

SANTA MARIA JOINT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Measure “H-2016” - FACT SHEET

The Santa Maria Joint Union High School District provides grades 9-12 high school education to the children of Santa Maria and is the oldest high school district in California. Based on a study of existing school facilities, there is now a need to modernize, upgrade and construct classrooms and additional student support facilities throughout the District. In response, the School Board has placed Measure “H-2016”, the high school facilities improvement initiative, on the November 8, 2016 ballot. The following are some commonly asked questions and their answers to the proposed measure.

Q. What is Measure “H-2016”?

A. Measure “H-2016” is a General Obligation (G.O.) bond measure authorizing \$114 million in school bonds to modernize and make improvements to our schools, replace portable classrooms, and provide additional support facilities to meet our student and teacher needs. Measure “H-2016” will:

- Rebuild the 80-year old Santa Maria High School campus into a modern 21st century high school facility reflective of its heritage and the quality of our newer schools
- Modernize and upgrade existing classrooms, science labs and support facilities at Righetti and Pioneer Valley to support modern classroom instruction and technology for increased student achievement and teacher use
- Construct additional college and vocational/career technical education facilities so students are better able to compete for better college or good paying job opportunities upon graduation
- Provide the required local match for State grants for modernization or new construction of school facilities

Q. Why is Measure “H-2016” needed?

A. The four high schools that serve our community were built at varying times. Approximately one-third of all classrooms today are portable facilities that were introduced as interim facilities, but have now reached their economic life and are in need of replacement with permanent classroom facilities. In addition, the permanent classrooms at Righetti and Santa Maria High School were initially built in the 1960’s and some before the 1940’s and now require modernization, and in certain sections of Santa Maria replacement. The rapid pace of modern learning environments also requires upgrades to our newer facilities that were built in the last twenty years. The combined costs of these improvements cannot be funded from the District’s annual budget and no local funds remain to provide long term capital improvements.

Q. What safeguards does Measure “H-2016” provide for taxpayers?

A. State law requires a detailed project list and a citizens' oversight committee to ensure that funds are used only for voter approved school projects. Additional safeguards require annual financial and performance audits of all monies approved by voters. No funds may be used for employee salaries.

Q. How did the District assess the facilities needs at the schools?

A. The District conducted a series of studies and workshops of its school sites and facilities over a two-year period to evaluate their condition, modernization and technology needs. This assessment was used to identify the facilities projects to be undertaken as part of a Master Schools Improvement Program on file in the Superintendent's office.

Q. Does the District qualify for any grants to assist in the funding of required improvements?

A. The District currently qualifies for over \$50 million in State grants for new construction and modernization of its school facilities. However, a local match is required in order to receive State funding. If the District cannot raise its local match requirement, these funds will be allocated to other school districts and communities that have raised funds locally to meet the match requirement.

Q. What happens if Measure “H-2016” fails?

A. The proposed improvements would be delayed and the facilities needs at our schools would continue to escalate with time. State school modernization and new construction grants that the District may be eligible for would be allocated to other school districts throughout the State that meet the local match requirement.

Q. How would the students benefit by improving the schools?

A. Funds would be used to replace portable classrooms and older buildings with permanent facilities. Students would be provided with modern classroom facilities and technology to better accommodate modern classroom instruction, certification and preparation for better quality colleges and job opportunities immediately upon graduation.

Q. What are General Obligation (G.O.) bonds?

A. G.O. bonds are long-term debt instruments used by school districts throughout the State. The proceeds from the sale of G.O. bonds issued pursuant to Proposition 39 can be used to fund the construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation or replacement of school facilities, including the furnishing and equipping of school facilities. The G.O. bonds issued pursuant to Measure H-2016 can be used for the aforementioned purposes, as identified in the project list included in the District’s resolution calling the election. Similar to a home loan, G.O. bonds are repaid over time.

Q. What can the District do with the bond money?

A. Under State Law, bond money can only be used to acquire, construct, or improve school facilities identified in the project list included in the resolution calling the election. All bond proceeds would be used in the District to make improvements to our schools and cannot be taken away by the State.

Q. What will Measure “H-2016” cost taxpayers per year, and how will it be assessed?

A. The proposed measure is estimated to cost a homeowner \$30 per year per \$100,000 of assessed value. The tax rate is determined by the assessed valuation. Do not confuse assessed valuation with market value. Assessed valuation is the value placed on property by the County pursuant to Proposition 13. The amount of the tax rate each year will depend upon the amount needed to pay the G.O. bonds issued pursuant to Measure H-2016.

Q. What about using lottery money for these projects?

A. By law, lottery money cannot be used for construction or repairs of school facilities.

Q. Who can vote in the November 8th election?

A. All the registered voters who live within the boundaries of the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District are eligible to vote on Measure “H-2016”. The last day to register to vote is October 24th.