

CHAPTER 10: SCHOOLS

10.0 Background

The Auburn City School District (ACS) was established as a separate school system in 1961. The Auburn City Board of Education is composed of five members, each of whom is appointed by the City Council to a five-year term. The school system is accredited by the State Department of Education and the Cognia Accreditation Agency, formerly the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Accreditation and adherence to Cognia School and System Quality Standards was affirmed and continued in February 2023.



The system provides an early intervention program for children with disabilities ages three-five, and specialized education programs to all eligible children. Programs for gifted children are also offered. A number of fine arts and sports programs are available as extracurricular activities to interested students.

10.1 Facilities¹

Auburn City Schools provides public education services to approximately 9,400 students in grades K-12. Overall, the school system has seen an increase in enrollment of 1,617 students since the 2014-2015 academic year. The school system is comprised of 10 elementary schools, one sixth-grade facility, one seventh-grade facility, one junior high, and one high school.

The elementary campuses are comprised of five schools serving grades K-2 (Auburn Early Education Center, Cary Woods Elementary, Dean Road Elementary, Richland Elementary, and Woodland Pines Elementary) that feed into five school serving grades 3-5 (Creeside Elementary, Ogletree Elementary, Pick Elementary, Wrights Mill Road Elementary, and Yarbrough Elementary). J.F. Drake Middle School (DMS) serves as a sixth-grade facility, East Samford School (ESS) serves as a seventh-grade facility, Auburn Junior High School (AJHS) serves grades 8-9, and Auburn High School (AHS) serves grades 10-12. The new Auburn High School opened in August 2017 at 1701 East Samford Avenue. With that opening, the previous high school became AJHS, the previous junior high became ESS, and DMS became sixth grade only.

The district employs approximately 1,163 (2023-2024 data) employees. The average teaching experience of an Auburn City Schools instructor is 13 years, and approximately 71% of teachers hold advanced degrees. The overall student-teacher ratio in academic instruction is 14.6:1.

Below is a list of facilities with 2023-2024 school year enrollments and planned capacities.

Auburn Early Education Center: Grades K-2

Auburn Early Education Center (AEEC) is a 74,552 square foot facility located on approximately 13 acres at 721 East University Drive. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 academic year is 496 students, while its planned capacity is 594 students.

¹<http://www.auburnschools.org/>

Cary Woods Elementary School: Grades K-2

Cary Woods Elementary School is a 78,931 square foot facility situated on approximately 13 acres at 715 Sanders Street. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 academic year is 461 students, while its planned capacity is 600 students.

Dean Road Elementary School: Grades K-2

Dean Road Elementary School is a 71,871 square foot facility situated on approximately 15 acres at 335 South Dean Road. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 academic year is 405 students, while its planned capacity is 506 students.

Richland Elementary School: Grades K-2

Richland Elementary School is a 65,000 square foot facility situated on approximately 14 acres at 770 Yarbrough Farms Boulevard. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 academic year is 413 students, while its planned capacity is 572 students.

Woodland Pines Elementary School: Grades K-2

Woodland Pines Elementary School is a 71,888 square foot facility situated on approximately 32 acres at 1565 West Farmville Road. Enrollment is currently at 357 (opened in August 2023), while its planned capacity is 600 students.

Creekside Elementary School: Grades 3-5

Creekside Elementary School is a 70,557 square foot facility situated on approximately 25 acres at 1800 Richland Road. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 academic year is 426, while its planned capacity is 600 students.

Ogletree Elementary School: Grades 3-5

Ogletree Elementary School is a 70,021 square foot facility situated on approximately 21 acres at 737 Ogletree Road. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 academic year is 515 students, while its planned capacity is 598 students.

Pick Elementary School: Grades 3-5

Pick Elementary School is a 72,327 square foot facility situated on approximately 26 acres at 1320 North College Street. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 academic year is 438 students, while its planned capacity is 600 students.

Wrights Mill Road Elementary School: Grades 3-5

Wrights Mill Road Elementary School is a 60,352 square foot facility situated on approximately 14 acres at 807 Wrights Mill Road. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 academic year is 396 students, while its planned capacity is 552 students.

Yarbrough Elementary School: Grades 3-5

Yarbrough Elementary School is a 65,122 square foot facility situated on approximately 19 acres at 1555 North Donahue Drive. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 academic year is 403 students, while its planned capacity is 573 students.

Drake Middle School: Grade 6

Drake Middle School is a 130,809 square foot facility situated on approximately 16 acres at 655 North Donahue Drive. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 academic year is 722 students, while its planned capacity is 1,000 students.

