



# Auburn Union School District School Facility Needs Frequently Asked Questions

## **What is this process all about?**

Auburn Union School District (AUSD ) schools serve an essential community need. As the local provider of Transitional Kindergarten (TK)-8 public education, we believe all students deserve to learn in quality classrooms and school facilities. We have two key priorities: first, to ensure academic success for every student attending one of our schools; and second, to make sure that our school facilities and school grounds are safe, secure, modern and equipped to provide the best educational environment possible.

AUSD has conducted a full assessment of our school facilities needs—including our grades TK-8 classroom structures, equipment, educational technology, and student support facilities at every site. Auburn schools are aging, and the state of our classrooms, facilities and technology is adversely impacting teaching and learning. Some of AUSD’s buildings date as far back as the 1940’s and are in need of basic repairs such as fixing leaky roofs and pipes; removing asbestos and lead paint, and updating ventilation systems. These vitally important repairs will make our neighborhood schools clean and safe for learning. To fund identified needs we are exploring all available options, including our own existing budget, state and Federal funding, private grants and other sources of support. We are also considering asking our community to support a school bond. **While NO decisions have been made yet**, this study process is a priority for us this school year.

## **How will this effort improve instruction?**

Safe, modern school facilities are essential to maintaining the quality of our local TK-8 schools. ALL children deserve to learn in quality classrooms and school facilities. Education studies confirm that a child’s early years are critical for brain development and that access to a high-quality education, safe school environment and well-qualified teachers are the key to academic and future success. This measure helps further Auburn Union School District’s efforts to provide students an opportunity to thrive in school and prepare for future school, work and life experiences.

## **Why is teacher retention important and will a potential bond measure help?**

This measure will ensure that Auburn Union can retain and attract quality teachers to improve teaching and learning. By upgrading classrooms and learning technology, the best teachers will want to teach at our local public schools because classrooms will be up-to-date and have greater access to new technology to support 21<sup>st</sup> century instruction needs.

## **What about ongoing school maintenance, doesn’t the District have a facilities budget?**

District staff work hard to maintain our elementary and middle school facilities, and keep them in good working condition with limited resources. However, the reality is that the types of repairs and renovations that our current needs assessment has identified go beyond the scope and means of regular school maintenance budgets.

### **How is all this work funded?**

District staff work hard to maintain our elementary and middle school facilities, and keep them in good working condition with limited resources. However, the reality is that the types of repairs and renovations that our current needs assessment has identified go beyond the scope and means of regular school maintenance budgets. About \$100M in school facility and technology needs have been identified to repair and modernization our 5 local public schools serving almost 2,000 students each day. To fund identified needs, we are exploring all available options, including our own existing budget, state and Federal funding, private grants, and other sources of support. We are also considering asking our community to support a school bond measure on the November 2022 ballot. **While NO decisions have been made yet**, this study process is a priority for us this 2022 school year.

### **What work will be completed?**

#### **Critical Projects Identified Include:**

- **Providing** students with a well-rounded education in science, technology, engineering, arts, and math
- **Retaining** and attracting quality teachers
- **Ensuring** school drinking water remains safe
- **Repairing** leaky roofs, gas lines, aging water lines, plumbing and restrooms.
- **Improving** access to education in science, math, and engineering
- **Removing** asbestos and lead paint
- **Upgrading** deteriorating schools, classrooms, and classroom technology
- **Improving** accessibility for disabled students

### **What is a Proposition 39 school bond measure and what can it pay for?**

A Proposition 39 school bond measure can ONLY be used to fund school facility and technology improvements. A Proposition 39 school bond requires 55%, plus one additional vote, to pass. Proposition 39 school bonds prohibit the use of the funds for operations, administrator salaries, or pensions and also requires independent financial and performance audits on the use of bond proceeds. No revenue generated by a local bond can be taken away by the State. All revenue stays local to benefit our local schools and students.

### **Does the District have a plan for how my money will be spent at our local schools? Do they have a Facilities Master Plan?**

Our school district values facilities master planning – we updated our AUSD Master Plan in 2017. AUSD has conducted a full assessment of our school facilities needs—including our grades TK-8 classroom structures, equipment, educational technology, and student support facilities at every site. Auburn schools are aging, and the state of our classrooms, facilities and technology is adversely impacting teaching and learning. Some of AUSD’s buildings date as far back as the 1940’s and are in need of basic repairs such as fixing leaky roofs and pipes; removing asbestos and lead paint, and updating ventilation systems. These vitally important repairs will make our neighborhood schools clean and safe for learning. To fund identified needs we are exploring all available options, including our own existing budget, state and Federal funding, private grants and other sources of support. We are also considering asking our community to support a school bond. **While NO decisions have been made yet**, this study process is a priority for us this school year.

**I don't have children or they are grown and gone. Why does this matter to me?**

A bond measure will help maintain quality schools with excellent teachers by repairing aging classrooms and improving student access to instruction in science, technology, engineering and math. Improving our local schools will make our neighborhoods more desirable places to live, protecting everyone's property values, including homeowners without children in schools. Good schools are the foundation of any healthy, thriving community. The longer we wait to complete needed upgrades, the more expensive they will become.

