

Long-term plan designed to maintain buildings in good condition, while anticipating future enrollment growth, and continuing the long legacy of excellence expected for Auburn City Schools.

2035

AUBURN CITY SCHOOLS FACILITIES MASTER PLAN



February 17, 2025







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Continuing the long legacy of excellence expected for Auburn City Schools
meeting our student's needs over the next ten years and beyond



00

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



OVERVIEW

This 2035 Facilities Master Plan is a long-term plan designed to maintain buildings in good condition, while anticipating future enrollment growth and continuing the long legacy of excellence expected for Auburn City Schools (ACS). This plan provides for investment at all ACS educational facilities while addressing student enrollment growth. The recommendations in this report aim to meet the needs of ACS in the next ten years and beyond.

The main challenges facing ACS include:

- Insufficient capacity to accommodate growth for the long-term, especially at the high school
- Several schools are beyond their useful lives

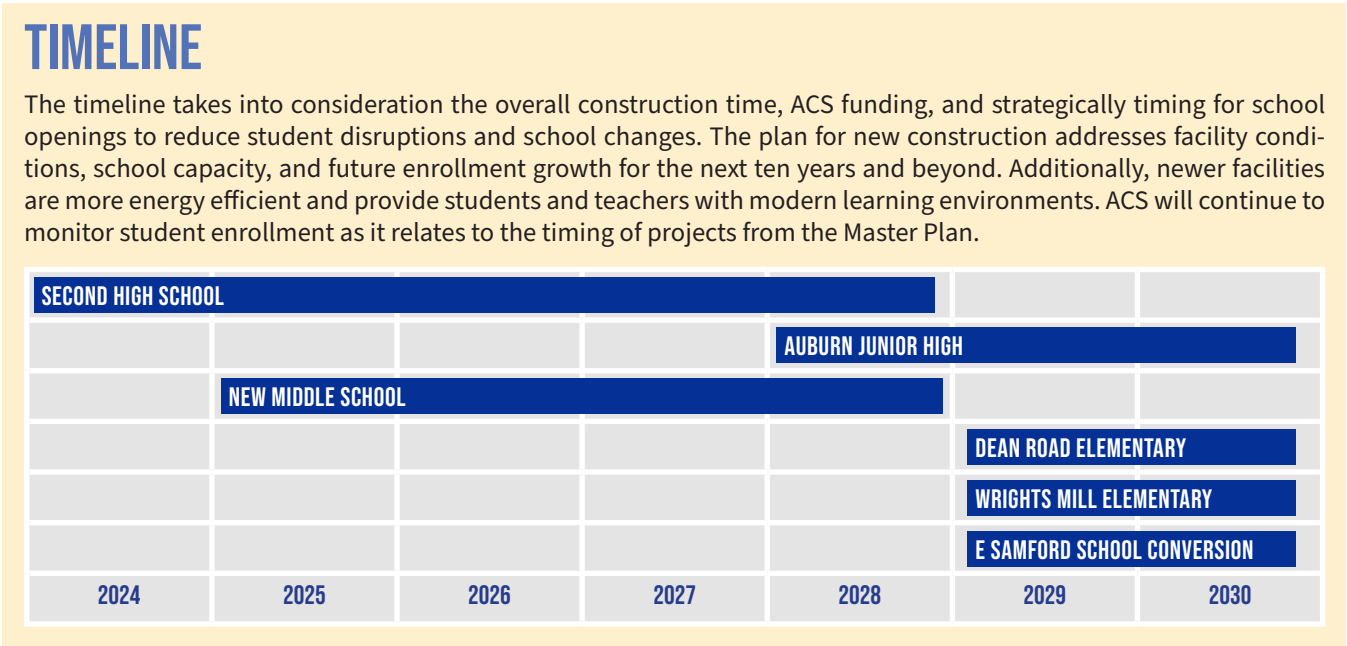
This 2035 Facilities Master Plan sets out to establish guidelines for investing in ACS facilities that most effectively supports the goals, mission, and financial realities of the district.

RECOMMENDATION

The ACS Board of Education approved moving forward with a plan for building a second high school as part of the 2028 Facility Master Plan. After reviewing and updating the 2028 Facility Master Plan it is recommended that: Dean Road Elementary School and Wrights Mill Road Elementary School be rebuilt instead of renovated, a new middle school constructed, and East Samford School converted. The change to two high schools serving grades 9-12 necessitate a decision on middle grade configuration. Overall, it is optimal for the district to operate two distinct feeder patterns which would necessitate the construction of a new middle school.

The benefits of this plan include:

- Traditional delivery of high school education
- More opportunities for student participation across academic, athletic, and fine art competitions and programs
- Accommodates student capacity in the long-term
- Avoids future inflationary costs of delaying construction of a second high school



BUDGET

The 2035 Facilities Master Plan estimates that ACS will need \$17 million for capital renewal and \$366.8 million for new construction. This brings the total investment to \$383.8 million over the next ten years. These projects will be funded through debt instruments paid for with local funds from the 16 mill Special School Tax funds.

