Tax Amount	Tax Amount	Increase	Increase
\$25.00	\$27.50	\$2.50	\$0.21
\$50.00	\$55.00	\$5.00	\$0.42
\$75.00	\$82.50	\$7.50	\$0.62
\$100.00	\$110.00	\$10.00	\$0.83
\$200.00	\$220.00	\$20.00	\$1.67
\$300.00	\$329.99	\$29.99	\$2.50
\$400.00	\$439.99	\$39.99	\$3.33
\$500.00	\$549.99	\$49.99	\$4.17
\$600.00	\$659.99	\$59.99	\$5.00
\$700.00	\$769.99	\$69.99	\$5.83
\$800.00	\$879.99	\$79.99	\$6.67
\$900.00	\$989.98	\$89.98	\$7.50
\$1,000.00	\$1,099.98	\$99.98	\$8.33

12/08/2025

Prepared by Stephen H. McDonald and Associates, Inc.

Schedule: 3.22

COMPARISON SINKING FUND MILLAGE RATES 2025-2026	
School District	Current Sinking Fund Millage Rate
Calumet	9.41
Thomas Fay Custer	11.81
Cordell	13.91
Duncan	14.43
Elk City	18.51
Arapaho-Butler	18.63
Watonga	23.50
Weatherford	26.02
Chickasha	26.56
Boone-Apache	27.38
Carnegie	28.10
Mustang	28.61
Hydro-Eakly	30.25
Okeene	31.37
Yukon	31.75
Cashion	31.97
Fort Cobb-Broxton	32.23
Hinton	32.46
Clinton	33.04
Deer Creek	33.36
El Reno	33.59
Piedmont	34.07

Weatherford PS projected increase to 36.00 millage after bond passes.

Why is the bond amount higher than the project amount?

The project amount reflects the estimated cost to design and build the facilities. The bond amount includes financing costs over 24 years, similar to a home mortgage. This allows the district to build the facilities now while spreading the cost responsibly over the life of the bond.

Can the bond be paid off early?

Yes. After 10 years, the district has the option to refinance or pay down the bond, depending on financial conditions at that time.

If property values increase and the district's assessed valuation grows, Weatherford Public Schools may be able to:

- Refinance the bond at a lower interest rate
- Pay the bond off sooner
- Reduce long-term interest costs

Any decision to refinance or pay down the bond would be made by the school board based on financial conditions and what is in the best interest of taxpayers.

What is the projected design and construction timeline?

The projected timeline is approximately three years. Students are projected to move into the new high school in Fall 2030.

What can bond funds be used for in Oklahoma schools?

In Oklahoma, bond funds are used for capital improvements and long-term projects, such as:

- Building new facilities or additions
- Renovating and repairing existing spaces
- Safety and security improvements
- Technology upgrades
- Transportation (buses and related needs)
- Athletic facilities
- Fine arts facilities
- Energy-efficiency improvements
- Land acquisition for future growth

Bond funds **cannot** be used for day-to-day expenses such as:

- Salaries, utilities, or routine maintenance

- Classroom supplies or administrative costs
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How does the vote work for the two bond propositions?

Each proposition is voted on separately, and each must receive at least 60% approval to pass, as required by Oklahoma law.

- If only one proposition passes, the district may move forward with the item voters approved, while the other would not move forward at this time.
- If both propositions pass, the district can move forward with the full plan as presented.
- If neither proposition passes, the district would continue operating current facilities and transportation. The needs related to growth, capacity, and aging buildings would remain and would need to be addressed in the future.

The district respects the outcome of the election and will move forward based on what voters approve.

When is the election and where can I vote?

Election Day is **Tuesday, February 10, 2026**, from **7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

Voters can find polling locations, early voting, and absentee ballot information at www.oklahoma.gov/elections.

Other key voting dates:

- Voter Registration Deadline: Friday, January 16, 2026
 - Absentee Ballot Request Deadline: Monday, January 26, 2026
 - Early Voting:
 - Thursday–Friday, February 5–6
 - 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
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What if I have more questions?

If you have questions or need more information, please contact Superintendent Mark Harmon at (580) 772-3327 or mharmon@wpsok.org