



Southern Kern Unified School District

Frequently Asked Questions

How are Southern Kern Unified School District schools doing?

Southern Kern Unified School District (SKUSD) has a history of success, with three of our four comprehensive schools receiving the California Department of Education's highest designation, the Gold Ribbon School Award. This year has seen state testing scores rise while chronic absenteeism and suspension rates have dropped. SKUSD maintains this standard of excellence by providing a safe and secure learning environment for all students to succeed.

What is the state of SKUSD classrooms and school facilities?

Some of the schools in Southern Kern were built nearly 60 years ago and need basic health and safety repairs. This includes removing hazardous materials, fixing leaking roofs and decaying walls, providing clean and safe drinking water, upgrading electrical systems, improving HVAC systems, and enhancing safety measures. Critical upgrades and improvements would maintain the safe learning environments that local students deserve.

Additionally, many of our technical and vocational education programs are in need of upgrades. Students who may not go to college need a career technical and vocational education that provides job training, technical knowledge, and specialized skills to compete for good-paying jobs.

How is student population growth impacting SKUSD?





Our area has been growing over the last few years as has enrollment in our local schools. As a result, many SKUSD schools are experiencing overcrowding. SKUSD is in need of a new elementary school to ensure we have enough classrooms and schools to accommodate our growing student population as well as prevent overcrowding at our current schools.

How does SKUSD plan to address the needs of local schools?

To address the needs of local schools, in July, the SKUSD Board of Trustees voted to place a \$60 million local school improvement bond measure on the November 2024 ballot.

Specifically, how would a local school improvement measure address needed upgrades & repairs?

If approved by voters, funding from the local school improvement measure will be used to:

-  Ensure safe, clean drinking water, remove asbestos and lead paint, repair leaky roofs, and address other urgent needs
-  Upgrade school safety and security
-  Upgrade science, technology, engineering, and math classrooms and labs
-  Reduce overcrowding in schools

Will all funds from the local school improvement measure benefit SKUSD schools only?

Yes. All funds generated by the local school improvement measure will stay local for our local SKUSD schools only and cannot not be taken away by the State.





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How do I know funds from the local school improvement measure will be used responsibly?

SKUSD has been a good steward of public funds and by law, the local school improvement measure will require accountability protections, including:

- ✓ By law, all funds remain under local control and may only support Southern Kern schools
- ✓ Independent citizen oversight and public reports of all spending is required
- ✓ No funds may be taken by the State

May funds from the local school improvement measure be used for administrator salaries & pensions?

No. By law, no funds from the local school improvement measure may be used for operating expenses, including administrator salaries and pensions.

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

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

How much would the local school improvement measure cost?

The local school improvement measure will provide \$60 million for repairs and upgrades to SKUSD schools and is estimated to cost 6 cents per every 100 dollars of a property's assessed (not market) value per year, while bonds are outstanding.

What is the difference between assessed value & 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 much 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 the local school improvement measure is based.

Are senior exemptions available?

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, older residents who have lived in their homes for a long time have the lowest assessed values and will pay the least toward the cost of a bond measure.

How can I learn more?

If you are interested in learning more about how the November 2024 local school improvement measure will help make improvements and repairs to SKUSD schools, please visit our website at www.SKUSD.k12.ca.us.