CAPITAL RENEWAL	\$17 M
CONSTRUCTION	
SECOND HIGH SCHOOL	\$ 214 M
AUBURN JUNIOR HIGH	\$ 18.6 M
NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL	\$ 78.2 M
DEAN ROAD ELEM.	\$ 28 M
WRIGHTS MILL ELEM.	\$ 28 M
CONSTRUCTION TOTAL	\$366.8 M
PROGRAM TOTAL	\$383.8 M

Shaping our student's future careers by
educating the whole child and emphasizing
college and career readiness



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INTRODUCTION



Auburn City Schools (ACS) serves as the premier public school system in the municipality and community of Auburn, which is nestled in the heart of Lee County on the Plains of East Alabama. ACS operates as a Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade (K-12) system with more than 9,400 students. As the pinnacle of educational excellence in Alabama, ACS becomes a driving force for student's future career paths. With an increased priority on educating the whole child and an emphasis on college and career readiness, ACS stays on the forefront of academics, athletics, fine arts, and technology.

OVERVIEW

In April 2023, ACS engaged Woolpert to analyze various options regarding ACS facilities, work with ACS to develop recommendations, and prepare this Facilities Master Plan.

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Woolpert's analyses considered a 2012 Facility Condition Assessment; current enrollment projections; district goals; and the following school sizes: Elementary school 600 capacity, Middle School 1000 capacity, and High School 2200 capacity. ACS currently manages the following 14 campuses:

10 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Cary Woods, Dean Road, Richland, Woodland Pines, and Auburn Early Education serve grades K-2. Ogletree, Wrights Mill Road, Yarbrough, Pick, and Creekside serve grades 3-5. The elementary schools are set up to feed into one another.

2 MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Drake Middle serves grade 6 and East Samford Middle serves grade 7

1 JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Auburn Junior High serves grades 8-9.

1 HIGH SCHOOL

Auburn High serves grades 10-12.

PURPOSE

This Facilities Master Plan provides short- and long-term strategic investment plans that provide recommended investments in each school and a suggested timeline. The final recommendation will be actionable and achievable given the current state of ACS facilities, future enrollment projections, and vision for the future of ACS.

The Facilities Master Plan provides guidance to district leadership in making decisions to adequately fund facility improvements, while working within fiscal realities. Ultimately, the plan provides opportunities for well-planned capacity in adequate facilities across all grade levels.

CHALLENGES

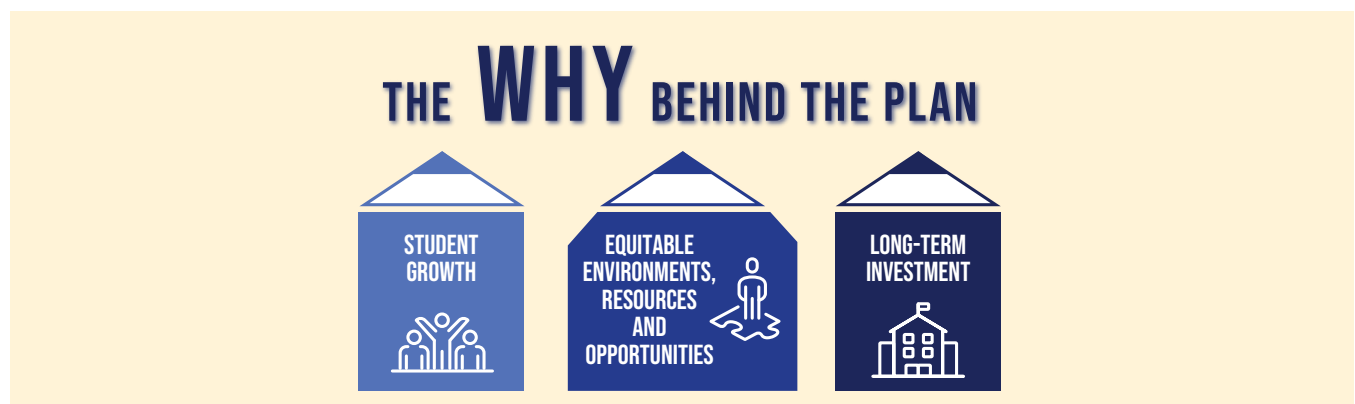
ACS's main challenge is capacity to accommodate growth for the long term, especially at the high school. In addition, several schools are beyond their useful lives. This 2035 Facilities Master Plan sets out to establish guidelines for investing in ACS facilities that most effectively supports the goals, mission, and financial realities of the district.