East Samford School: Grade 7

East Samford School is a 144,712 square foot facility situated on approximately 17 acres at 332 East Samford Avenue. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 academic year is 719 students, while its planned capacity is 1,000 students.

Auburn Junior High School: Grades 8-9

Auburn Junior High School is a 264,396 square foot facility situated on approximately 36 acres at 405 South Dean Road. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 academic year is 1,501 students, while its planned capacity is 1,724 students.

Auburn High School: Grades 10-12

The current Auburn High School is a 349,181 square foot facility located on approximately 102 acres at 405 1701 East Samford Avenue. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 academic year is 2,153 students, while its planned capacity is 2,200 students.

10.2 Existing Funding, Plans & Standards

10.2.1 Funding

The FY2024 budget for ACS shows the system received approximately \$159.61 million in total revenue². Total local revenue accounted for \$78.40 million of the budget and was provided mainly through various ad valorem taxes, bonds, and an appropriation from the City of Auburn. The remaining revenue was provided through a combination of State, Federal, and other sources.

The City's dedication to Auburn City Schools is evident through its local funding allocation of 1.25 pennies of sales and use tax from the City's General Fund. The City appropriated \$19.4 million for fiscal year 2024. In addition to this funding from the General Fund, the City also dedicated the resources from a Special 5-Mill Fund to provide for the construction of additional schools and other facility improvements. This allocation is used to pay debt service on school related projects and will provide an estimated \$8.2 million in FY2024.

10.2.2 Capital Facilities Plan

In May 2014, the Board of Education approved Facility Plan 2024, a ten-year plan addressing the impact of student growth on the facilities capacity. In May 2018, the plan was updated with the Board of Education approving Facility Plan 2028 which includes an estimated \$181.60 million of capital needs to complete the full implementation.³ Since 2014, Auburn City Schools has constructed a new Auburn High School, Creekside Elementary School, a new Drake Middle School, a new Cary Woods Elementary School, and a new gymnasium at East Samford School while implementing Facility Plan 2024 and Facility Plan 2028. Recent capital improvements include opening the new Woodland Pines Elementary School, grades K-2, in the fall of 2023. In 2023, the Board of Education approved the design of a second high school with an anticipated opening as early as 2027-2028.² Other capital improvements may be necessary at existing aging facilities.

² Auburn City Schools 2028 Master Plan <https://www.auburnschools.org/Page/2697>

³ City of Auburn Schools FY 2024 Budget Hearing Presentation
<https://www.auburnschools.org/cms/lib/AL01901372/Centricity/Domain/1330/00%20FY%202024%20Public%20Hearing%20Document.pdf>

10.2.3 School Site Requirements

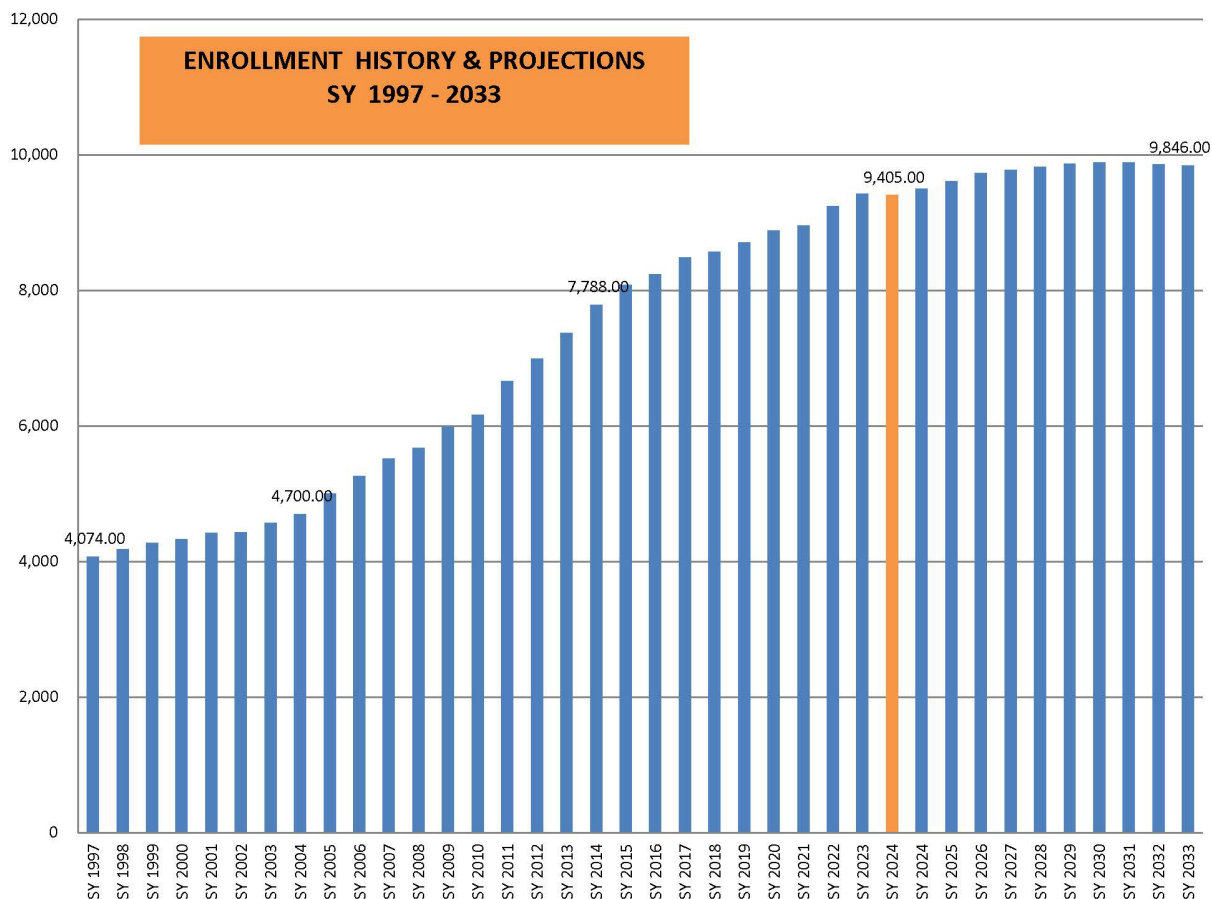
The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) is responsible for determining site requirements for new facilities. The school grounds must be large enough to provide outdoor areas for physical education and recreation. The minimum requirements for school sites are as follows:⁴

