



# Newark Unified School District

## November 2024 School Bond Measure

# Measure O Frequently Asked Questions

### What is Measure O?

Measure O is a local school bond measure on the November 5, 2024 ballot seeking voter authorization to repair and upgrade school facilities and equipment within the Newark Unified School District (NUSD). To pass, at least 55% of voters must approve Measure O. A “YES” vote supports approving funding to implement the District’s plan to upgrade and modernize school facilities. A “NO” vote does not support approving funding for this plan. All registered voters in NUSD are eligible to vote on Measure O.

### Why has Newark Unified School District placed Measure O on the ballot?

As the local provider of TK-12 public education, the NUSD Board of Education believes all students deserve to learn in quality classrooms and school facilities. However, all nine NUSD schools are at least 60 years old. After decades of constant use, they are deteriorated and outdated, and in need of significant repairs and upgrades. The magnitude of need far exceeds our limited state-allocated facilities budget.

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

*“To update schools for 21st century learning, classrooms/ labs for science, technology, engineering, arts and math instruction; technology infrastructure, HVAC, electrical/ plumbing systems, and school security/ emergency preparedness; shall Newark Unified School District’s measure authorizing \$205,000,000 in bonds at legal interest rates be adopted, with average levies of \$50 per \$100,000 assessed valuation while bonds are outstanding, generating approximately \$14,000,000 annually extending not increasing estimated tax rates, with citizen oversight, annual audits and no funds for administrators?”*

### If approved by local voters, how will proposed Measure O funds be used?

#### Proposed Measure O School Facility Upgrades:

- **Improve school safety in NUSD schools** by removing safety hazards like asbestos and lead pipes and completing earthquake safety upgrades
- **Modernize** classrooms and labs for 21st century learning in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM)
- **Renovate** job training and career preparation instructional spaces
- **Repair/Replace** roofs, restrooms, electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems
- **Upgrade** education technology infrastructure

### Will passage of Measure O improve instruction?

Safe, modern school facilities are essential to maintaining the quality of our local TK-12 schools. Education studies confirm students and teachers perform best in safe, modern schools

### How much will Measure O cost?

Measure O is not projected to raise the District’s existing combined tax rate. Measure O proposes to extend, without increasing, the bond authorization originally approved by NUSD voters in 1997. If approved by voters this November, Measure O will authorize \$205 million in general obligation bonds, continuing an annual estimated tax rate of \$50 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation. (*Important note: the assessed valuation refers to taxable value, not the market value of your property. The taxable value of your home or business will depend on when you purchased it.*)

**Does the District have a facilities budget?**

Our dedicated school district maintenance and operations staff members work hard to keep our schools safe and well maintained. Our current list of facility needs includes repairs and upgrades to improve school safety, roofs, HVAC systems, modernizing classrooms and labs for 21st century learning, and upgrading education technology. These needs far exceed our state-allocated budget for facilities maintenance.

**What about Lottery funding?**

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 cannot fund the extensive upgrades that our schools need.

**Does the State provide funding for facility upgrades?**

In general, funds provided by the State are for instructional programs, not capital expenditures or improvements. Moreover, in order to access state funding, school districts must generate local matching funds by passing a school bond measure. In fact, passing a local bond is the only way to qualify for additional state facilities funding if and when it becomes available. There are no other sources of State funding available for major facility upgrades.

**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 an affirmative vote of at least 55% to pass. Proposition 39 school bonds prohibit the use of the funds for operations, administrator salaries or pensions. Proposition 39 also requires independent financial and performance audits. No revenues generated by a voter-approved local school bond can be taken away by the State.

**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 by improving aging classrooms and improving student access to science, technology, engineering, and math facilities. Improving our local schools could make our neighborhoods more desirable places to live, protecting everyone's property values.

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

Our last school bond was Measure G, in 2011, helping to make necessary repairs and upgrades to our aging schools. However, NUSD schools continue to age and require upgrades to keep them up to date.

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

If approved by voters, the District will focus first on the most critically needed facilities repairs and upgrades. A schedule for funding projects will be developed so they can be completed on time and within budget.

**Will businesses share in the cost of Measure O?**

Yes, both commercial and residential property owners will be subject to the Measure O assessment if it passes.

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

If approved by voters, Measure O would require independent Citizens Oversight and regular public reporting to ensure the funds are spent only to improve schools. No funds can be used to increase salaries, benefits, or pensions for administrators, teachers, or any other school employees.

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

Registered voters in NUSD will have the final say on whether or not Measure O is approved when they vote on the measure this November.

**What is required for proposed Measure O to pass?**

At least 55% of the voters who cast their ballots on Measure O in the November 5th Presidential General Election must vote in favor of the bond for it to be approved. Measure O is being sought under the provisions of Proposition 39 approved by California voters in 2000, which prohibits use of the funds for operations, administrator salaries, or pensions and also requires independent financial and performance audits on the use of bond proceeds.

**Who is eligible to vote on Measure O?**

All registered voters within the Newark Unified School District will be eligible to vote on Measure O. Ballots will be mailed to NUSD voters the week of October 7<sup>th</sup>.

**If I am not currently registered to vote, how can I get registered to vote?**

The last day to register to vote in the November 2024 election (online or by postmark) is October 21, 2024. You may also conditionally register and vote after the 15-day voter registration deadline. Contact the Alameda County Registrar of Voters for more information or visit their website at <https://acvote.alamedacountyca.gov/>