

Modesto City Schools

Frequently Asked Questions About Local Education Funding

How are our Modesto City Schools (MCS) doing?

Modesto City Schools (MCS) provides a rigorous and relevant instructional program that facilitates the development of students' diverse interests and talents. Students graduate on time, college and career ready, with the knowledge, abilities and character traits needed to thrive in today's world.

What challenges face our Modesto City Schools?

Although we're proud of the education opportunities provided to all students in MCS, many of our schools are over 50 years old and it has been nearly 20 years since the last investment in upgrades to our school facilities. Our aging education facilities need repairs and upgrades to meet modern academic and safety standards. Updates are needed to improve campus and student security, including lighting, security cameras and fencing to control access to all campuses. Classroom and facility improvements are needed to cut utility costs and ensure the health and safety of all students.

Our schools also need upgrades and technology improvements to meet current educational standards and provide up-to-date classrooms for core academics. Supporting 21st-century learning in Modesto schools will help prepare students to succeed in high school, college and careers.

How does MCS plan on addressing these challenges?

While upgrades are needed at all of our schools, MCS is first focused on addressing the most urgent needs at our elementary and junior high schools. To maintain safe and quality educational opportunities in our classrooms, the MCS Board of Trustees has voted to place Measures D and E, a package of school improvement bond measures, on the November 6, 2018 ballot. These measures would make important upgrades and repairs to our elementary and junior high schools to meet today's academic standards and ensure the continued health and safety of every student.

What projects would Measures D and E address?

If approved by voters, Measures D and E would make the following repairs and updates to our elementary and junior high schools:

- Repair leaking roofs
- Improve fire, emergency, lighting and security camera systems
- Equip classrooms and science labs with modern learning technology to prepare students for 21st-century jobs
- Update aging cafeterias, restrooms, plumbing, heating, air conditioning and electrical systems
- Improve accessibility for students with disabilities
- Repair and update outdated classrooms and science labs to protect the quality of academic instruction in core subjects like math, science, reading and writing

Can't the State fund school facility improvements?

The State provides very limited funding for school facility upgrades. Most state funding requires local matching funds. This is why MCS is seeking locally-controlled funding to upgrade schools and qualify for state matching funds that would otherwise go to other school districts.

How do we know funds from Measures D and E would be spent wisely?

Strict fiscal accountability is required for the measures:

- All funds from these measures would benefit local schools, be controlled locally and could not be taken away by the state
- The money is limited to facility expenses only and cannot be used for operating expenses or increasing salaries, benefits or pensions for administrators or teachers
- These measures require independent citizens' oversight and reports to the community to ensure funds are spent as promised

How much would Measures D and E cost?

The annual cost of the package of school improvement measures would not exceed approximately \$50 per \$100,000 in assessed value (not market value) per year.

Is there a comprehensive list of the projects that could be funded by these measures?

Yes. A detailed list of projects can be found on the district's website at www.mcs4kids.com/updates/modestoschools

If Measures D and E pass, would our district qualify for state matching funds?

Yes. If these measures pass, MCS would qualify for approximately \$85 million in matching state dollars. If these measures do not pass, these state matching funds will go to other districts.

Would all funds benefit all of our Modesto City Schools?

Yes. All funds from Measures D and E would be locally controlled and would benefit all MCS elementary and junior high schools. No funding could be taken away by the State or used for other purposes.

What about our high schools? Why doesn't any money go to the high schools?

While upgrades are needed at all of our schools, MCS is first focused on addressing the most urgent needs at our elementary and junior high schools. The high school needs will be addressed in the future.

Has our community supported MCS with local funding in the past?

Yes, our community has a history of supporting our schools with local funding. However, it has been nearly 20 years since our community made an investment in improving our schools through a facility improvement bond measure. The little state funding that is available to school districts requires local matching funds, for which Measures D and E could qualify our District.

Is there any other way to improve our schools?

Our District has very few options when it comes to funding the necessary upgrades that our schools need. We can't rely on the State to complete these repairs and redirecting funds in the current budget would take resources out of our classrooms and away from our students.

Measures D and E would provide local funding to repair and update school facilities to ensure we can provide a safe, modern learning environment for our students.

What's the difference between parcel taxes and bond measures?

Bond measures and parcel tax measures are used for different purposes — bond measures can *only* fund facility upgrades and improvements and cannot be used for operating costs or programs. Parcel taxes may be used for teachers and programs.

Is there a senior exemption?

By law, MCS cannot offer a senior exemption for a bond measure. However, the cost of Measures D & E is based on the assessed value of a person's property, which is different from market value. The assessed value is based on the original purchase price of a home, which is often much lower for those that have lived in their homes for a long time.

How is the independent Citizens' Oversight Committee formed, and who selects the members?

By California law, a school district must form an oversight committee shortly after passage of a bond measure. It must be made up of seven volunteer members who serve a term of two years each. Composition of the committee must include representatives from the business community, a senior organization and a taxpayer organization, as well as parents with children in the District. In addition, no employee or vendor of the District can be a member of the committee.

When would I be able to vote on Measures D and E?

The MCS Board of Trustees has voted to place Measures D and E on the November 6, 2018 ballot.

What level of support do Measures D and E need to pass?

Each of these measures need to be supported by 55% of those who vote in order to pass.

How can I register to vote or learn more about voting?

You can register to vote at www.registertovote.ca.gov. To find out more about voting in this election, please contact the Stanislaus County Registrar of Voters at (209) 525-5200 or visit www.stanvote.com.

How can I learn more about our schools?

We welcome your comments and questions as we work to ensure our students get the education they deserve. Please contact the Public Information Office at (209) 574-1500 for more information.