- (1) An elementary school is a school with any combination of Grades K-eight and must not contain a grade above eight.
 - (a) Both existing and proposed elementary schools must have a base of five acres of land plus one acre for each 100 students.
- (2) A middle school is a school with a combination of grades four-nine, but not including both grades four and nine.
 - (a) Both existing and proposed middle schools must have a base of 10 acres of land plus one acre for each 100 students.
- (3) A secondary school is a school with any combination of grades five-twelve but must contain a grade above eight.
 - (a) Existing secondary schools must have a base of 15 acres of land plus one acre for each 100 students.
 - (b) A proposed secondary school must have a minimum base of 30 acres of land plus one acre for each 100 students.
- (4) A unit school is a school that included grades below five and above eight with a principal on a single campus.
 - (a) An existing unit school must have a minimum of 25 acres of land.
 - (b) A proposed unit school must have a minimum base of 30 acres of land plus one acre for each 100 students.
- (5) Area Vocational Schools.
 - (a) Both existing and proposed area vocational schools must have a minimum of 10 acres of land.

10.2.4 Projected Increases in Enrollment Numbers

The current enrollment for Auburn City Schools is 9,405 with a projected enrollment of 9,846 by 2032-2033. This would be a projected increase of 441 students or 4.69% in the next nine years. Below is a chart that was shown in the FY 2024 budget hearings for ACS.

⁴ Alabama State Board of Education, State Department of Education Administrative Code, Chapter 290-2-2-.04, School Site Requirements



10.3 Governing Principles⁵

The Auburn City Schools Mission, Vision, Statements of Belief, and Goals are as follows:

Mission Statement

This Mission of Auburn City Schools, the pinnacle of educational excellence, is to ensure each student embraces and achieves his or her unique intellectual gifts and personal aspirations while advancing the community, through a system distinguished by:

- Compassion for others
- Symbiotic relationship with an engaged community
- The creation and sharing of knowledge
- Inspired learners with a global perspective
- The courage to determine our future

Our Vision

Auburn City Schools, in partnership with families and community, will create a safe, nurturing, learning environment where a challenging curriculum, high academic standards, and respect for diversity will maximize each student's intellectual, artistic, technological, and physical potential to become a productive member of our society.

