

6.0 RECOMMEND-ATIONS



Fremont High School - Bond New Construction

6 Recommendations

6.1. Using the Investment Framework

Use Investment Framework as a Tool

- **Use as a community-centered decision tool:** Apply the framework to guide transparent, community-informed decisions.
- **Align facilities with educational priorities**: Ensure capital investments directly support the District's vision, instructional models, and student success outcomes.
- **Prioritize modernization and core improvements:** Use it to identify and address aging infrastructure, including safety, accessibility (ADA), seismic resilience, HVAC performance, indoor environmental quality, and operational efficiency
- **Take a systemwide portfolio approach:** Evaluate investments across the full district portfolio—responding to enrollment shifts, program needs, and community priorities—rather than focusing on individual sites in isolation.
- **Use as a foundation for prioritization, not a project list:** Apply the framework to evaluate and sequence investments over time; it does not pre-approve or rank specific capital projects.
- **Inform, but do not determine funding decisions:** Use it to guide future funding strategies (e.g., bonds), while recognizing that it does not allocate or commit funding.
- **Support future policy discussions with data:** Leverage it to inform conversations about potential portfolio changes, including closures or consolidations, without predetermining outcomes.
- **Maintain flexibility over time:** Treat the framework as an adaptable tool that provides structure and clarity while allowing the District to respond to evolving needs and community input.

Use Investment Framework to Support Equitable Decision Making

This FMP brings together one of the most comprehensive collections of facility data OUSD has assembled. The intent is not to rely on data alone, but to support data-informed decision making that balances quantitative analysis with community context, lived experience, and educational priorities.

DATA-INFORMED, NOT DATA-DRIVEN

A purely data-driven approach can oversimplify complex challenges and overlook school identity, community role, and historical inequities. Decisions based only on enrollment, cost, or facility condition risk unintended outcomes.

A data-informed approach integrates measurable findings with qualitative insights and community priorities, allowing OUSD to evaluate trade-offs, consider multiple scenarios, and align decisions with District goals and community needs. Data provide clarity—but do not dictate outcomes.

A HOLISTIC AND EQUITY-CENTERED FRAMEWORK

Facilities planning requires considering how multiple factors intersect—facility condition, enrollment trends, educational adequacy, program needs, and financial resources—to understand each school's full context.

For example, a school that appears underutilized may have strong community ties or specialized programs, while a campus with high facility needs may serve as a critical neighborhood anchor. Education adequacy challenges may also reflect outdated design, not just deferred maintenance.

Apply the Investment Framework Through Community and Board Partnership

While data helps identify schools that qualify for major investment consideration, final portfolio and investment decisions must be made through a collaborative process involving the Board of Education, District leadership, and school communities. Data alone cannot determine which projects or decisions should move forward first. Prioritization must reflect both quantitative need and community values.

If a school is not identified for a transformative capital project, it should become a top candidate, provided there is a strong need, for focused Districtwide investment strategies, ensuring that all schools receive upgrades to address critical needs related to health and safety, climate control, accessibility, education adequacy, and other high-priority areas (Tier 1).

This partnership-based approach ensures that major investments advance equity, build trust, and improve the overall health of the OUSD portfolio, rather than creating isolated improvements disconnected from community priorities.



Oakland Tech School: 2025 Exterior painting project- Deferred Maintenance

6.2. Current and Near-term Actions

Maintaining a Dynamic List of Candidate Schools

Accompanying the Plan is a publicly accessible, online dashboard with campus-level data across key metrics. The dashboard allows users to filter, visualize, and compare facility conditions, capacity, utilization, and equity indicators. As an interactive tool, it operationalizes the Plan's framework—enabling decision-makers and the community to apply equity criteria consistently and test potential investments against transparent, data-driven measures.

As facility conditions, enrollment projections, program needs, and community preferences evolve, the District will need to regularly update its list of candidate schools. The Master Plan provides the structure and criteria to revisit and refine priorities on an ongoing basis.

This approach ensures the capital program remains flexible and responsive, while grounded in clear principles and transparent decision-making.

Next Steps: Conduct Targeted Studies

- Asset Management Plan
- Air Quality and Thermal Comfort Strategies: Evaluate and implement strategies to address rising temperatures and improve thermal comfort across campuses.
- Deferred Maintenance Plan: Prepare a comprehensive plan to address backlog and prioritize long-term facility repairs and replacements.

