



Mountain Empire Unified School District

March 5, 2024 School Bond Measure

Measure B Fact Sheet

Background: As the local provider of TK-12 public education, we believe all students deserve to learn in quality classrooms and school facilities. We have **two key priorities:** first, to ensure academic and career success for every student; and second, to make sure that our seven school campuses, including facilities, technology, and school grounds are healthy, safe, secure, technologically current, well maintained, and equipped to provide Mountain Empire Unified School District (MEUSD) students with the very best educational setting possible.

Measure B proposes to make significant needed upgrades to **Mountain Empire High School**, built nearly 50 years ago and now in **serious** need of attention. Local students attend Mountain Empire High School in a facility with failing gas lines, storm drains, and a sewer system where leaks, flooding, and sewage backups are common. Classrooms and science labs haven't been upgraded in almost 50 years and don't meet current building or safety standards. The high school is forced to close several times each year due to water/fire suppression system problems. Adequate, safe classrooms and labs are desperately needed to provide our students access to a quality high school education. In 2017, we updated our Facilities Master Plan, which included facility needs assessments at every school, and worked to address many of those needs with Measure JJ, but JJ was not enough to address everything, most notably the need for a full high school replacement.

Measure B DEFINED: Measure B is a school bond measure on the March 5, 2024 ballot seeking voter authorization for MEUSD funding to make needed facility repairs and replacements. **Measure B requires 55% voter support to pass.** A "YES" vote approves funding for the District's plan; a "NO" vote rejects the plan.

Measure B Ballot Question: *"To repair, replace, or reconstruct deteriorating classrooms, science labs, and school facilities at Mountain Empire High School that don't meet building safety/earthquake safety standards; replace/fix roofs, plumbing, sewer, electrical, and aging portables; and improve school safety/security systems, shall Mountain Empire Unified School District's measure authorizing \$20,000,000 in bonds, at legal rates, be adopted, levying approximately \$40 per \$100,000 of assessed value (averaging \$1,253,097 annually) while bonds are outstanding, with citizen oversight, independent audits, and all money staying local?"*

Measure B Summary – Measure B proposes to address critical MEUSD school facilities needs, including:

- **Provide** modern high school science labs, career technical facilities, and equipment
- **Fix/Replace** deteriorating roofs, plumbing, heating, ventilation, gas and sewer lines, and electrical systems
- **Repair/Reconstruct** deteriorating classrooms and school facilities to meet safety or earthquake standards
- **Modernize** computer systems and instructional technology
- **Improve** student, building, and earthquake safety, campus security and emergency communication systems, fencing, cameras, smoke detectors, fire alarms, and sprinklers

Fiscal Accountability and Taxpayer Protections:

- Measure B makes MEUSD eligible for State matching funds.
- ALL funds must stay local LOCALLY controlled to benefit MEUSD students and schools.
- By law, Measure B funds CANNOT be taken away by the State or used for other purposes.
- Independent citizens' oversight and mandatory annual audits ensure proper spending.
- By law, NO funds go to administrators' salaries.

The \$20 million bond proposal translates to about \$40 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. **FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Visit our website at <https://www.meusd.org/> or contact Superintendent Keeley via email: Patrick.keeley@meusd.org



Mountain Empire Unified School District
March 5, 2024 School Bond Measure
Frequently Asked Questions

What is Measure B?

Measure B is a school bond measure on the March 5, 2024 ballot seeking voter authorization for Mountain Empire Unified School District (MEUSD) funding to make needed facilities repairs and replacements. Measure B requires 55% support to pass. A “YES vote” approves funding for the District’s plan; a “NO vote” rejects the plan. All Mountain Empire Unified School District School District voters registered by February 20, 2024 or conditionally registered after the deadline up until and on election day will be eligible to vote on Measure B.

Why has MEUSD placed Measure B on the ballot?

Local students today attend **Mountain Empire High School** in a facility with failing gas lines, storm drains, and a sewer system where leaks, flooding, and sewage backups are common. Classrooms and science labs haven’t been upgraded in almost 50 years and don’t meet current building or safety standards. Our high school is forced to close several times each year due to water/fire suppression system problems. Adequate, safe classrooms and labs are desperately needed to provide our students access to a quality high school education. Measure B is on the ballot to secure voter authorization to address these critical needs. Ongoing investment in infrastructure is critical. Part of our responsibility to the community is to maintain quality school facilities that support excellent teaching and learning.

What would funds raised by Measure B go towards?

- **Provide** modern high school science labs, career technical facilities, and equipment
- **Fix/Replace** deteriorating roofs, plumbing, heating, ventilation, gas and sewer lines, and electrical systems
- **Repair/Reconstruct** deteriorating classrooms and school facilities to meet safety or earthquake standards
- **Modernize** computer systems and instructional technology
- **Improve** student, building, and earthquake safety, campus security and emergency communication systems, fencing, cameras, smoke detectors, fire alarms, and sprinklers

What is the actual question that voters will be asked to decide in March?

“To repair, replace, or reconstruct deteriorating classrooms, science labs, and school facilities at Mountain Empire High School that don’t meet building safety/earthquake safety standards; replace/fix roofs, plumbing, sewer, electrical, and aging portables; and improve school safety/security systems, shall Mountain Empire Unified School District’s measure authorizing \$20,000,000 in bonds, at legal rates, be adopted, levying approximately \$40 per \$100,000 of assessed value (averaging \$1,253,097 annually) while bonds are outstanding, with citizen oversight, independent audits, and all money staying local?”