GOALS

The overarching goals of the plan are to:

- Create data-driven facility investments given growth and building conditions
- Balance school utilization across the portfolio
- Create solutions that will serve the community well for the next 20+ years

Figure 1: The Why Behind the Plan



Reviewing and analyzing information to
prioritize facility spending to best serve
ACS students



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BACKGROUND



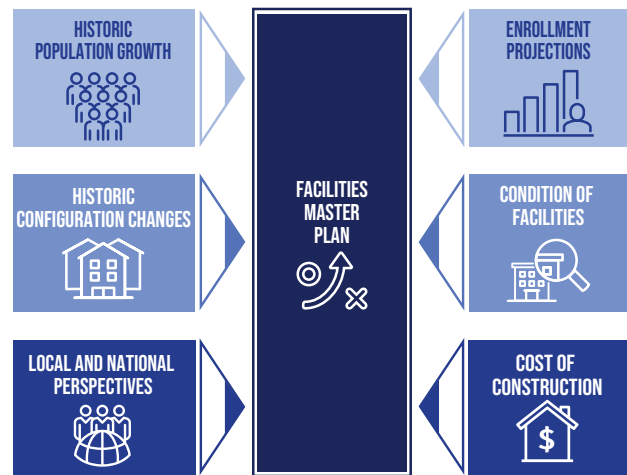
BACK-GROUND

Developing the 2035 Auburn City Schools Facilities Master Plan considered several sets of information (Figure 2), including:

- Historic Population Growth
- Historic Configuration Changes
- Local and National Perspectives
- Enrollment Projections
- Condition of Facilities
- Cost of Construction

All available information was reviewed and analyzed in an effort to prioritize facility spending to best serve the students of Auburn City Schools.

Figure 2: Plan Considerations



HISTORIC POPULATION GROWTH AND CONFIGURATION CHANGES

Since its establishment in October 1961, ACS has undergone nine grade configuration changes to support the growth of the city (Figure 3). The school district began operations for the 1962-1963 school year, assuming control of eight schools from Lee County. The Auburn City School Board immediately began planning for the construction of a new Auburn High School to alleviate the overcrowding, with Auburn voters approving taxes for that purpose in 1965.

Closure and consolidation of outdated schools brought the Auburn City Schools to six campuses by 1983. Expansion of existing school campuses kept up with growth until the 1992 construction of the Auburn Early Education Center,

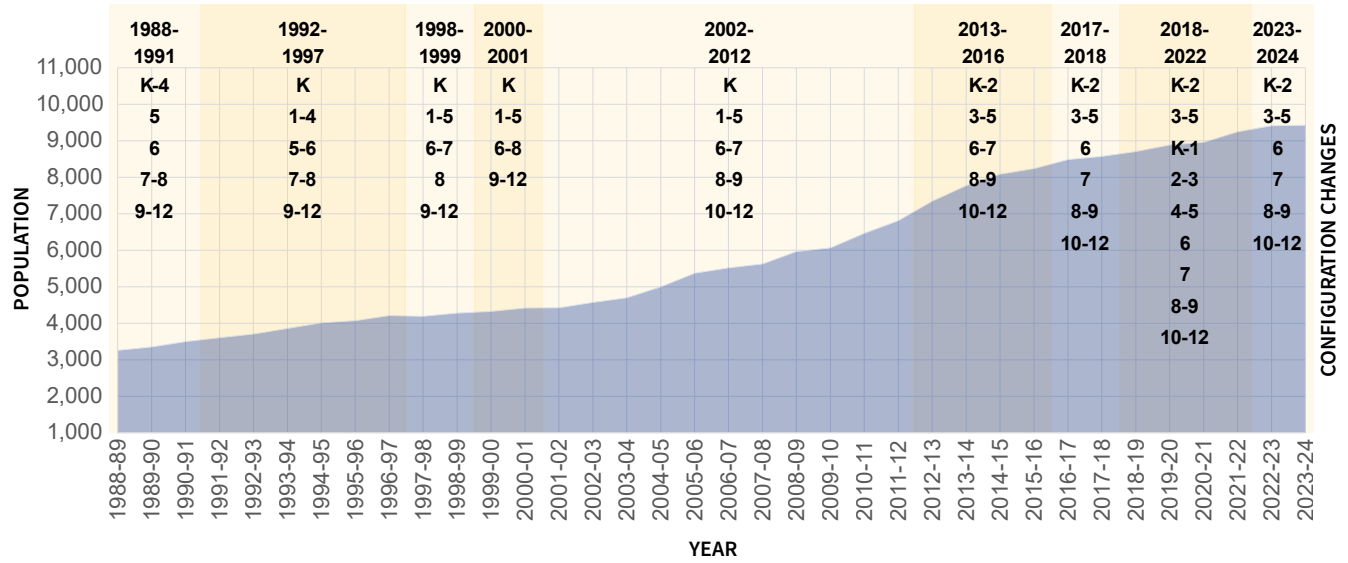
the state's first large public kindergarten-only facility. New elementary schools were constructed in 1998 (Yarbrough and Ogletree) and 2008 (Richland), while expansion of other campuses continued virtually non-stop from the 1990s into the 2010s.

The new Auburn High School opened its doors in the fall of 2017, triggering a shift in campuses where the previous high school now serves as the new junior high, and the previous junior high serves 7th grade.

To accommodate growth while maintaining one main high school, ACS has changed grade configurations seven times since 1998, including making the high school a 10-12 configuration in 2002.

