

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 system is accredited by the State Department of Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). In 2013, the system received District Accreditation as a Quality School System through the SACS Council on Accreditation and School Improvement and AdvancED.



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 kindergarten through 12th grade public education to over 8,501 students, an increase of 254 (3%) students over the 2015-2016 academic year². Overall, the school system has seen an increase of approximately 2,050 (30%) students over the 2011-2012 to 2015-2016 academic years.³ The system is comprised of eight elementary schools. There are four schools which are kindergarten through second grade; Auburn Early Education Center, Cary Woods, Dean Road, and Richland, and four schools which are grades three through five; Yarbrough, Olgetree, Pick, and Wrights Mill Road. In addition, there is Drake Middle School, grades six and seven, Auburn Junior High School, grades eight and nine, and Auburn High School, grades ten through twelve. A new Auburn High School is set to open in August 2017 at 1701 East Samford Avenue. With that opening, the current high school will serve as the new junior high, the current junior high will be a 7th grade facility and the middle school will become a 6th grade only facility. Auburn's public school facilities are shown on Map 10.1 at the end of this section.

The district employs approximately 1,025 (2016 data) employees. The average teaching experience of an Auburn City Schools instructor is 11.4 years, and approximately 70% of teachers hold advanced degrees. The overall student-teacher ratio in academic instruction is 15:1.⁴ Below is a list of facilities with 2016-2017 school year enrollments and planned capacities.⁵

Auburn Early Education Center: Grades K-2

Auburn Early Education Center (AEEC) is a 74,552 square foot facility located on approximately 14 acres at 721 East University Drive. Enrollment for the 2016-2017 academic year was 553 students, while its planned capacity is 594 students.

¹<http://www.auburnschools.org/>

² City of Auburn Schools 2017 Budget Presentation <http://www.auburnschools.org/Page/2388>

³ <http://www.auburnschools.org/Page/3379>

⁴ <http://www.auburnschools.org/Page/152>

⁵ City of Auburn Schools 2017 Budget Presentation <http://www.auburnschools.org/Page/2388>

Cary Woods Elementary School: Grades K-2

Cary Woods Elementary School is an 80,400 square foot facility situated on approximately 13 acres at 715 Sanders Street. Enrollment for the 2016-2017 academic year was 546 students, while its planned capacity is 506 students.

Dean Road Elementary School: Grades K-2

Dean Road Elementary School is a 48,871 square foot facility situated on approximately 15 acres at 335 South Dean Road. Enrollment for the 2016-2017 academic year was 417 students, while its planned capacity is 506 students.

Richland Elementary School: Grades K-2

Richland Elementary School is a 71,782 square foot facility situated on approximately 13 acres at 770 Yarbrough Farms Boulevard. Enrollment for the 2016-2017 academic year was 596 students, while its planned capacity is 572 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 2016-2017 academic year was 556 students, while its planned capacity is 573 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 2016-2017 academic year was 512 students, while its planned capacity is 598 students.

Pick Elementary School: Grades 3-5

Pick Elementary School is a 72,290 square foot facility situated on approximately 25 acres at 1320 North College Street. Enrollment for the 2016-2017 academic year was 530 students, while its planned capacity is 600 students.

Wrights Mill Road Elementary School: Grades 3-5

Wrights Mill Road Elementary School is a 47,352 square foot facility situated on approximately 14 acres at 807 Wrights Mill Road. Enrollment for the 2016-2017 academic year was 440 students, while its planned capacity is 552 students.

Drake Middle School: Grades 6-7

Drake Middle School is a 130,809 square foot facility situated on approximately 16 acres at 655 Spencer Avenue. This facility will become the 6th grade facility in August 2017. Enrollment for the 2016-2017 academic year was 1,306 students, while its planned capacity is 1,236 students.

Auburn Junior High School: Grades 8-9

Auburn Junior High School is a 147,552 square foot facility situated on approximately 17 acres at 332 East Samford Avenue. This facility will become the 7th grade facility in August 2017. Enrollment for the 2016-2017 academic year was 1,234 students, while its planned capacity is 1,315 students.

Auburn High School: Grades 10-12

The current Auburn High School is a 227,244 square foot facility located on approximately 36 acres at 405 South Dean Road. This facility is slated to become the junior high school in August 2017. Enrollment for the 2016-2017 academic year was 1,874 students, while its planned capacity is 1,724 students.

A new Auburn High School is scheduled to open at 1701 East Samford Avenue in August 2017. This facility will have 350,000 square feet with a capacity for 2,200 students.