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

MEUSD makes every effort to use resources wisely, but the burden is growing to adequately repair and replace our school facilities and classrooms. Our maintenance and operations team works hard to keep our schools safe and in adequate condition, but the current scope of repairs needed far exceeds the standard allotment for school maintenance. Local school bonds are the most common way to fund the upgrades needed. NO other funding currently exists to properly repair our local high school.

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% to pass. Proposition 39 school bonds prohibit the use of the funds for operations or administrator salaries. It 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 local Mountain Empire schools and students.

Does the District have a Facilities Master Plan?

In 2017, we updated our Facilities Master Plan, which included facility needs assessments at every school, and worked to solve many of those needs with Measure JJ, but the passage of JJ was not enough to address everything and we still have a lot more work to do, most notably the need for a full high school replacement.

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. And, the money our school district receives from the Lottery each year comprises **less than 1.5%** of our annual General Fund Budget. Lottery funds alone cannot fund the extensive upgrades that our schools need.

If voters approve Measure B, when will the work begin?

If voters approve Measure B, 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 much will Measure B cost me?

The \$20 million bond proposal translates to about \$40 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.

How can we be assured Measure B would be spent properly?

MEUSD makes every effort to use taxpayer dollars wisely and save taxpayers money. Measure B would make us eligible for State matching funds. All Measure B funds would be locally controlled, benefitting MEUSD students and schools only. By law, no Measure B funds can be used for administrative salaries and they can't be taken away by the State. Independent citizen's oversight and mandatory annual audits would ensure proper spending.

Doesn't the State provide funding for facility repairs and replacements?

Very little. In the past, State funding has been available to support local school repairs, 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. This is the only way to qualify for additional state funding if and when it becomes available. There are no other sources of funding for our major facility needs.

Have there been other MEUSD bonds? If so, when was the last bond?

Yes. In 2018, the passage of Measure JJ, a local school bond benefitting MEUSD, addressed some of the most urgent school facilities needs and led to the reconstruction of our junior high school. However, our other school facilities have continued to show their age and require high levels of maintenance, with inspections revealing that additional upgrade work may cause structural compromise at some schools. Over \$170 million dollars in need has been identified to repair, modernize, and build new schools to accommodate our growing community and meet the needs of our existing local schools serving more than 5,100 students each day. As such, the District

continues to seek funding assistance from the State to help address and resolve these issues to better serve our students.

Will businesses share in the cost of Measure B?

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

Who makes the final decision on a local school bond?

Local MEUSD REGISTERED VOTERS have the final say when they vote for or against Measure B on the March 5, 2024 ballot. All voters will receive a Vote by Mail ballot in early February and can mail in or drop off their ballots instead of voting at vote centers on Election Day.

Where can I confirm I'm registered to vote, re-register, or register to vote? What is the deadline?

The last day to register to vote online or via mail (with a postmark) is **February 20, 2024**. However, you can "conditionally" register to vote at the San Diego County elections office after the 15-day voter registration deadline up until and on election day at Vote Centers. Visit registertovote.ca.gov to register to vote, pre-register to vote at age 16 and 17, and check your registration status.

How do you change your voting address to Mountain Empire Unified School District?

You will need to re-register at registertovote.ca.gov, or with a paper registration form. Paper forms are available at the Elections Office, the library, and post office.

Where can I find more information?

To learn more, visit our website at <https://www.meusd.org/> or contact Superintendent Patrick Keeley via email: Patrick.keeley@meusd.org

Measure B Information Only Section to Add to Regular District Communications:

Measure B Information Only – On the March 5, 2024 Ballot

- Measure B has been placed on the ballot unanimously by the locally elected Mountain Empire Unified School District School Board. Measure B is a school bond measure on the March 5, 2024 ballot seeking voter authorization for Mountain Empire Unified School District School District funding to make needed facility repairs and replacements. Measure B requires 55% support to pass. A “YES” vote approves funding for the District’s plan; a “NO” vote rejects the plan.
- **Measure B Summary** – Measure B will address critical Mountain Empire USD school needs, including:
 - **Provide** modern high school science labs, career technical facilities, and equipment
 - **Fix/Replace** deteriorating roofs, plumbing, heating, ventilation, gas/sewer lines, and electrical systems
 - **Repair/Reconstruct** deteriorating classrooms/school facilities to meet safety or earthquake standards
 - **Modernize** computer systems and instructional technology
 - **Improve** student, building, and earthquake safety, campus security and emergency communication systems, fencing, cameras, smoke detectors, fire alarms, and sprinklers
- **Fiscal Accountability and Taxpayer Protections:**
 - Measure B makes us eligible for State matching funds.
 - ALL funds must stay local **LOCALLY** controlled, benefitting MEUSD students and schools.
 - By law, Measure B funds **CANNOT** be taken by the State or used for other purposes.
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All Mountain Empire USD voters registered by February 20, 2024 or conditionally registered after the deadline up until and on election day at Voter Centers will be eligible to vote on Measure B.

For more information, please contact Superintendent Keeley via email: Patrick.keeley@meusd.org