

Mountain Empire Unified School District Frequently Asked Questions

How are MEUSD schools doing?

Mountain Empire Unified School District (MEUSD) is dedicated to ensuring we provide a safe and high-quality learning environment where each of our students can become confident, positive, and self-aware learners that are prepared for adult life.

What is the state of our high school?

Our high school was built nearly 50 years ago and doesn't meet modern safety standards, contains asbestos and lead pipes, and isn't earthquake safe. The gas lines, storm drains, sewer system, and plumbing at the High School are all failing, causing leaks, mold, and sewage backups. District schools are often forced to close due to infrastructure challenges, such as issues with water and fire suppression systems and electrical system failures.

How does this impact high school students in the classroom?

Our high school classrooms and labs also need upgrades, so our students have access to the technology and STEM education they need to succeed in college and careers. Our students deserve the same educational opportunities as others in the region.

How is the MEUSD planning to address identified issues?

To complete needed repairs and improvements MEUSD Board of Education voted unanimously to place a \$23 million dollar bond measure on the November 2026 ballot.

Specifically, how would the bond measure extension be used to complete needed improvements?

If approved by local voters, the measure would provide \$23 million in locally controlled funding that could be used to:

- Repair or replace deteriorating roofs, plumbing, heating, ventilation, gas lines, sewer lines, and electrical systems
- Remove hazardous materials including asbestos, lead pipes, and mold
- Ensure proper access for students with disabilities
- Provide modern science labs, agriculture and career technical facilities and equipment so students are prepared for college and in demand careers in fields like health sciences, engineering, and technology
- Repair, replace, or reconstruct deteriorating classrooms and school facilities that do not meet current building safety or earthquake safety standards

How do I know funds from the measure would be used responsibly?

The bond measure includes strict fiscal accountability protections to ensure responsible management of funds, including:

- All funds would be controlled locally for our schools only and could not be taken away by the State

- An independent citizens' oversight committee and mandatory annual audits would ensure all funds are spent as voters intended
- A detailed project list outlining the specific use of funds would be required
- No funds could be used for administrators' salaries

Would all funds benefit all schools in MEUSD?

Yes. Funds would be locally controlled and would benefit all local MEUSD schools. No funding could be taken away by the State or used for other purposes.

Is there any other way to repair and update MEUSD's high school?

No. The District is currently under extreme financial strain and lacks the necessary funds in its operating budget to address the substantial repairs and upgrades required at the high school. By placing a \$23 million bond measure on the November 2026 ballot, the District can leverage its resources to qualify for state matching funds, which are otherwise unavailable. Without a successful local bond and the state matching funds it would garner, there is no other viable funding source to complete critical safety and facility improvements to our high school and elementary schools.

What is the difference between assessed value and market value?

The cost of bond measures is based on the assessed value of properties. The assessed value of a property is based on the original purchase price and may not increase by more than 2% a year, while the market value tends to grow at a much faster rate based on market conditions. Thus, the assessed value is usually lower than the market value, especially if a property was purchased long ago at a much lower price than it could be purchased for today. It is this lower assessed value upon which the cost of a bond measure is based.

How much would it cost me if the measure is passed?

If approved by voters, the measure's cost would be structured to limit the rate to \$38 per \$100,000 of a property's assessed (not market value) per year, or about \$110 per year for the typical homeowner while bonds are outstanding.

Are senior exemptions available?

No. State law does not allow for exemptions to be applied to bond measures. However, because the cost of a bond measure is based on the original purchase price of a home, residents who have lived in their homes a long time have the lowest assessed values and will pay the least toward the cost of a bond measure.

What is the difference between a school bond measure and a school parcel tax?

Parcel taxes provide local funding to support teachers and academic programs. A school bond measure, by contrast, is entirely different and can only be used for school facility upgrades and improvements, such as repairing aging buildings and infrastructure. Bond funds cannot be used for operating costs, salaries, or programs.

I don't have children attending local schools. How does this impact me?

Even if you do not have school-age children, studies show that funding quality education can help improve the quality of life in the community and protect the property value of local homes.

What level of support does the measure need to pass?

The measure would need to be supported by 55% of local voters for it to pass. If placed on the November 2026 ballot, all registered voters living in Mountain Empire Unified School District would be eligible to vote on the measure.

How can I share my thoughts or learn more?

As MEUSD plans for the future of our neighborhood schools, we welcome your questions and input. For more information or any questions, you may have, please contact Patrick Keeley at 619-473-9022 ext. 129.