



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Rim of the World Unified School District

2020 School Bond Measure

What is this process all about?

As the local provider of pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade education in our mountain community, Rim of the World Unified School District (ROWUSD or Rim) has **two key priorities**: first, to ensure **academic success for every student** attending one of our schools; and second, to make sure that our **school facilities and school grounds** are safe, secure, modern, and equipped to provide the best education possible. This school year, the District has been assessing our school facilities and technology across the school district. This assessment is part of a larger process to ensure quality schools for the students, families, and communities we serve. The current state of our classrooms, labs, technology, and facilities is adversely impacting teaching and learning, so we are now elevating the conversation with our Rim education community, local voters, and the public.

On December 3, 2019, the ROWUSD School Board voted unanimously to place a local school bond measure on the March 2020 San Bernardino County ballot seeking voter authorization for funds to make needed facilities repairs, upgrades, and improvements to all six ROWUSD school sites – Rim and Mountain High Schools, MPH Intermediate School, and CHE, LAE, and VOE elementary schools.

Why has Rim USD placed this measure on the ballot?

Our schools have grown old and deteriorated due to constant use and harsh weather conditions up here on the mountain. While our schools are well maintained, they are aging and in serious need of major repairs and upgrades. Our assessment of unmet facilities needs is now estimated at nearly \$75 million. Studies show that aging schools have greater safety hazards, making it hard to respond in emergencies and increasing the potential for conflict on school campuses. Our school facilities maintenance staff work hard to maintain our school facilities and keep them in good working condition with limited resources. However, the reality is that the types of repairs and upgrades that our schools need go beyond the scope and means of regular school maintenance budgets.

What is the actual question that voters will be asked to decide in March?

To repair deteriorating roofs, plumbing, electrical; remove hazardous materials; improve safety/security, labs, classrooms, technology for math, science, engineering, arts, skilled trades/ college/career readiness instruction; renovate, acquire, construct/repair classrooms, facilities, sites/equipment, shall Rim of the World Unified School District's measure authorizing \$51,500,000 in bonds at legal rates, levying 3 cents/ \$100 assessed value (\$3,400,000 annually) while bonds are outstanding, be adopted, with citizen oversight, all funds staying local?"

How will the funds be used?

Funds raised from this measure will be used to:

- **Modernize** aging, outdated classrooms for high-quality instruction in science, math, technology, engineering, and arts;
- **Repair/replace** deteriorating roofing, plumbing, insulation, HVAC, and restroom facilities;
- **Renovate** outdated science labs, engineering labs, and career training facilities so students are prepared for college and in-demand careers in fields like health sciences, engineering, technology, and skilled trades
- **Upgrade** aging electrical and technology systems to support 21st Century classroom instructional technology;
- **Replace** outdated security cameras, emergency communications systems, fencing, smoke detectors, fire alarms, and sprinklers to improve student safety and security.

Who is eligible to vote on this measure?

All of the nearly 18,000 registered voters within Rim of the World Unified School District will be eligible to vote on Measure __. The last day to register and be eligible to vote on Measure __ (in the March election) is February 18th.

What's required for the measure to pass (win)?

At least 55% of the voters who cast their ballots in the March 3rd election must vote in favor of the measure for it to be approved. This measure is being sought under the provisions of Proposition 39, which prohibits use of bond funds for operations, administrator salaries, or pensions, and also requires independent financial and performance audits on the use of bond proceeds.

Will this improve instruction?

We are proud of the teaching and learning that takes place every day in our six Rim schools – 3 elementary schools (CHE, LAE, and VOE), 1 intermediate school (MPH), and 2 high schools (Rim and Mountain). Our goal is to improve school campuses to make them safer, more effective and more vibrant learning spaces. Quality school facilities create the setting that makes a great education possible. Studies show that students and teachers perform better in safe, modern classrooms and school facilities.¹

What about ongoing maintenance at Rim USD schools?