Figure 3: Population Growth and Configuration Changes

ACS POPULATION GROWTH AND CONFIGURATION CHANGES



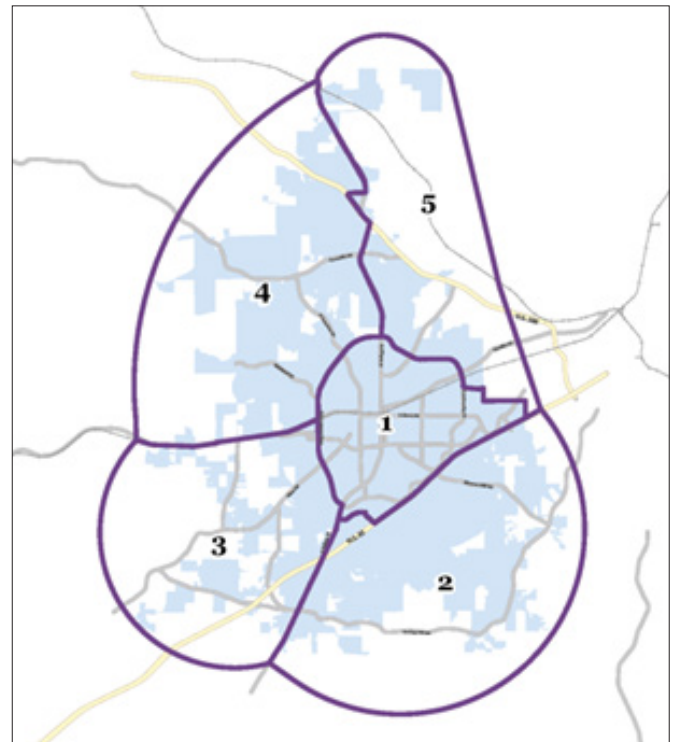
CITY OF AUBURN POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The City of Auburn CompPlan 2030 Update provides information on the population projections for the City of Auburn (Table 1 and Figure 4). The Auburn Interactive Growth Model (AIGM) indicates the city population will increase by 15,107 residents by 2030.

Figure 4: Auburn Interactive Growth Model Map

Table 1: Auburn Interactive Growth Model Projections

Area	AIGM Population 2020	AIGM Population 2030	Change	%Change
1	43,917	46,449	+2,532	+5.8%
2	11,823	13,850	+2,027	+17.1%
3	4,659	6,214	+1,555	+33.4%
4	9,531	15,332	+5,801	+60.9%
5	7,374	10,565	+3,192	+43.3%
Total	77,304	92,411	+15,107	19.5%



Metro Forecasting Models provided high level school system enrollment forecasts in Table 2.

Table 2: Metro Forecasting Models

Growth Scenario	Forecasted School System Enrollment		
	Year 2025	Year 2030	Year 2035
High	9,892	10,966	11,803
Normal	9,603	10,359	10,901
Low	9,326	9,776	10,032

FACILITY CONDITIONS

In 2012, ACS engaged Jacobs to perform a comprehensive facility condition assessment. ACS has completed a significant number of projects based on the 2012 Jacobs report. The information included in these 2012 assessment was updated based on district knowledge of completed projects. Additionally, cost estimates were escalated to current 2024 estimates. The repair and replacement costs were used to anticipate the facility needs over the next ten years.

CONSTRUCTION COST PROJECTIONS

Estimating the cost of new facility construction was based on past performance of the construction market, as well as anticipating future increase in costs. Historically, prior to the COVID pandemic, inflation was typically estimated at 3 percent per year. From 2020 into the early 2023 the construction market saw increase in costs of approximately 35 percent. However, this inflation trend was historic, has leveled off, and is not anticipated to continue into the future. The construction market is estimating future construction costs to increase by approximately 4 percent per year. Table 3 shows the cost per square foot for new construction of different school types.

Table 3: Estimated Construction Cost per Square Foot

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Elementary School	\$241	\$251	\$261	\$271	\$282	\$293	\$305	\$317	\$330	\$343	\$357	\$371	\$386	\$401
Middle School	-	-	-	-	\$425	\$442	\$460	\$478	\$497	\$517	\$538	\$559	\$582	\$605
High School	-	-	-	-	\$515	\$536	\$557	\$579	\$602	\$627	\$652	\$678	\$705	\$733

Elementary and middle schools are well-utilized while the 8-9 and 10-12 grades are over-utilized



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PORTFOLIO



PORTFOLIO

ACS 2024-25 enrollment is 9,438 students across:

- Five campuses serving grades K-2
- Five campuses serving grades 3-5
- One campus serving grade 6
- One campus serving grade 7
- One junior high school serving grades 8 and 9
- One high school serving grades 10 through 12

The facility condition needs are estimated to be \$17 million over the next ten years. Additionally, Auburn Junior High School and Auburn High School are projected to be at or over capacity within the next ten years (Table 4).