Next Steps for Implementation: Priority Projects

- Project Prioritization: Identify which schools and projects should advance first based on need, readiness, funding availability, and community impact.
- Engagement: Continue engagement with school communities to refine project scopes and implementation strategies.
- Site Feasibility: Conduct site-level studies and program planning to confirm project feasibility and educational program needs.

6.3. Using the FMP to Support Future Decision Making on District Re-envisioning and Re-designing

Use the FMP and supporting data to inform transformational school redesign through the sustainable community schools model and guide a citywide process to define OUSD's future footprint and align services and staffing. The District now has a clearer understanding of which campuses are well-positioned for continued investment and which face challenges that may not be addressed through minor improvements.

Combined with financial planning and community engagement, this information supports a thoughtful and transparent process for re-envisioning and redesigning the school portfolio.

The Need to Explore Re-envisioning and re-designing with the Community

Given the number of small schools and the cost pressures associated with operating them, the FMP recommends that OUSD begin a structured conversation with the community about potential re-envisioning and re-designing strategies. Re-envisioning and re-designing should not be seen as a cost-cutting exercise but rather as an opportunity to create stronger, more vibrant schools that can offer robust academic programs, modern learning environments, and equitable access to resources.

Any re-envisioning and re-designing effort should be grounded in community partnership and guided by clear goals. These goals may include:

- Improving the quality and consistency of educational programs
- Supporting whole-child services and access to specialized staff
- Reducing the strain of maintaining campuses with low occupancy rates
- Advancing equity by ensuring that every student has access to high-quality facilities
- Using capital investments strategically to transform student experiences

Using Capital Investments and a Future Bond to Support Re-envisioning and Re-designing

The FMP introduces a T-shaped investment strategy that highlights two types of investments: Districtwide focused improvements and transformative projects. This framework can be directly linked to future re-envisioning and re-designing efforts.

Transformative projects represent a major opportunity. In areas where multiple schools are experiencing declining enrollment, aging facilities, and inadequate spaces for modern programs, it may be appropriate to consider replacing several smaller campuses with one larger, modern, transformative school that can serve as a high-quality anchor for the surrounding community.

A future bond program could fund these large-scale investments and provide the capital needed to build new campuses that meet 21st century instructional expectations.

Such an approach allows the District to:

- Consolidate resources into fewer, higher-performing campuses
- Provide students with improved facilities and access to a broader range of programs
- Reduce long-term maintenance and operational costs
- Reset the age and condition of buildings in neighborhoods with the greatest need
- Invest in energy efficiency as a tool for long-term cost control, system resilience, and operational stability.

Transformative investments can also be phased within clusters of schools, focusing first on those with the most critical facility challenges and the high enrollment. This targeted approach ensures that re-envisioning and re-designing is paired with tangible improvements that families can see and feel.

Key Factors to Explore in Decision Making

If OUSD moves into a re-envisioning and re-designing study, apart from the criteria for transformational projects, the following factors should be examined to guide equitable and transparent choices:

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Schools serve not only students but also neighborhoods. The District should analyze community needs, partnerships, and the role each school plays beyond academics.

HISTORICAL IMPACT AND EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

School closures across the country have often disproportionately affected Black, Latino, and low-income communities due to historic racism, housing displacement, and decades of underinvestment in certain neighborhoods. OUSD has the responsibility to approach re-envisioning and re-designing with a deep understanding of this history and must commit to a process that avoids repeating past harms.

This means:

- Conducting an equity impact analysis for any closure or consolidation scenario
- Engaging communities early and consistently
- Understanding who is affected and how
- Ensuring that students who have historically experienced underinvestment benefit directly from any re-envisioning and re-designing
- Ensuring that families see clear improvements, such as access to a high-quality, modernized, transformative campus
- Re-envisioning and re-designing should not deepen inequities but should instead be designed to correct them.



Bridges Academy Elementary School


Manzanita Elementary School

6.4. Capital Planning Budget

OUSD's capital planning budgets are developed through a combination of long-range facilities planning, bond funding strategies, and ongoing assessment of facility conditions and educational needs. Capital investments are guided by priorities such as health and safety, modernization of aging infrastructure, program needs, equity considerations, and operational efficiency.