⁵ Auburn City School Board Policy Manual <http://www.auburnschools.org/Auburn>

Our Statement of Belief

The goals, objectives, and strategies guiding the Auburn City Schools are based on the following shared values and beliefs about education and its role in the life of our community. We believe that:

- all people have inherent worth
- all people deserve to be treated with kindness
- all people have the right to be safe
- diversity enriches a community
- communities thrive only to the degree that education is a shared commitment
- learning empowers the individual
- good character is always rewarding to the individual
- we are the agents of change for the world we want to create
- fairness is essential to trusting human relationships
- collective efforts always surpass individual potential
- we have the moral obligation to acknowledge and address the basic needs of others
- a culture of excellence is our greatest legacy
- faith inspires

Our Goals

- 100% of students exceed established academic expectations
- 100% of students continuously set and achieve personal, ambitious goals through life
- 100% of students possess the character and passion to lead and serve a global society
- 100% of students graduate and are competitive and in high demand in their career of choice

10.4 Other Educational Institutions

10.4.1 Lee-Scott Academy⁶

Lee-Scott Academy is a private preschool through 12th grade college preparatory school comprised of students from the cities of Auburn and Opelika, as well as surrounding communities. The campus is located at 1601 Academy Drive in Auburn. Total enrollment each year is approximately 700.

Lee-Scott Academy is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and is a member of The Alabama Independent School Association, and The Southern Association of Independent Schools.



⁶ Lee-Scott Academy <http://www.lee-scott.org/page.cfm?p=1>



10.4.2 Southern Union State Community College

Southern Union State Community College is a public, two-year college established in 1993 as part of The Alabama College System. Southern Union's nearest campus is located six miles from Auburn in Opelika, Alabama. Southern Union enrolls over 5,000 students from an eight-county area in east central Alabama, as well as neighboring counties in Georgia.

Programs are designed for students to graduate from various academic, technical, and health science fields. Southern Union is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award Associate Degrees in Science, Applied Science, and Occupational Technologies. Other instructional programs received individual professional accreditation/approval through various organizations. Through an articulation agreement between Alabama two- and four-year colleges and universities, Southern Union students who complete general education core requirements in the Associate in Science Degree and specialized major courses are guaranteed junior status when transferring to an upper-division college. Additionally, the institution also provides industry training in a variety of trades to area businesses and industries.

10.4.3 Auburn University ⁸

Auburn University is a public, four-year college originally chartered by the Alabama Legislature in 1856 and, in 1872, became the state's first public land-grant institution. Auburn University is accredited by the Commission of Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award Bachelor's, First Professional, Master's, Educational Specialist and Doctor's degrees in 13 different schools. For the 2022-2023 academic year, Auburn enrolled 31,764 students. The number of full-time employees for the 2022-2023 term totaled 5,552, of which approximately 1,435 were faculty. The campus is situated on over 1,800 acres with the academic core located within the boundary of South Donahue Drive, West Magnolia Avenue, South College Street, and West Samford Avenue.



⁸ Auburn University <http://www.auburn.edu/>

10.5 Goals, Objectives and Policies

SC 1: Plan ahead to meet facility demands for the current and projected student population

SC 1.1: Plan for improved and future facilities in conjunction with new growth.

SC 1.1.1: Use the Auburn Interactive Growth Model (AIGM) to analyze future population trends and provide data to schools as trends change.

SC 1.1.2: Update AIGM submodel as grade-level configurations change.

SC 1.1.3: Consider impact on school enrollments and capacities when reviewing annexations, rezonings, and other land use proposals.

SC 1.1.4: Consider increasing maximum potential capacity for new facilities.

SC 1.2: Assist Auburn City Schools in planning for future educational facility locations.

SC 1.2.1: Provide and interpret schools submodel results to help Auburn City Schools plan for future physical school locations.

SC 1.2.2: In conjunction with Auburn City Schools, develop a land acquisition process to identify, reserve and acquire sites for future schools.

SC 2: Collaborate with local educational institutions, learning centers, and intergovernmental organizations.

SC 2.1: Establish and maintain formal processes for ongoing communication and cooperation between the City of Auburn and local educational officials.

SC 2.1.1: Conduct semi-annual meetings with Auburn City Schools to assess current and upcoming needs and development proposals.

SC 2.2: Consider joint use of existing facilities to provide a broad range of educational opportunities.

SC 2.3.1: Work with existing community and civic organization to establish community learning centers that offer literacy and GED lessons, enrichment programs, and industry training.

SC 3: Provide school facilities that serve as community focal points and that are well-integrated into the urban fabric.

SC 3.1: Encourage development of school facilities to function as a focal point for civic activities in conjunction with new growth.

SC 3.1.1: Co-locate schools with other public facilities, including parks and recreation amenities, libraries, and community centers.

SC 3.1.2: Provide pedestrian connectivity between facilities when possible, utilizing programs such as *Safe Routes to School* where possible.

SC 3.2: Ensure consistency of facilities with current and projected land use classifications of surrounding property.