10.2 Existing Funding, Plans & Standards

10.2.1 Funding

The FY2017 budget for ACS shows the system received approximately \$83.84 million in total revenue⁶. Total local revenue accounted for \$41.73 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 budget document and resulting budget ordinance. The City has appropriated a combined total of \$25.5 million (15.5 %) of its total The plan othdedicated the resources from a Special 5-Mill Fund to provide for the construction of the new high school and other facility maintenance. This allocation will provide an additional \$8.9 million in FY 2017 and 2018.⁷

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 and includes an estimated \$163.09 million of capital needs to complete the full implementation.⁸ Recent capital improvements include opening the new Auburn High School, grades 10-12, in the fall of 2017. Additional changes in 2017 include converting the current Auburn High School to an 8th-9th grade junior high school, converting Auburn Junior High School to a 7th grade school, and converting Drake Middle School to a 6th grade school. In 2017, the Board of Education modified the existing facility plan timeline and school additions to include the opening of two new elementary schools in 2018 -2019 and 2021-2022 and the anticipated opening of a second high school as early as 2020-2021.⁹ Other capital improvements may be necessary at existing aging facilities.

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:¹⁰

- (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.

⁶ City of Auburn Schools FY 2017 Budget Hearing Presentation www.auburnschools.org/Page/2388

⁷ City of Auburn, Alabama approved biennial budget for FY 2017 and 2018, p. 297

⁸ City of Auburn Schools Facilities Plan 2024 <http://www.auburnschools.org/Page/2697>

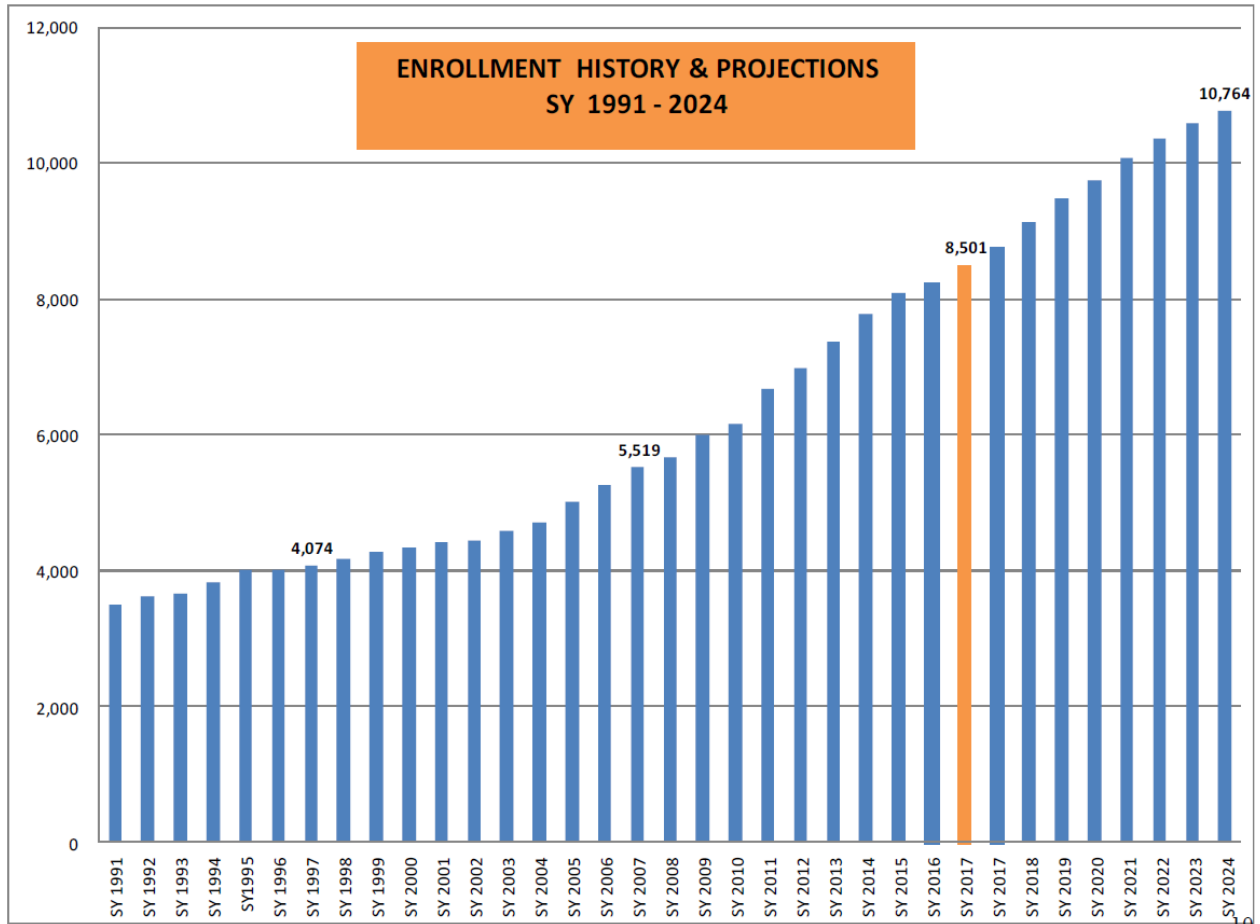
⁹ City of Auburn Schools Facilities Plan 2024 <http://www.auburnschools.org/Page/2697>