Measure Y provides a key reference point for how capital funds have been deployed across OUSD. Planned and completed projects under Measure Y span multiple categories, including modernization, new construction, health and safety upgrades, accessibility improvements, and program enhancements. It was approved in 2012 by voters.

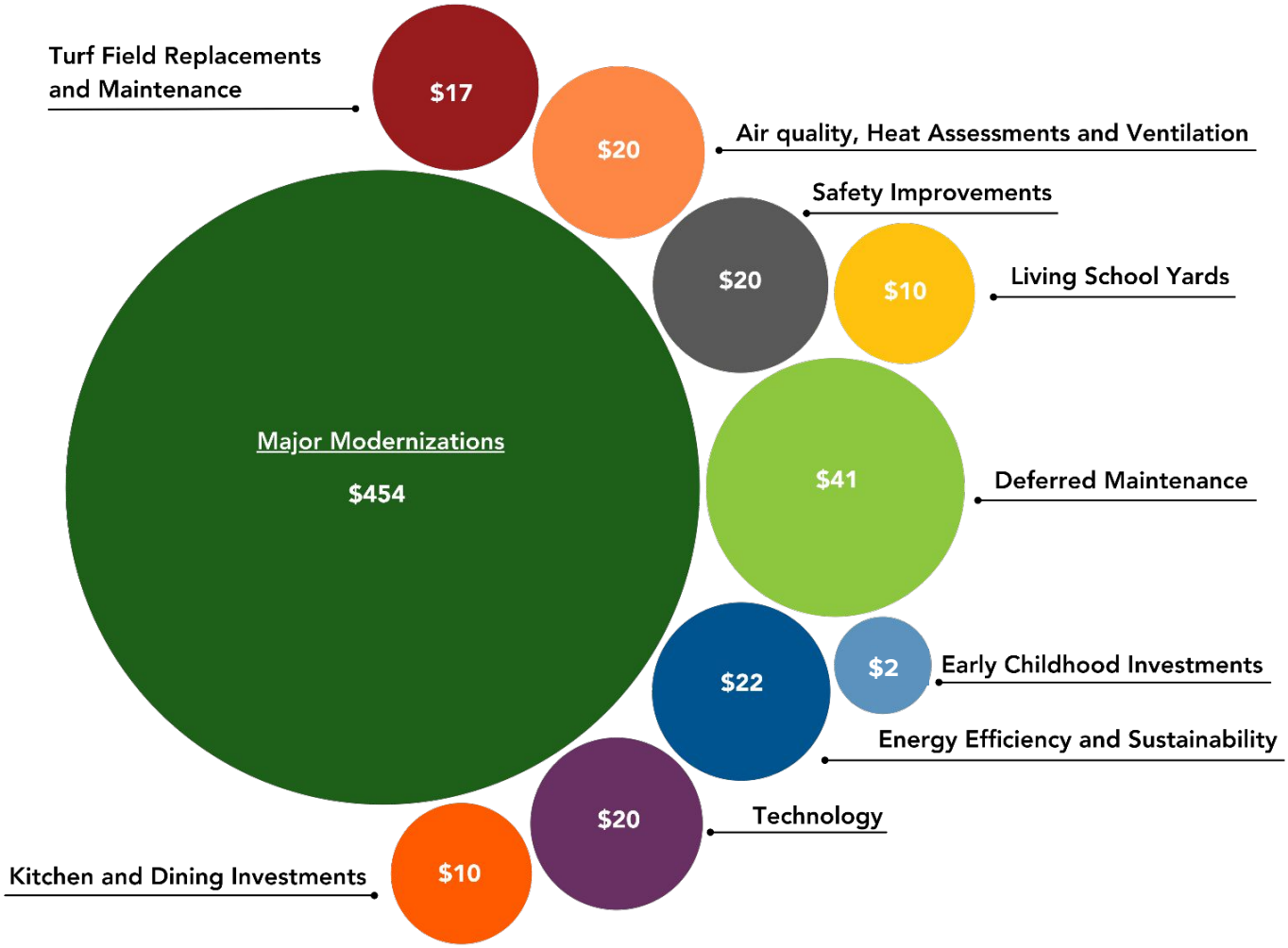


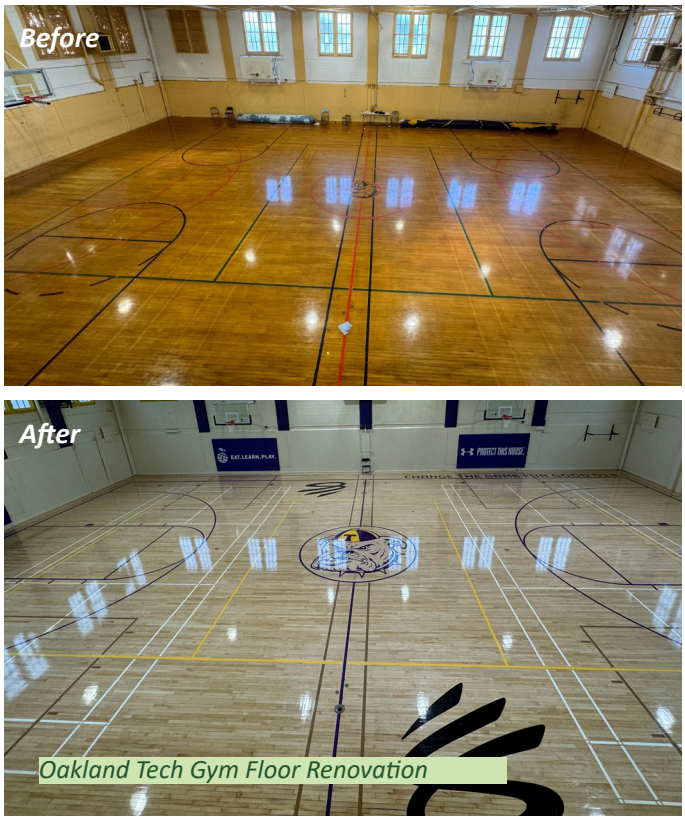
Figure 46 *Planned And Completed Projects Categorized By Initiative Funded By Measure Y*

Notes:

- *Budget investments as of February 2025.*
- *All values in Millions of Dollars, rounded down to the nearest whole number.*
- *Early Childhood Investments is funded by Measure AA.*

Estimated Costs for Recommended Projects

OUSD has established a data-driven framework to determine which campuses require modernization, systems renewal, replacement, or program expansion. The Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA) identifies building system needs and informs prioritization across sites. To estimate the order-of-magnitude costs associated with the framework driven recommended projects, OUSD applies standardized per-unit cost assumptions (e.g., per square foot rates), which will be updated periodically to reflect market conditions, inflation, and external factors.



Sample Project Type	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
New Construction	$1100/SF	$1100/SF	$1100/SF
Modernization	$400/SF	$400/SF	$400/SF
Early childhood and transitional kindergarten expansion	$1100/SF	N/A	N/A
Special education learning environment improvements	$550/SF	$550/SF	$550/SF
Career Technical Education pathway devel-opment	N/A	N/A	$600/SF
STEM and science lab upgrades	$600/SF	$600/SF	$600/SF
Visual and performing arts space improvements	$600/SF	$600/SF	$600/SF