Figure 5: ACS School Locations

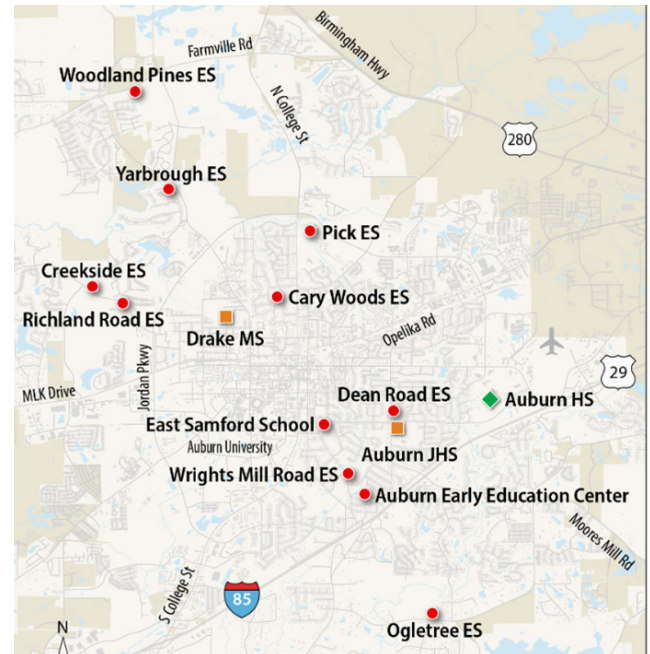


Table 4: Current and Projected Enrollment

Grade	Current		
	Capacity	Enrollment	Utilization
K-2	2,866	2,073	73%
3-5	2,923	2,217	76%
6	1,000	732	73%
7	1,000	717	72%
8-9	1,724	1,480	86%
10-12	2,200	2,219	100%
Total	11,713	9,438	80%

\$17M

ESTIMATED FACILITY CONDITION NEEDS

Recommendations to maintain buildings in good condition, while anticipating future enrollment growth, and continuing the long legacy of excellence expected for ACS



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RECOMMENDATION



RECOMMEN- DATION

The recommendations in this 2035 Facility Master Plan provide the best long-term investment for the students of ACS and offer the most strategic investment of taxpayer dollars. This 2035 Facility Master Plan provides for:

- Rebuilding Dean Road Elementary School and Wrights Mill Road Elementary School
- Building a second high school (both high schools will serve grades 9-12)
- Building a new middle school (both middle schools will serve grades 7-8)
- Converting Auburn Junior High School to a middle school
- Converting East Samford School to other academic and support functions

These recommendations also align with the ACS 2028 Facilities Master Plan approved by the Board of Education in 2018.

The benefits of these recommendations include:

- Traditional delivery of high school education
- More opportunities for student participation across academic, athletic, and fine art competitions and programs
- Accommodates student capacity in the long-term
- Avoids future inflationary costs of delaying construction of a second high school

The change to two high schools serving grades 9-12 necessitate a decision on middle grade configurations moving forward; namely should ACS maintain separate schools

for grades 6, 7 and 8, or change to two 7-8 grade middle schools that feed into the two high schools. With the district moving to two high schools, it is optimal for the district to operate two distinct feeder patterns which would necessitate the construction of a new middle school and converting Auburn Junior High School to a middle school. The current grade configuration requires students to move schools three times in their middle grades. Building a new middle school along with the second high school will provide a more equitable and sustainable middle grades experience than the current single grade configuration schools.

Additionally opening a new middle school and the second high school at the same time will minimize disruptions to students and parents during the transition.

The new middle school provides the opportunity to take East Samford offline and consider converting the space for ACS operations, professional development, and other academic programs. Initially the transition to office space would require minimum costs. However, as the scope is more fully developed, costs will be infused back into the plan.

This 2035 Facility Master Plan includes rebuilding Dean Road Elementary School and Wrights Mill Road Elementary School instead of the 2028 Facility Master Plan recommendation to renovate. This provides ACS the opportunity to modernize older school facilities and improve infrastructure issues.

CURRENT AND PROJECTED GRADE CONFIGURATION

Figure 6 and Figure 7 demonstrate the current and recommended grade configuration.

