

# The Wildcat Chronicles

Durant High School

September 29, 2022

## Bond vote has widespread support at school

By Kennedy Schumacher

A majority of Durant students and staff believe a proposed \$15.6 million bond referendum is a necessary step as the district's enrollment continues to climb.

While the bond entails major updates to the auditorium and middle school gym, there are several other updates and needs the bond also addresses.

The bond was presented to the Durant school board on Monday, September 12, by the Facility Advisory Committee (FAC).

The committee has recommended updating the high school art and science classrooms, rearranging offices, replacing and/or repairing windows throughout the school, and making updates to the heating, lighting, electrical, and sprinkler systems, along with the expansion of the auditorium

and middle school gym.

Fifth grade teacher Mrs. Hailey Houk said one of the top windows in her classroom is broken.

The main, big window in her classroom is completely unable to open as well, making her classroom hotter with the hot temperatures. She and her students compared the classroom to a sauna.

Mrs. Houk said she has been told that in order to fix the windows in her classroom, the entire glass panel, consisting of all of the top windows, would have to be removed to fix the one broken window.

Mrs. Houk even brought her own portable air conditioning unit to try to overcome the hot temperatures.

But it is usually unsuccessful, so Mrs. Houk and her students really just have

to "deal with it [the hot temperatures]."

She said if the bond doesn't pass, she and many other students and staff will probably feel a little let down.

But she understands that some community members might have certain reasons for their stance on the bond.

"In order to keep us [Durant schools] thriving, in future generations, I think updates need to be made," said Mrs. Houk.

Most of the students at Durant are aware of the upcoming bond as well.

Sophomore Mia Berry feels the bond is important for things such as the ability to hold conference tournaments for sporting events.

She feels there are many benefits to expanding the middle school gym.

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Photo by Kylie Meyermann  
Students work out in the middle school gym, which would be renovated under a proposed bond referendum.

## Rose Bowl float honors former Durant student

By Ryan Brown

Nearly 12 years ago, the lives of a local family changed forever.

On the morning of December 5, 2010, Emily Bohnsack, a junior at Durant, attended church with her family. Later that day, Emily drove to her first day of club volleyball practice. While on the way to the school, she tragically died in an automobile accident near Durant.

Emily is now known by many in the community as the face of the Green Out Night annual basketball game, which was started by her mother Suzy Bohnsack, a retired Durant elementary teacher, to help spread awareness for organ donation with the Iowa Donor Network.

The Durant community and school have raised over \$38,000 thanks to all the support and fundraising from the community, and the Iowa Donor Network has selected the Bohnsack family to represent them in Pasadena, California, for the 2023 Rose Bowl parade, in Emily's honor.

In fact, Emily's image will appear on the Donate Life Rose Bowl float, a national organization which spreads awareness about the importance of organ donation.

"We were nominated as a family for what we've done to help spread awareness," Mrs. Bohnsack said, "and then we were chosen to go for the Rose Bowl pa-

rade. A photo of Emily will be on the float, made out of flowers—a floragraph."

The floragraph will be made up of many flowers to capture Emily's image. There will be 44 floragraphs of various organ donors on the float.

The families chosen were from all around the country. Mrs. Bohnsack said there will also be another Iowa family.

A spectacular Chinese street dragon is the centerpiece of the Donate Life float. In Chinese culture, dragons symbolize great power, good luck and strength.

"The dragon will be supported on poles by living donors and surrounded by organ, eye and tissue recipients, whose lives have been transformed and have turned the corner to a more prosperous future, thanks to those who said 'YES' to organ, eye and tissue donation," said Ms. Anna Hobart, an events specialist for the Iowa Donor Network.

The theme of this year's float is "Lifting Each Other Up," said Ms. Hobart, and "celebrates the power of organ, eye and tissue donation, with donors and recipients working together to support one another."

Emily's organ donations saved more than 200 lives. They were able to freeze many of Emily's viable parts. These included 37 grafts from bone-connected tissue and 189 skin grafts for burn victims.

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## School enhances security

By Kiyah Daily

In response to the mass shooting in Uvalde, Texas, last spring, Durant has stepped up its safety procedures in the school building.

According to School Resource Officer Mike Meier, one precaution is adding alarms that sound on outside doors if someone opens the door. Students must also sign out of classes and sign back in and have passes when they are in the hallways.