¹⁰ Alabama State Board of Education, State Department of Education Administrative Code, Chapter 290-2-2-.04, School Site Requirements

- (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 8,501 with a projected enrollment of 10,764 by 2024. This would be a projected increase of 2,263 students or 26.7% in the next seven years. Below is a chart that was shown in the FY 2017 budget hearings for ACS.



10.3 Governing Principles¹¹

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.

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

¹¹ Auburn City School Board Policy Manual <http://www.auburnschools.org/Auburn>

- 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 Academy¹²

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.



10.4.2 Southern Union State Community College¹³

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.



¹² Lee-Scott Academy <http://www.lee-scott.org/page.cfm?p=1>

¹³ Southern Union State Community College <http://www.suscc.edu/>

10.4.3 Auburn University ¹⁴

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 2016-2017 academic year, Auburn enrolled 28,290 students. The number of full-time employees for the 2016-2017 term totaled 4,830, of which approximately 1,209 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.



¹⁴ 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.

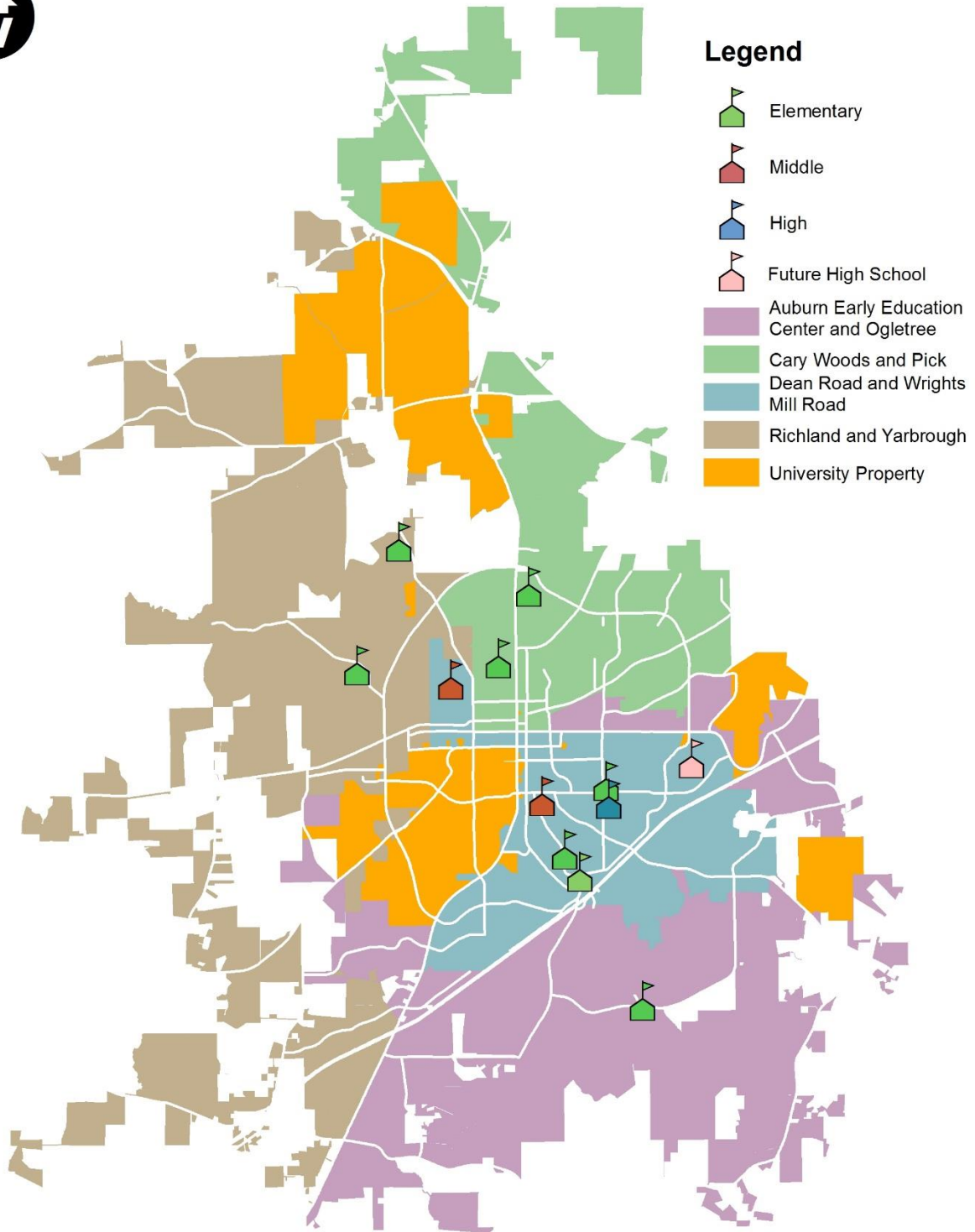
SC 3.1.2: Provide pedestrian connectivity between facilities when possible, utilizing programs such as *Safe Routes to School* where possible.