Outdoor learning environments and living schoolyards	$3,000,000/Site	$3,500,000/Site	$4,500,000/Site
Student wellness and support spaces	$400/SF	$400/SF	$400/SF

Figure 47 *High Level Cost Estimates for Recommended Projects*
Information Source: 2026 Cost Benchmarks (National + Local)

6.5. Bond Strategy Recommendation

As OUSD looks ahead to the next phase of facilities investment, there is an opportunity to position future bond programs not simply as a continuation of repairing and maintaining schools, but as a deliberate strategy to reshape the District's long-term facilities footprint. Previous bond programs have played a critical role in addressing health, safety, and deferred maintenance needs. The next generation of investment can build on that foundation by using transformative projects as a lever to intentionally design the school system Oakland wants for future generations of students and families.

A potential framework for this next phase is to structure each bond cycle around a small number of highly intentional, high-impact modernization projects, complemented by Districtwide investments that address critical needs across the full portfolio. The following considerations should be made in future bond efforts:

- At a programmatic level, each bond could prioritize investment in one early childhood center or hub strategically located to support dense neighborhoods. Where feasible, these early learning facilities would be integrated into elementary campuses to create a seamless PK–5 continuum.
- In addition, each bond cycle could include two transformative elementary school projects that integrate early learning on-site, replace outdated facilities, and are designed for long-term sustainability.
- This framework would also include one transformative middle school project and one transformative high school project per bond cycle.