Staff is emphasizing that students must not bring backpacks to classes, and Sgt. Meier also added a second screen in his office to view more security cameras.

Even though students dislike the sign-in and sign-out sheets, Sgt. Meier said, "It is so if an incident happens, we [the school] knows where you're at."

The new sign-in and sign-out sheets are mostly for accountability. When students want to leave a class, they have to write on the sheet when they leave and where they are going.

This is so that if an unfortunate event does happen, the teachers could use the sheet to find a student.

"In the past, I've noticed that at times it's been a little relaxed, and people are just wandering the hallways," said Sgt. Meier. "This way we can see that the person checked in and out of the classroom."

Through his training over the summer, Sgt. Meier also learned that some schools aren't even allowing students to have backpacks on campus.

"We can't see what a student has in a backpack, and that's what we don't like," said Sgt. Meier. "We can see the size and shape of the backpack, but not its contents."

He said that he would also prefer to have all clear water bottles to prevent any incidents that could happen.

One student, senior Skylar Larion, thinks the sign-in and sign-out sheets are "absolutely stupid. I don't understand it."

She doesn't think the passes will work all year long because "the teachers are going to give up" because they will get tired of writing them.

Larion also believes that this will not help with students who leave class for an extended period of time because "they're just going to write a different time when they come back."

Fire and threat drills have also been combined this year. Students will no longer leave the classroom for a fire drill but stay in place during the drill and be prepared to react to any situation or event.

"In the last 50 years, no student has died in a school structure during a fire," said Sgt. Meier, "so why send you guys [students] outside in the elements if we don't have to."

Sgt. Meier said after the alarm goes off, students will line up to get ready to go.

"The staff member will keep an eye out, and everyone will listen to what's going on. The staff member will look out in the hallway if they don't see or hear anything," said Sgt. Meier. "Everyone needs to be ready

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## Iowa City support group helps victims of sexual violence

By Grace Paustian

An Iowa City-based support group has helped more than 100 victims of sexual violence in Cedar County in the last two years.

The Rape Victim Advocacy Program (RVAP) was established in 1973, according to RVAP assistance director Venissa White. It is one of the oldest sexual violence centers in the country and the first in Iowa.

In 2021, the RVAP helped 62 clients from Cedar County and provided 417 sessions of counseling. In 2022 they have helped 47 clients and have provided 225 sessions of counseling so far.

In total for 2022, the RVAP has had 566 clients with 233 of those clients being under the age of 23.

"When someone calls the victim

call center, they are routed to a statewide organization that takes down minimal information to connect you with the correct organization," White said.

The victims do not need to share their name or any information about their identity. Once victims are connected with the RVAP, they can request services or just speak with someone directly regarding sexual violence.

"You don't have to be the person who experienced sexual violence to connect with RVAP," White said. "You could be a friend who is looking to support someone, a dad who is struggling to manage their anger in the wake of sexual violence, or a teacher looking to better support students."

The RVAP is not only an organization that works to prevent sexual violence

but also to support the victims and communities impacted in the aftermath, said White.

"RVAP offers a wide variety of services, from providing primary prevention in K-12 schools, communities, and college students in southeast Iowa, to facilitating training to teachers, administrators, daycare employees, and community members at large," said White.

The RVAP is currently serving all high schools in Cedar County and is looking to do more in rural schools. The RVAP has more than 10 full-time employees and multiple part-time and volunteer positions.

There are eight counties served by the RVAP: Cedar, Des Moines, Lee, Henry, Iowa, Johnson, Washington, and Van Buren.

The RVAP was created after the federal government came up with Title IX

in 1972, which was created to ensure that students have the right to a safe learning environment, free of bullying, fear, and harassment. The RVAP uses Title IX everyday to make sure students are able to access education without any type of sexual harassment.

Durant's director of instruction and innovation, Mrs. Maria Brown, was appointed to be its Title IX coordinator in July. Mrs. Brown chose White to come speak with the Durant teaching staff during in-service in August, and White also worked with the Durant MVP team.

"The district has a Title IX team, and the coordinator helps organize trainings on Title IX protections, procedural requirements, district procedures and protocols, reporting obligations, investigations, and grievance procedures," Mrs. Brown said.