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.

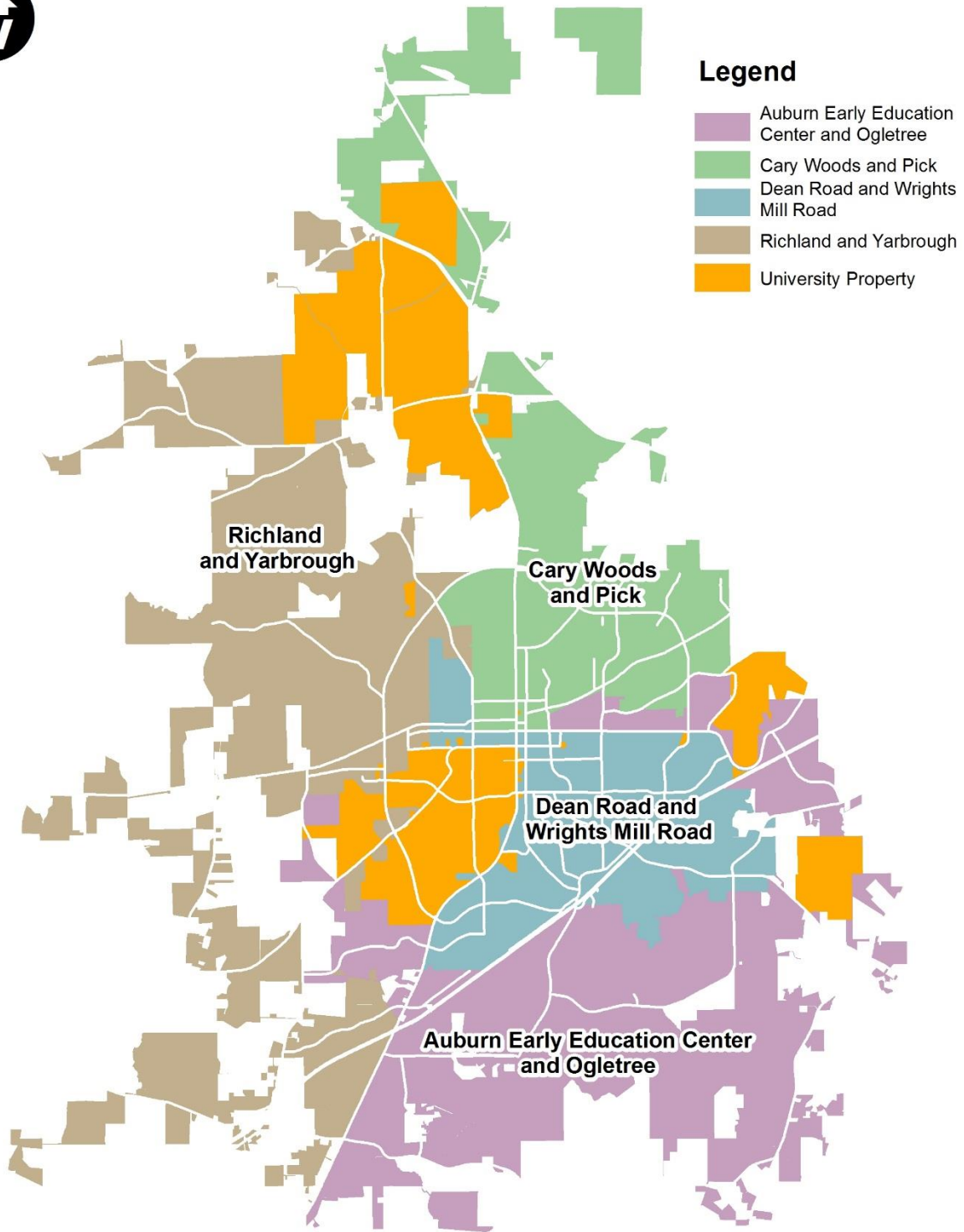
SC 4: Maintain the City of Auburn's commitment to the Auburn City School System.

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



Map 10-1: Auburn City School Sites 2017





Map 10-2: Auburn City School Zones 2017