

# **Black Oak Mine Unified School District**

## **Frequently Asked Questions Handout**

Although it appears that our schools are in good shape based on achievements by our students, our classrooms and facilities need significant repairs and improvements. Faced with aging classrooms and the need to bring school facilities up to current standards, the Black Oak Mine Unified School District is placing a general obligation bond measure on the March 3rd ballot that will modernize and renovate our local schools.

The following information is provided to assist voters in understanding the facts behind Measure H and how its passage will affect the District and our community.

### **What is Measure H?**

Measure H is a \$29.87 million general obligation (G.O.) bond program. This measure is intended to address the needs of the student population through modernization and renovation projects at the District's six schools.

### **What is a General Obligation (G.O.) bond?**

G.O. bonds fund projects such as the renovation of existing classrooms and school facilities, as well as construction of new schools and classrooms. Similar to a home loan, G.O. bonds are typically repaid over 25 to 30 years. The loan repayment comes from a tax on all taxable property - residential, commercial, agricultural and industrial - located within the District's boundaries.

### **Why did the District place Measure H on the ballot?**

Our schools are outdated, and major upgrades and renovations need to be made. While facilities have been well maintained, aging classrooms must be upgraded since many do not meet 21st century safety, education and technology standards. The average age of schools in the District is over 60 years with Georgetown School, our oldest, first built nearly 75 years ago. A local school improvement measure would allow the District to improve the quality of the school facilities and education provided to local students.

### **Why can't the District meet its facilities needs with its current budget?**

Today, the scope of improvements needed in the Black Oak Mine Unified School District are far more than the current funding sources available. The per-pupil funding which the District receives from the state is intended to be used for the day-to-day business of educating children and not the cost of upgrading, modernizing, and repairing facilities.

### **How did the District come up with the project list for Measure H?**

Over the last several months with input from staff, teachers, parents, and an architect, the District has prepared a School Facilities Needs Analysis. The Needs Analysis identifies the major repairs and upgrades that need to be made.

Specific types of projects identified include:

- Repairing or replacing leaky roofs
- Upgrading inadequate electrical systems
- Replacing deteriorating plumbing and sewer systems

- Modernizing outdated classrooms, restrooms and school facilities
- Repairing or replacing outdated heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems

**Has the School District passed a school improvement measure before?**

Yes. The District passed a measure nearly 14 years ago with 62.4% voter approval. Funds were used to upgrade and modernize some of the older classrooms in the District as well as construct new classrooms and facilities.

**What will the passage of Measure H mean for our students and the community?**

Measure H will provide our students with a better learning environment by making repairs and upgrades to existing classrooms and school facilities; many of which are also used and available to the community such as the libraries and playing fields.

**What will happen if Measure H does not pass?**

If Measure H does not pass, our classrooms and school facilities will continue to deteriorate. In addition, funds that would otherwise go to classroom instruction will be needed to make critical safety repairs and improvements at each school. Major repairs will need to be postponed and as a result will potentially be more expensive to make.

**Does the District qualify for state matching funds?**

Yes. If the state school bond measure is also approved by voters in 2020, the District's schools will be eligible to receive State matching funds for eligible Modernization Projects. For example, Northside School is eligible for approximately \$1.7 million for Modernization. As written, the state bond would provide 60% of additional matching funds. Of course, this requires the District to provide the remaining 40% - Measure H will provide this critical match. A 50% match is required for new construction projects. Again, Measure H will provide for this critical match and allow the District to maximize local funds, when combined with State funds.

**What will Measure H cost?**

The tax rate per property owner is estimated to be \$49 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation per year, or about \$4.00 per month. (Do not confuse assessed valuation with market value. Assessed valuations are the value placed on property by the County and are almost always lower than market values). Check your property tax statement for your current assessed valuation.

**How can I be sure that bond funds will be spent on improving our local schools?**

By law, all bond funds have to be spent locally and cannot be taken by the state. Furthermore, an independent citizens' oversight committee will be established to ensure that bond funds are properly spent. Also, by law, there must be annual audits and no bond money can be used for teacher or administrative salaries.