While these full-scale modernizations form the backbone of each bond program, the strategy also emphasizes the importance of Districtwide projects focused on Tier 1 priorities.

THE TIER 1 INVESTMENTS WOULD ADDRESS CRITICAL, SYSTEM-WIDE NEEDS SUCH AS LIFE-SAFETY, CORE BUILDING SYSTEMS, ACCESSIBILITY, AND OTHER HIGH-PRIORITY DEFICIENCIES ACROSS THE PORTFOLIO.

By advancing these projects in parallel with major modernizations, the District can ensure that all schools benefit from bond investments, not only those undergoing comprehensive reconstruction.

AS BOND CAPACITY ALLOWS, TIER 2 AND TIER 3 PROJECTS CAN BE STRATEGICALLY LAYERED INTO THE PROGRAM TO ADDRESS ADDITIONAL NEEDS AND ENHANCEMENTS.

This flexible approach enables the District to respond to evolving conditions, leverage efficiencies as projects are bundled or sequenced, and maximize the overall impact of available funds. Together, Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 investments create a balanced capital program that combines urgency, equity, and long-term vision.

Using a Bond to Right-Size the Portfolio

As individual modernization projects are scoped, the District can look for opportunities to strengthen long-term sustainability by consolidating small, outdated campuses into modernized sites that better support today's programs and student needs. This approach helps ensure modernization investments improve both educational outcomes and operational efficiency.

Key elements of the strategy:

- Merge school communities where feasible into stronger, modernized campuses that support robust programming, collaboration, and student services
- Prioritize replacement of portables that are beyond their useful life with permanent, high-quality learning spaces
- Improve utilization and reduce long-term operating inefficiencies across the portfolio
- Support campuses capable of sustaining integrated community school services

Over a sustained planning horizon of approximately three bond cycles (20–25 years), this strategy provides a pathway to right-size the facilities portfolio in response to enrollment trends. It allows time for continued community engagement while gradually shifting from maintaining many aging facilities to sustaining fewer, stronger, fully modernized campuses built to contemporary standards.

State Funding Consideration

An important shift embedded in this strategy is the explicit use of state funding eligibility as a core criterion in project sequencing and prioritization. By aligning bond investments with projects that maximize eligibility for the State School Facility Program, the District can significantly extend the impact of local bond dollars. This leverage allows Oakland to do more with each bond cycle while maintaining flexibility to address Districtwide needs and long-term strategic priorities.

Taken together, this bond strategy reframes facilities investment as a coordinated, long-term transformation of the District's physical and educational environment. By pairing transformative modernizations with Districtwide Tier 1 investments and selectively layering Tier 2 and Tier 3 projects, Oakland can balance immediate needs with future readiness and deliver high-quality, sustainable learning environments for decades to come.

Each bond cycle could include two transformative elementary projects, plus one middle school and one high school project, integrating early learning, replacing outdated facilities, and supporting long-term sustainability.

Investment Type	Bond Cycle 1	Bond Cycle 2	Bond Cycle 3
Early Childhood Investments (PK & TK expansion) – Expansion at school sites to build a full early learning continuum on a campus	PK/TK expansion at selected campuses	Continued expansion to additional campuses	Full Districtwide PK–TK feeder strategy established
Elementary School Rebuilds (500-650 students) – Two right-sized elementary schools to allow OUSD to reset its long-term footprint	2 Elementary Schools	2 Elementary Schools	2 Elementary Schools
Middle School Investment – One middle school modernized or rebuilt per phase	1 Middle School	1 Middle School	1 Middle School
High School Investment – One comprehensive high school modernized or rebuilt per phase	1 High School	1 High School	1 High School

Figure 48 *Continuous Cycle of Investment Over at Least Three Bond Cycles*

The Facilities Master Plan is not a static document, but a dynamic framework that will continue to evolve through implementation. Updated annually and supported by an online dashboard, the FMP becomes a living tool—one that enables transparency, tracks progress, and keeps the community informed and engaged. By making data accessible and decisions visible, the District can foster ongoing trust, support informed conversations, and ensure that investments remain responsive to changing needs over time.