Figure 6: Current Grade Configuration

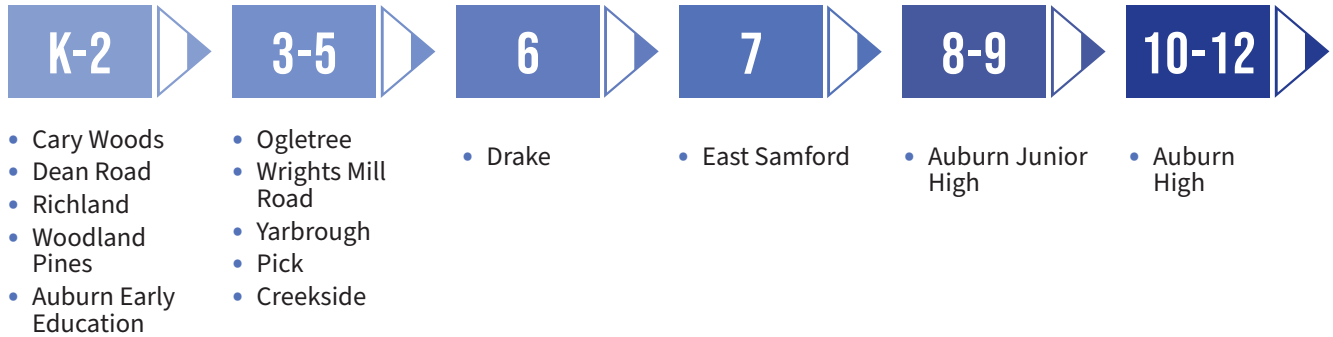
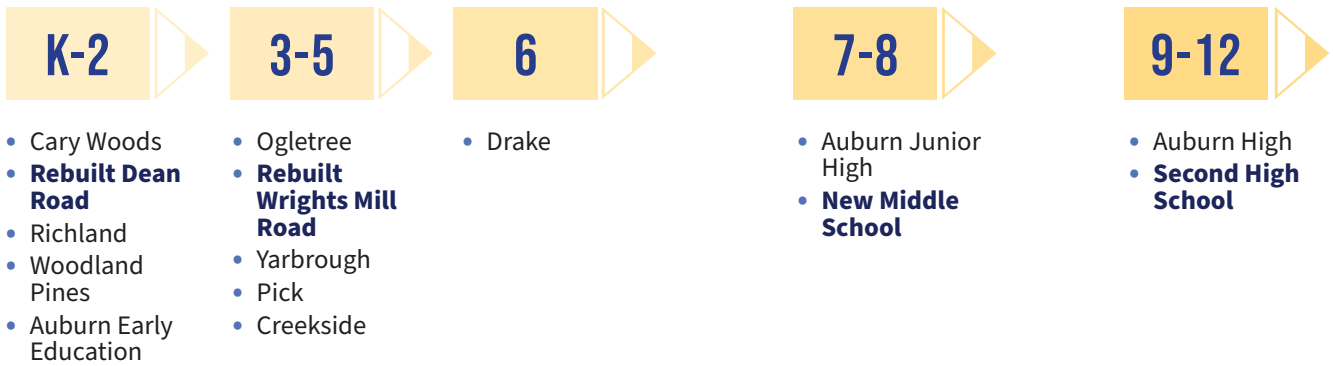


Figure 7: Recommended Grade Configuration



CURRENT AND PLANNED CAPACITY

The recommendation addresses current and projected capacity needs for the middle and high school levels, see Table 5.

Table 5: Current and Projected Enrollment

Grade	Current			Planned Capacity
	Capacity	Enrollment	Utilization	
K-2	2,866	2,073	73%	2,960
3-5	2,923	2,217	76%	2,971
6	1,000	732	73%	1,000
7	1,000	717	72%	-
7-8	-	-	-	2,000
8-9	1,724	1,480	86%	-
10-12	2,200	2,219	100%	-
9-12	-	-	-	4,400
Total	11,713	9,438	80%	13,331

CONSTRUCTION

The plan for new construction addresses facility conditions, school capacity, and future enrollment growth for the next ten years and beyond. Additionally, newer facilities are more energy efficient and provide students and teachers with modern learning environments.

SECOND HIGH SCHOOL

The construction of a second high school will address the current capacity of Auburn High and accommodate the anticipated future growth of the district. Currently Auburn High is at full capacity, with 2,219 students and a utilization of 100 percent. The new high school is intended to serve an additional 2,200 students, bringing ACS high school capacity to 4,400 students. Based on current enrollment projection trends, it is anticipated that the two high schools would have capacity to handle ACS high school enrollment beyond 2040.

Additionally, a second high school will provide the opportunity for more high school students to participate across academic, athletic, and fine art competitions, and programs.

AUBURN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The demolition and construction project at Auburn Junior High will address the current conditions and provide for additional capacity. The project includes demolition of the quads, constructing new classroom spaces, and building a new softball field.

NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL

Construction of a new middle school will provide ACS the ability to develop two feeder patterns for the two high schools. Opening the new middle school and high school at the same time will minimize disruptions to students and parents. Also, with a new middle school ACS has the option to repurpose East Samford to administrative spaces.

DEAN ROAD AND WRIGHTS MILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Dean Road Elementary and Wrights Mill Elementary are two of ACS's older facilities. Dean Road Elementary School is currently 64,000 square feet and has a capacity of 506 students. The new Dean Road Elementary School will be built slightly larger and is planned for a capacity of approximately 600 students. Wrights Mill Elementary is currently 63,000 square feet with a capacity of 552 students. The new Wrights Mill Elementary School will also be planned for approximately 600 students, with an overall building square footage of 72,000.

SECOND HIGH SCHOOL

Budget	\$214 M
Square Feet	350,000
Grades	9-12
Open	Fall 2028

AUBURN JUNIOR HIGH

Budget	\$18.6 M
Square Feet	25,000
Grades	7-8
Open	Fall 2030

NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL

Budget	\$78.2 M
Square Feet	150,000
Grades	7-8
Open	Fall 2028

DEAN ROAD ELEM.