**What about the Lottery funding? Wasn't it supposed to fix our schools?**

Unfortunately, restricted Lottery funds can only be used for classroom instruction, not technology or facility upgrades. Moreover, the money our school district receives from the Lottery each year comprises less than 1% of our annual General Fund Budget. Lottery funds alone cannot fund the extensive upgrades that our schools need.

**Which schools would the bond benefit?**

All 5 schools – 3 Elementary Schools, 1 Middle School, and 1 Community Charter School – will benefit from any revenue raised from the potential bond measure.

**How much would the bond cost?**

**No decisions have been made yet.** A \$45 million bond translates to about \$28 per year for every \$100,000 of assessed valuation. The assessed valuation refers to taxable value, ***not the market value of your home***. The taxable value of your home or business will depend on when you purchased it. If the bond is approved, the typical homeowner in our school district will pay about \$115 a year, or \$9.50 a month.

**Are the local schools at AUSD really that old?**

Some of Auburn USD's buildings date as far back as the 1940's and are in need of basic repairs such as fixing leaky roofs and pipes; removing asbestos and lead paint, and updating ventilation systems. These vitally important repairs will make our neighborhood schools clean and safe for learning.

**NOTE:** Even our "newest" school – built in 1995 (nearly 30 years ago) has had **NO modernization to date.**

School	Original Construction	Modernization Year	Additions
Alta Vista	1936	1989 (Admin only)	1986 Library, 1970 K1/2, 1961 Wing A, 1955 Multi/Wing B/WingC
Auburn Elementary	1995	n/a	n/a
EV Cain	1949	1995	2001 portables, 1996 Music Room/Dragila Gym/Wildcat Gym
Rock Creek	1965	2003	1991 portables, 1988 Library
Skyridge	1994	n/a	2001 portables

**Will businesses share in the cost of a potential bond measure?**

Yes, commercial, industrial and residential property owners will be subject to assessment.

**How can we be assured that the bond money would be spent properly?**

**Taxpayer protections are REQUIRED.** A potential bond measure includes tough accountability provisions such as public disclosure of all spending, citizens' oversight, annual independent financial audits and local control of all funds, which cannot be taken by the State or redirected for other purposes. None of the money from this measure can be used to increase salaries, benefits, or pensions for administrators, teachers, or any other school employees.

**Doesn't the STATE provide funding for facility upgrades?**

Very little. In the past, State funding has been available to support local school upgrades, but especially now, we cannot count on this uncertain source of funding. Moreover, in order to access state funding, school districts MUST generate local matching funds by passing a local school bond measure. Passing a local bond is the ONLY way to qualify for additional state funding if and when it becomes available. There are no other sources of funding for major facility upgrades.

**Have there been other AUSD school bonds? If so, when was the last bond?**

Auburn USD has not asked our local community to support a bond for its local public schools. With limited help from the State and our school facility and technology needs growing every day, we need to work together as a community to protect our local quality of education.

**Why are aging portables a priority for bond funds?**

Some students are learning in portable classrooms that have been in use over 30 years, longer than national standards recommend. Many of these portables across the District are in poor condition, lack updated ventilation, and are not adequately wired for modern classroom requirements. A bond measure will help replace outdated portables to ensure our students can learn in a safe and up-to-date academic setting.

**If voters approve the bond, when will the work begin?**

If the District moved forward with a bond measure and it is approved, the District will immediately focus on the most critical facilities needs. A schedule for funding projects will be developed so they can be completed on time and within budget.

**How will a potential bond impact AUSD schools safety?**

Many schools in our area have outdated security and safety features, including aging electrical and fire safety systems, as well as inadequate safety lighting, fencing, and emergency communications systems. This measure will allow our schools to make basic security upgrades, that will help to keep our children safe.

**How dose AUSD compare with neighboring districts?**

To ensure our local students can compete academically with neighboring districts and do not fall behind, we need to improve our schools to provide a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment. This measure will establish science, computer, engineering and math labs; upgrade classroom technology and internet access; and repair deteriorating classrooms to improve student learning and achievement and prepare them for high school.

**What about other funding?**

Our school district makes every effort to use resources wisely. With limited help from the State and our school facility and technology needs growing every day, we need to work together as a community to protect our local quality of education. AUSD has been exploring all available solutions to meet these needs – including State matching funds, private grants and a local school bond. School bonds are the established and most common way to fund the upgrades our schools need.

**Who makes the final decision on a local school bond?**

The locally elected Auburn Union School District Board of Education is the legal entity that can place a bond on the ballot. Ultimately, Auburn Union School District REGISTERED VOTERS will have the final say when they vote for or against the measure on the ballot.

**Where can I find more information?**

To learn more, please visit our website at: [www.auburn.k12.ca.us](http://www.auburn.k12.ca.us) or contact Superintendent Amber Lee-Alva via email: [aleealva@auburn.k12.ca.us](mailto:aleealva@auburn.k12.ca.us) or by phone: (530) 885-7242.