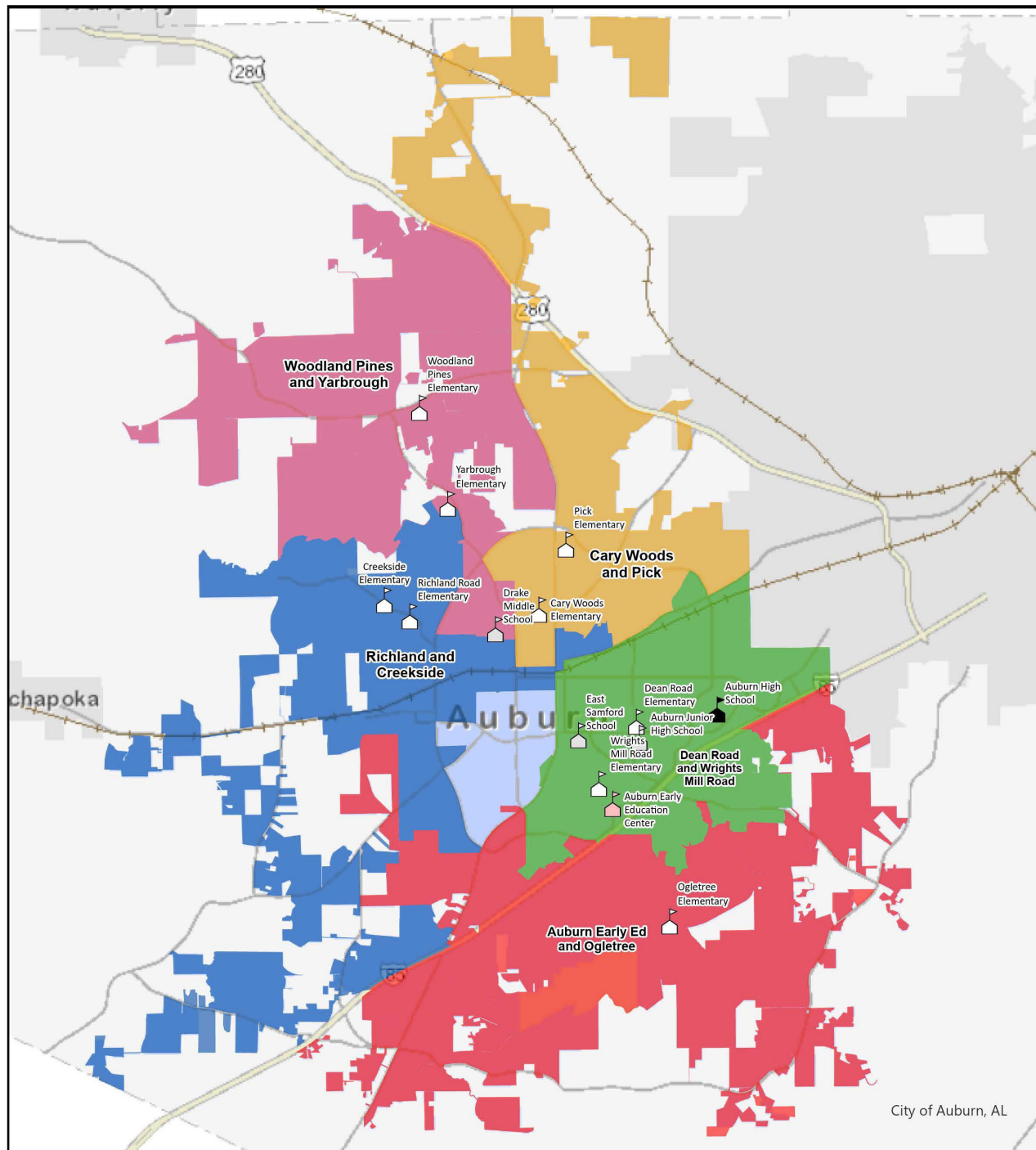
SC 3.2.1: Review parking conditions and make recommendations for improvements around schools with existing parking capacity problems.

SC 4: Maintain the City of Auburn's commitment to the Auburn City School System.

SC 4.1: Uphold financial support by continuing to appropriate funding from the City's General Fund.



Map 10.1 Auburn City School Sites 2023

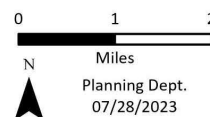


Schools

- Early Ed
- Elementary
- Middle
- High

School Zones

- Auburn Early Ed and Ogletree
- Cary Woods and Pick
- Dean Road and Wrights Mill Road
- Richland and Creekside
- Woodland Pines and Yarbrough



The City of Auburn, Alabama does not guarantee or warrant the accuracy of this map or any information contained herein. Information may contain errors and should be verified by an appropriately qualified, licensed and independent professional.