



# Tustin Unified School District

## November 5, 2024 Local School Bond Measure

# Measure J FAQs

### What is Measure J?

**Measure J DEFINED:** Measure J is a local school bond measure on the November 5, 2024, ballot seeking voter authorization to repair and upgrade school facilities and equipment within Tustin Unified School District (TUSD). To pass, the measure must secure at least 55% support among TUSD voters casting ballots in the November 5, 2024, Election and voting on this measure. A “YES vote” approves funding to implement the District’s Bond Plan to repair and upgrade impacted schools; a “NO vote” rejects the Plan. All TUSD residents who are registered to vote within the TUSD District boundaries are eligible to vote on this measure.

### Why has the School District (TUSD) placed Measure J on the ballot?

Tustin Unified Schools consistently perform among the best in the State. However, our elementary and middle school classrooms are aging. Many are over 50 years old, built before our current “digital age,” and although well maintained, require significant repairs and upgrades after decades of constant use. In order for our students to succeed in college and careers, they must have access to classrooms that support high quality teaching and learning in skilled trades, the use of today’s technologies, core subject’s science, math, engineering, and technology. Furthermore, all of our schools require ongoing safety and security upgrades. Measure J provides a prudent, responsible plan reflecting input from hundreds of community members to address these critical Tustin Unified School District needs. NO other funding currently exists to upgrade these facilities.

### What is the actual question that voters will be asked to decide on in November?

**Measure J Official Ballot Question:** *“Tustin Unified School District Classroom Repair/ Safety/ Quality Education Measure. To repair/upgrade aging classrooms, science labs, school and career-training facilities supporting college/career readiness in math, science, technology/skilled trades; fix roofs, plumbing, and electrical; improve school safety/security; remove asbestos/lead; shall Tustin Unified School District's measure authorizing \$261,000,000 in bonds at legal rates be adopted, levying 3¢ per \$100 assessed value (raising \$18,000,000 annually) while bonds are outstanding, with citizen oversight, audits, and all money locally controlled?”*

### What is required for Measure J to pass (win)?

At least 55% of the voters within the TUSD District boundaries who cast their ballots on Measure J in the November 5, 2024, Election must vote in favor of the bond for it to be approved. Measure J is being sought under the provisions of State Proposition 39, which prohibits use of bond funds for operations or administrator salaries, benefits, or pensions, and also requires independent financial and performance audits on the use of bond proceeds.

## **What are TUSD's greatest facilities NEEDS? How will bond funds be used?**

- **Construct, Upgrade and Modernize** Aging Schools to Ensure Safe and Modern Learning and Teaching Environments
- **Upgrading** School Safety, Security and Emergency Response Systems
- **Upgrade, Repair and** Provide Adequate Infrastructure Serving Schools and Other Support Sites
- **Improvements** to Ensure a Healthy Learning and Teaching Environment
- **Improvements** to Play Areas and Yards, Fields and Other Physical Education and Athletic Facilities and Spaces

View the full project list by clicking [here](#).

## **Will Measure J improve instruction?**

YES. Tustin Unified schools strive for teaching and learning excellence in every educational setting. Our goal is to provide all students with access to the education they need to be successful in college, well-paid jobs of the future, and life. Safe, modern school facilities and education technology are essential to maintaining quality schools and giving our students a competitive edge. As school facilities are improved, students and our community will benefit.

## **What about other funding?**

Our school district makes every effort to use resources wisely, however, the burden is growing to ensure needed instruction and modern facilities in our local schools. TUSD continues to explore all options – including seeking State matching funds when they become available, to leverage local taxpayer dollars even further in the effort to improve our local schools. Measure J (featuring local school bonds) is the most common way to fund the significant repairs and upgrades we need.

## **What about ongoing maintenance at TUSD schools?**

Tustin Unified Maintenance and Operations staff work hard to keep our schools in adequate working condition with limited resources. Our facilities needs far outweigh the current resources and state-allocated budget we have to address them.

## **What about the Lottery or Proposition 30? Weren't they supposed to fix our schools?**

Unfortunately, Lottery funds can only be used for classroom instruction, not facility or technology infrastructure upgrades. Moreover, the money TUSD receives from the Lottery each year comprises less than 2% of our annual General Fund Budget. Proposition 30 funds, approved by California voters in November 2012, restored earlier classroom cuts, however, did not provide any "new" funding for schools or school facilities. Neither Lottery nor Prop 30 funds can provide the funding solution that our local schools need for repairs, upgrades, and modernization.

