

Colusa Unified School District Frequently Asked Questions

How are Colusa Unified School District schools doing?

Colusa Unified School District (CUSD), comprising five schools, has enjoyed a long tradition of excellence where children thrive in a community focused, small school environment. The diversity of Colusa Unified and the community we serve is at the heart of our strength. The District serves about 1,450 students in Transitional Kindergarten (TK) through 12th grade. In partnership with the community, CUSD ensures students receive the support they need to succeed.

What challenges does Colusa Unified face?

While CUSD strives to meet the needs of our community and students, most of our schools were built nearly a century ago and don't meet modern building and safety codes. Classrooms and science labs are outdated, and some contain hazardous materials including asbestos and lead pipes, while others need basic repairs and security upgrades.

Are Colusa Unified schools well maintained?

Our District's maintenance team works hard to take care of our aging classrooms and school facilities by keeping up with minor repairs and maintenance. Unfortunately, the significant upgrades and improvements needed at our older schools are beyond what can be accomplished by basic maintenance and funded by our regular maintenance budget. The State of California provides very limited funding for school improvements, and most state funding requires local matching funds.

Is there a plan to address these needs at our local schools?

To ensure all students have access to safe and modern educational facilities, the Colusa Unified Board of Trustees is considering a phased approach to address the top priorities for our schools. Phase 1 would include placing a \$13.8 million school facilities improvement bond measure on the November 5, 2024 ballot.

What projects could a bond measure fund?

Funds from the potential measure could be used to complete Phase 1 priority projects:

- Remove hazardous materials, like asbestos and lead pipes from older school sites
- Provide classrooms and facilities with technology needed to support high quality instruction in math, science, engineering, and technology
- Update or replace safety and/or security systems
- Improve access for students with disabilities
- Repair or replace deteriorating roofs, windows and old plumbing, sewer, heating, ventilation, and electrical systems

Would this measure include any fiscal accountability provisions?

Any potential school facilities bond measure would include strict fiscal accountability protections to ensure responsible management of locally controlled funds, including:

- A detailed project list indicating projects that could be funded with Board of Education approval

- Public disclosures of all spending would be required
- A citizens' oversight committee and independent annual audits would be required
- All money raised by the measure would be controlled locally and could not be taken by the State

How much would this measure cost?

Although no decisions have been made, the Board of Education is considering placing a \$13.8 million school facilities improvement bond measure on the November 2024 ballot to provide additional funding for Phase 1 priorities. A potential measure would be limited to 6 cents per \$100 of a property's assessed (not market) value as long as the bonds are outstanding. This would help our schools qualify for state matching funds that would otherwise go to other districts.

What is the difference between assessed value and market value?

The cost of bond measures is based on the assessed value of properties. The assessed value of a property is generally based on the original purchase price and may not increase by more than 2% a year. Market value, on the other hand, is based on market conditions and tends to grow at a much faster rate. Thus, the assessed value is usually much lower than the market value, especially if a property was purchased long ago at a much lower price than it could be purchased for today. It is this lower assessed value upon which the cost of a bond measure is based.

Could this funding be taken by the State?

No funds could be taken by the State or used for purposes other than those specified in the bond measure. All funds from the bond measure would benefit Colusa Unified schools only.

I don't have children attending local schools. How does this impact me?

Even if you do not have school-age children, supporting quality education is a wise investment. By maintaining high-quality public schools in our neighborhoods, we continue to attract new families to our community and protect our local property values.

When would a measure appear on the ballot?

The Board of Education is considering placing a school facilities improvement bond measure on the November 2024 ballot.

What level of support is required to pass a bond measure?

At least 55% of those voters who cast a ballot on the measure must vote "Yes" on the measure to pass it.

How can I share feedback and learn more about the potential measure?

As CUSD considers a potential school bond measure and explores options to update local school facilities, we value your input. The District values questions, comments and feedback from parents and community members. To learn more about the District's needs, please visit <https://www.colusa.k12.ca.us/District-Info/Facilities-Bond---2024/index.html>

Tough Questions

Didn't we pass Measure A in 2014 to address these needs?

Voters overwhelmingly approved Measure A in 2014 to address aging classrooms and facilities. While much has been accomplished with Measure A, critical repairs and upgrades are still needed at many local schools. Most of our schools were built more than a century ago and don't meet modern building or safety codes. Classrooms and science labs are outdated, and some contain hazardous materials including asbestos and lead pipes, while others need basic repairs and security upgrades.

Are any Measure A funds left to address our current needs?

Although much has been accomplished with Measure A, critical repairs and upgrades are still needed to ensure a safe and secure learning environment for our students. However, after a comprehensive process to assess the District's needs and develop a plan to improve our facilities, it is clear that additional locally controlled funding from a bond measure is the only option to address these needs in our schools now. That is why the Board of Education is considering placing a bond measure on the November 2024 ballot.

Is there a senior exemption?

By law, the District cannot offer a senior exemption for a bond measure. However, the cost of the measure would be based on the assessed value of a person's property, which is different from and in most cases lower than market value. The assessed value is often based on the price of the home when it was first purchased and increases are limited to 2% a year.