Budget	\$28 M
Square Feet	72,000
Grades	K-2
Open	Fall 2030

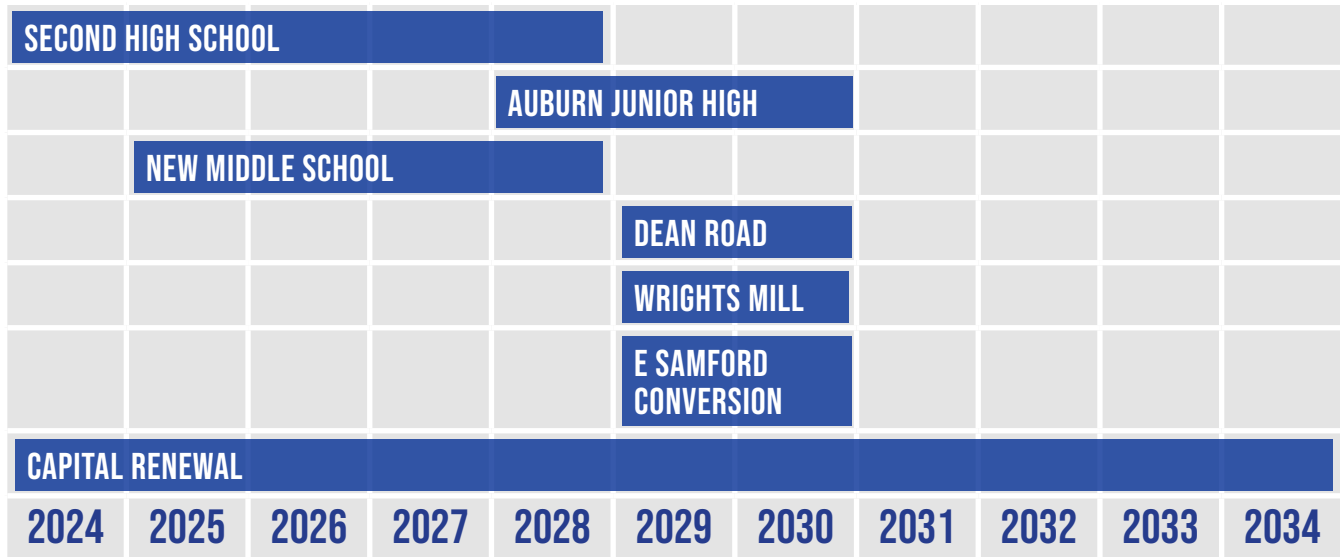
WRIGHTS MILL ELEM.

Budget	\$28 M
Square Feet	72,000
Grades	3-5
Open	Fall 2030

PROGRAM TIMELINE

The timeline below takes into consideration the overall construction time, ACS funding, and strategically timing for school openings to reduce student disruptions and school changes.

Figure 8: Construction Timeline



CAPITAL RENEWAL

Capital renewal costs were projected based on the 2012 facility condition assessment. The capital renewal budget includes deficiencies identified in the 2012 report that had not been addressed at the time of the 2035 Facilities Master Plan. The capital renewal need is estimated to be approximately \$17 million for remaining facilities. Items included in these estimates include replacing components, such as: roofs, mechanical components, paving, and sidewalks. Schools identified for replacement are not included. The table below provides the budget by school.

Table 6: Capital Renewal Costs

EARLY EDUCATION CENTER	\$3.1 M
RICHLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	\$0.5 M
OGLETREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	\$0.8 M
YARBROUGH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	\$4.0 M
EAST SAMFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL	\$4.1 M
AUBURN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	\$4.4 M
CAPITAL RENEWAL TOTAL	\$17.0 M

10-YEAR COST ESTIMATE SUMMARY

The table below represent the budget for capital renewal and new construction over the next ten years.

Table 7: 10-Year Capital Renewal and New Construction Costs

CAPITAL RENEWAL	\$17 M
CONSTRUCTION	
SECOND HIGH SCHOOL	\$ 214 M
AUBURN JUNIOR HIGH	\$ 18.6 M
NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL	\$ 78.2 M
DEAN ROAD ELEM.	\$ 28 M
WRIGHTS MILL ELEM.	\$ 28 M
CONSTRUCTION TOTAL	\$366.8 M
PROGRAM TOTAL	\$383.8 M