District facilities staff members work tirelessly to maintain our schools and keep them in good working condition despite limited resources. However, the types of repairs and renovations that our current needs assessment has identified go well beyond the scope and means of regular school maintenance budgets (currently estimated in the \$75 million range). One example: the heating systems at all our schools are inadequate. During the winter, they all need manual adjustments DAILY. This is what is required to keep students and staff warm given our very old heating systems.

How 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 upgrades. The money our school district receives from the Lottery each year comprises less than 2% of our annual General Fund Budget. Prop 30, approved by California voters in November 2012, has helped prevent reductions in schools' per pupil funding but is also **restricted to instructional use**. Lottery and Proposition 30 funds cannot fund the significant upgrades our schools need.

Doesn't the STATE provide funding for facility upgrades?

Very little. In the past, state funding has been available to support local school upgrades but especially now, we cannot count on this uncertain source of funding. Moreover, in order to access state funding, school districts **MUST** generate local matching funds by passing a local school bond measure. Passing a local bond is the **ONLY** way to qualify for additional state funding if and when it becomes available. There are no other sources of funding for major facility upgrades.

How much will this cost me?

The \$51.5 million bond translates to \$30 per year for every \$100,000 of assessed valuation (*not to be confused with market value*). 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. In our community, the typical homeowner will pay approximately \$59 per year.

¹ See report at <https://www.ed-data.org/article/School-Facilities-in-California#a5>

How long would the funding for this bond last?

The current proposal under consideration calls for 30-year bonds. If the final bond issue is completed at the latest date possible, in 2029, the bond would last until 2059.

Will businesses share in the cost of the measure?

Yes, both commercial and residential property owners will be subject to the assessment.

No one in my home attends Rim schools. How will this impact me?

Good schools are the foundation of any healthy, thriving community. Good schools protect property values and keep communities strong.

When was the last Rim school bond? How much do we pay?

Our school district makes every effort to use all taxpayer dollars in a prudent, responsible manner. It's been nearly 11 years since the last bond was passed supporting our schools. The typical Rim homeowner currently pays about \$31 per year to support the Rim school bond approved by voters in 2008.

Isn't there another bond headed for the March ballot?

YES. A statewide school facilities bond, now known as Proposition 13, has qualified for the March 2020 ballot. If that measure is approved by California voters, it will, among other things, provide "state matching funds" to local school districts seeking extra funding to upgrade their schools. However, it is important to note that passing a local bond is **the ONLY way** to qualify for these matching funds if and when they become available. If we don't pass a local school bond, the State's available matching funds will go to other communities that have approved local school bonds. Closer to home, it is also our understanding that an additional local bond measure has been placed on the March ballot sponsored by and benefitting **Mountains Community Healthcare District**.

If our community supports a local school bond, which schools would benefit?

All six of our local Rim schools (Charles Hoffman, Lake Arrowhead, and Valley of Enchantment Elementary Schools; Mary Putnam Henck Intermediate; and Rim of the World and Mountain High Schools) will benefit from a new local school bond passing. Our goal is to address individual school needs while also striving to achieve equity among all school sites so ALL local public schools here on the mountain provide the same quality education.

Who makes the final decision on a local school bond?

The locally elected Rim of the World Unified School District Board of Education is the legal entity that has called for the bond measure election. Ultimately, Rim of the World Unified School District REGISTERED VOTERS will have the final say when they vote for or against the measure as absentee voters or at the polls on March 3.

Can second homeowners vote on the measure?

If a second homeowner is registered to vote in our community, they will be eligible to vote on this measure. If they are not registered to vote here, they won't be eligible to vote.

When will the work begin and how will projects be prioritized?

If the bond passes, the District will start with the most critical facilities needs, including urgent facility repairs and student safety and security upgrades. A complete schedule will be developed to ensure that projects are completed on time and within budget.

Will the District employ local contractors to complete the school improvements we need?

If the bond measure passes, the District has procedures in place for selecting vendors to complete the work. While it is not the only factor we evaluate when hiring vendors, we do put emphasis on trying to hire local contractors whenever possible.

How can we be assured that funds will be spent properly?

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

Where can I get more information?

For more information, please contact the Rim of the World Unified School District office at (909) 336-4100.