## **No one in my home attends local TUSD schools. How will Measure J impact me?**

Quality schools are the foundation of a healthy, thriving community. Quality schools improve the quality of life in the community, protect home values and keep the Tustin community strong.

### **Have there been other TUSD school bonds? If so, when?**

TUSD strives to be a model of financial responsibility, making every effort to spend taxpayer dollars wisely. We greatly appreciate the passage of previous school bonds, approved by local voters, which have helped address critical school needs. These include **Measure G** twenty-two years ago to renovate, modernize, and acquire property for school facilities; **Measure L** sixteen years ago focused on the high schools to improve facilities and infrastructure, modernize science labs, and replace portables with permanent classrooms; and **Measure S** twelve years ago for instructional technology needs ONLY. By leveraging Measure G, L & S funds, we obtained additional matching funds from the State and other sources, allowing the District to leverage taxpayer dollars much further. Today, our schools continue to rank among the best in the State, thanks in large part to continued community support and ongoing investments. Measure J is on the ballot to obtain authorization for the next set of essentials-only upgrades to our schools. In fact, many of our elementary and middle schools are now over 50 years old – and although well maintained, need attention after decades of use. All schools require ongoing safety and security upgrades.

### **Who is eligible to vote on Measure J?**

All residents who are registered to vote within Tustin Unified School District's boundaries are eligible to vote on Measure J. This includes portions of Irvine and Santa Ana located within TUSD boundaries.

### **What if I am not currently registered to vote? What do I need to know? How can I register to vote?**

The last day to register to vote is October 21, 2024, online or by postmark. Additionally, anyone can register to vote in person at any of the vote centers that are open starting 10 days before the election and vote conditionally until your information is verified. Visit [www.voteinfo.net](http://www.voteinfo.net) to learn more.

### **How much will Measure J cost?**

The \$261 million bond currently translates to about \$30 per \$100,000 of ASSESSED property value. The "assessed" value of your home refers to the taxable value, *not its market value*. The taxable value of your home or business will depend on when you purchased it. Approval of Measure J will support locally controlled funding for critically needed Tustin Unified school facility improvements.

For illustrative purposes, the median home's assessed value in Tustin is \$619,174, which would equate to just under \$186 annually.

### **Will businesses share in the cost of Measure J?**

Yes, both commercial and residential property owners will be subject to Measure J assessments if it passes.

### **Does this reduce or replace the Mello Roos tax?**

Measure J does not affect the Mello Roos tax for homeowners in the four Mello Roos communities. However, Tustin Unified actively pursues refinancing opportunities to pay off those taxes sooner and save money for homeowners. Recently, Tustin Unified completed a successful refinancing of the 07-1 and 14-1 communities which shortened the tax period by 5 years, saving taxpayers over \$41 million. For more information on this tax saving effort, please click on the [link](#).

Our next refinancing opportunities will include Mello Roos communities 97-1 and 06-1.

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

The locally elected Governing Board of the Tustin Unified School District is the legal entity that placed Measure J on the ballot. Ultimately, Tustin Unified School District REGISTERED VOTERS living within the District's boundaries will have the final say on whether or not Measure J is implemented when they vote on the measure on November 5, 2024.

### **How can we be assured that Measure J money will be spent properly?**

**Taxpayer protections are REQUIRED.** All Measure J funds stay local - they cannot be taken away by the State or used for other purposes. ONLY facilities and equipment upgrades are allowed. NO funds can be spent on administrators' salaries or pensions. Measure J requires the establishment of a Citizens Bond Oversight Committee (CBOC) within 60 days after a successful election result is certified. The CBOC is responsible for monitoring bond finances to ensure the public that the money is being spent properly. Measure J also requires independent annual audits for the public on use of bond proceeds.

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

The short answer: NO. In the past, State funding has been available to support local school upgrades, but we cannot count on this uncertain source of funding – there are simply no guarantees. Moreover, in order to access State funding, school districts MUST generate local matching funds by passing a local school bond measure. In fact, passing a local bond is the ONLY way to qualify for additional State funding when it becomes available.

### **If voters approve Measure J, when will bonds be issued?**

Once approved, the first issuance of bonds would be in the Spring of 2025.

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

Once the measure is approved, the school district will immediately focus on projects to address the most critical facilities needs starting with safety and security upgrades, as well as modernization of our highest need schools. We anticipate the first projects commencing in the Summer of 2026. A schedule for funding projects will be developed so projects can be completed on time and within budget.

**For more information:** Visit [www.Tustin.k12.ca.us](http://www.Tustin.k12.ca.us) or call the TUSD Communications Office at (714) 730-7339.