



# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

## What is this process all about?

As the local provider of pre-kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and additional adult continuing education programs, 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.

As part of our commitment to maintaining a high quality of education in neighborhood schools, Morgan Hill Unified School District (MHUSD) has been assessing our school facilities and technology needs from pre-kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade across the District. This assessment is part of a larger process to ensure quality schools for the families and communities we serve.

Many of our campuses have grown old and outdated, and are overdue for repairs, upgrades and modernization for 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning and teaching. These conditions impact instruction and student learning. District staff works hard to maintain our MHUSD pre-kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade schools 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 already identified go beyond the scope and means of regular school maintenance budgets.

## Does the District have a plan for school facility improvements?

We completed our MHUSD Master Plan in September 2017. Nearly a billion dollars in need have been identified to repair and modernize our local schools serving more than 9,000 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 at some point in the future. **While NO decisions have been made yet**, this study process is a priority for us in the 2019-20 school year.

## How will potential school bond funds be used?

- **Repair/Replace** deteriorated roofs, floors, insulation, plumbing, HVAC, electrical systems, wiring and restroom facilities.
- **Upgrade** aging science, technology, engineering, math, vocational and career education classrooms and labs to prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy.
- **Retain and attract** quality teachers by upgrading and modernizing our classrooms and facilities.
- **Upgrade** fire alarms, fire sprinklers, security systems and install security fencing and lighting for improved student safety and security.
- **Modernize** outdated electrical systems and wiring for computer technology and internet access.
- **Retrofit** classrooms and schools to meet earthquake safety standards.
- **Improve** physical education areas, outdoor spaces, fields, play equipment, multi-use facilities, pick-up/drop-off zones and parking areas for student health, safety and access for individuals with disabilities.
- **Replace** aging plumbing and electrical wiring systems to modernize infrastructure and increase energy efficiency and water conservation in all school facilities.

### **What about ongoing school maintenance? Doesn't the District have a facilities budget?**

District facilities staff members work hard to maintain our neighborhood schools 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 already identified go beyond the scope and means of regular school maintenance budgets.

### **Will this effort improve instruction?**

We are extremely proud of our 14 schools – 6 Elementary Schools (K-5), 2 Elementary/Middle School (K-8), 2 Middle Schools (6-8), 2 Comprehensive High Schools (9-12), 1 Continuation High School (10-12), 1 Community Adult School – and the amazing teaching and learning that is accomplished each school year. An important part of an excellent education is having great school facilities. Studies show that students and teachers perform better in safe, modern classrooms and school facilities.<sup>1</sup>

### **No one in my home attends Morgan Hill Unified School District schools. How will this impact me?**

Good schools are the foundation of any healthy, thriving community. Good schools make our neighborhoods desirable places to live and support our property values. Home resale values are directly impacted by the quality of our schools.<sup>2</sup>

### **What about other funding?**

Nearly a billion dollars in need have been identified to repair and modernize our local schools serving more than 9,000 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.

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

Unfortunately, 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 2% 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 of our local MHUSD schools will benefit from any revenue raised from the potential bond measure.

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

Once the bond 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 much will the bond cost?**

No decisions have been made yet. As an example, a \$900 million bond would cost property owners a maximum of \$60.00 per year for every \$100,000 of assessed valuation. The assessed valuation refers to the taxable value, **not** the market value, of your home. The taxable value of your home or business will

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<sup>1</sup> See report at <https://www.ed-data.org/article/School-Facilities-in-California#a5>

<sup>2</sup> See "The Value of School Facility Investments: Evidence from a Dynamic Regression Discontinuity Design," by Stephanie Riegg Cellini (George Washington University), Fernando Ferreira (University of Pennsylvania), and Jesse Rothstein (UC Berkeley). Paper published in *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* (February 2010) 215-261; see also <https://www.nber.org/digest/jan03/w9054.html>

depend on when you purchased it. If the bond is approved, the typical homeowner in our school district will pay about \$309 a year, or \$25.75 a month, for each year that the bonds are outstanding.

**Will businesses share in the cost of a local school bond?**

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

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

Taxpayer protections are required. All funds from the potential school bond measure stay local - they cannot be taken away by the state or used for other purposes. Only facilities, technology and equipment upgrades are allowed. No funds may be spent on administrators' salaries or pensions. A school bond measure requires the establishment of a Citizens' Oversight Committee within 60 days after a successful election result is certified. The Committee is responsible for monitoring bond expenditures to assure the public that the money is being spent properly. A school bond measure also requires independent annual audits on use of bond proceeds.

**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 we cannot count on this uncertain source of funding. Moreover, in order to access state funding, school districts must generate local matching funds. 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 MHUSD school bonds? If so, when was the last bond?**

MHUSD makes every effort to use all taxpayer dollars in a prudent, careful manner. It's been nearly 8 years since the last bond was passed supporting our schools. Voters have invested in maintaining the local high-quality education standards by passing two previous GO bonds (in 2012 and 1999). The proceeds from those bonds were spent on time and within budget. Both previous bonds will be paid off completely in 2047.

**How do our local MHUSD bonds compare with neighboring school districts?**

Below is just a short list of other nearby school districts who have passed local funding measures.

- Alum Rock Union Elementary School District: \$139 million bond, 2016; parcel tax extension, 2014; and \$125 million bond, 2012
- Evergreen Elementary School District: Parcel tax renewal, 2018; \$100 million bond, 2014; and parcel tax of \$100/parcel, 5 years, 2014
- Gilroy Unified School District: \$170 million bond, 2016
- Los Gatos Union Elementary School District: Parcel tax extension, 2013
- San Jose Unified School District: Parcel tax of \$72/parcel, 8 years, 2016 and \$290 million bond, 2012
- Santa Clara Unified School District: \$720 million bond, 2018; \$419 million bond, 2014; and parcel tax of \$84/parcel, 5 years, 2012

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

The locally elected Morgan Hill Unified School District Board of Education is the legal entity that can place a bond on the ballot. Ultimately, Morgan Hill Unified 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?**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Please go to our website at: [mhusd.org](http://mhusd.org) or contact Allison Murray Executive Assistant, Business Services via email: [feedback@mhusd.org](mailto:feedback@mhusd.org) or by phone: (408) 201-6000.