FUNDING

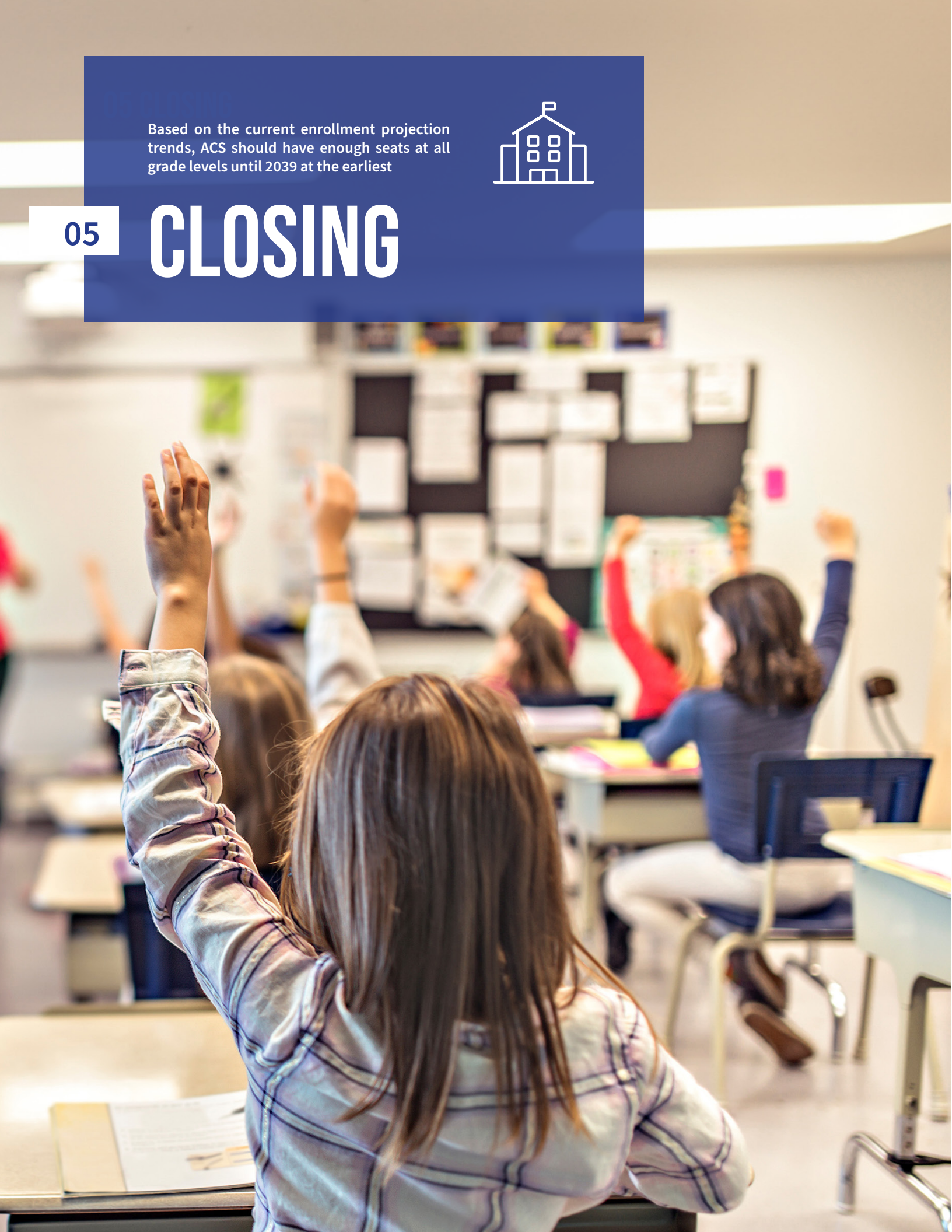
The 2035 ACS Facilities Master Plan includes approximately \$383 million in estimated capital needs to complete the full implementation. These projects will be funded through debt instruments paid for with local funds from the 16 mill Special School Tax funds. The school district continues to monitor student enrollment as it relates to the timing of projects from the Master Plan.

Based on the current enrollment projection trends, ACS should have enough seats at all grade levels until 2039 at the earliest



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CLOSING



CLOSING

BEYOND TEN YEARS

This Master Plan addresses current condition and capacity concerns, while taking into consideration what Auburn City Schools might look like in 20 or 30 years. Based on the current enrollment projection trends, analyses were completed to identify when new construction may be necessary to accommodate student growth. It should be noted that projecting beyond 10 years is highly speculative. However, based on a 1 percent, 2 percent, or 3 percent enrollment growth beyond 2032, it is anticipated that ACS should have enough seats at all grade levels until 2039 at the earliest ([Table 8](#)).

Table 8: Long-term Enrollment Trend Analysis

Growth Beyond 2033	1%	2%	3%
Elementary Schools	>2050	2046	2042
Middle Schools	>2050	2042	2039
High Schools	>2050	2045	2041

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

The ACS 2035 Facilities Master Plan is developed to allow the school system to pivot to accommodate other configurations and handle future enrollment growth. Based on current financial analysis there should be funding available to support a future 10-year plan following the completion of the 2035 Facilities Master Plan.

CLOSING

This 2035 Facilities Master Plan is a long-term plan designed to maintain buildings in good condition, while anticipating future enrollment growth, and continuing the long legacy of excellence expected for ACS. This plan provides for investment at all ACS educational facilities while addressing the current over capacity Auburn High School.

The recommendations in this report aim to meet the needs of ACS in the next ten years and beyond. However, the plan should be revisited every two to five years and updated in accordance with current economic, enrollment, and facility conditions.



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