

COMMUNITY UPDATE



AN UPDATE FROM LOWELL JOINT SCHOOL DISTRICT

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE



Dear Neighbor,

As the school year has come to an end, I am consistently reminded of the honor it is to serve as Lowell Joint School District (LJSD) Superintendent. Our unwavering mission is to provide a strong academic program of well-rounded, diverse and innovative education opportunities to all students, expanding their learning beyond the walls of the classroom. We know that safe, happy, and healthy students are more likely to achieve academically, and we're proud of the high quality of education in LJSD schools.

Over the past few years, thanks to Measure LL, all of our schools received repairs and critical updates to the structural foundations of our schools. These improvements have included replacing deteriorating roofs, fire alarm systems, HVAC systems and associated electrical and plumbing; replacing aging portables with permanent modular classrooms at Jordan Elementary School as well as updating parking lot drop-off/pick-up zones to improve student safety and expanding ADA accessibility just to name a few.

While Phase I has already been completed – on time and on budget, there is more work to be done. Measure LL provided the necessary funding for the most urgent priority repairs and upgrades, but additional needs remain to meet current safety and academic standards in all of our schools.

Therefore, the LJSD Board of Trustees is exploring funding options to support Phase II upgrades to ensure our schools are up to date with safe and modern classrooms for our current and future students. Please read on to learn more details about our district facilities needs and the possible local funding option to address these needs. Thank you for your continued support of Lowell Joint schools and students.

In partnership,

Jim Coombs, Superintendent



We are proud of the excellent academic performance in our district schools, but some of our schools are in need of repairs and upgrades to meet modern academic and safety standards. In 2023, LJSD Board of Trustees approved a revised comprehensive Facilities Master Plan to determine priority repairs and improvements for our schools.

This plan is intended to be completed over the next five to ten years and includes projects such as replacing deteriorating portables with permanent modular classrooms, constructing new classrooms for the arts, upgrading science labs and classrooms for career technical instruction, renovating outdated facilities at older schools to maintain student safety and accessibility, and continuing to upgrade classroom technology to meet current learning standards.

NEXT STEPS TO SUPPORT STUDENT SAFETY AND 21ST-CENTURY EDUCATION

In order to continue the progress of our LJSD Bond Program, the LJSD Board of Trustees is considering placing a local school improvement bond measure on the November 2024 ballot that could generate up to \$54 million to repair and improve LJSD schools. The measure would cost about \$30 per \$100,000 of a property's assessed value (not market value) per year while bonds are outstanding, or about \$142 for the typical homeowner. A potential measure would:



Provide classrooms, facilities and technology needed to support high-quality instruction in math, science, engineering and technology, career technical education, and the performing arts



Improve student safety, campus security systems including fencing, cameras, emergency communications systems, smoke detectors, fire alarms and sprinklers



Improve access for students with disabilities



Create modern, multi-use classrooms to support hands-on science and career technical instruction



Replace aging portable classrooms with permanent modular classrooms that meet today's academic standards

CONTINUED MANDATORY FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

A school improvement bond measure requires mandatory fiscal accountability, including:

- ✓ An independent citizens' oversight committee, annual audits and a project list describing how funds will be used
- ✓ All money raised by the measure must be used in LJSD schools and could not be taken away by the State
- ✓ By law, no funds could be spent on administrators' salaries or benefits

UPCOMING MEETING

On June 17, 2024, the LJSD Board of Trustees will consider placing a school improvement bond measure on the November 2024 ballot.

DATE: Monday, June 17, 2024

Time: Open Session begins at 7:30pm

Location: 11019 Valley Home Avenue, Whittier



Lowell Joint School District
11019 Valley Home Ave
Whittier, CA 90603

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How are Lowell Joint School District (LJSD) schools doing?

Our schools are great! LJSD has provided our community with high-quality education since 1906 and currently serves over 3,100 Transitional Kindergarten (TK) – 8th grade students in six schools. All of our LJSD schools are California Distinguished Schools, Business Excellence Schools, and Rancho-Starbuck is a National Schools to Watch School. Lowell Joint ranks #11 in the entire State for reading acquisition. Our top scores in reading and math outperform the Los Angeles County, Orange County, and California State averages. Our highly qualified teachers provide rigorous academics including focus on ARTS for ALL, Dual Language Instruction, Young Engineers, and STEAM programs to help ensure our students have a well-rounded education.

Have improvements been made to LJSD schools in recent years?

Yes. In 2018, voters approved Measure LL to repair and upgrade LJSD schools. We've received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the community for these Phase I improvements, however there is more work to be done.

Is further work needed to repair and upgrade LJSD schools?

Yes. While Measure LL provided the necessary funding for the most urgent priority repairs and upgrades, additional needs remain including replacing deteriorating portables with permanent modular classrooms, constructing new classrooms for the arts, upgrading science labs and classrooms for career technical instruction, renovating outdated facilities at older schools to maintain student safety and accessibility, and continuing to upgrade classroom technology to meet current learning standards.

What is LJSD's plan to upgrade aging school facilities?

In 2023, LJSD completed a comprehensive Facilities Master Plan to prioritize facility needs for our schools. This plan is intended to be completed over the next five to ten years. In order to fund projects in the Master Facilities Plan, the LJSD Board of Trustees is considering placing a school improvement bond measure on the November 2024 ballot. This measure will fund school improvement projects identified in the Facilities Master Plan and would make the District eligible for up to \$15 million in state matching funds.

Is there any other way to maintain and improve our schools?

Our district has few options when it comes to funding necessary repairs and updates that our schools need. We can't rely on the State to complete these repairs and redirecting funds in the current budget would take resources out of our classroom and away from our students.

A school improvement bond measure would provide local funding to address the facilities needs at our schools. In addition, the potential measure would help our schools qualify for up to \$15 million in state matching funds if the measure were to pass – funds that would otherwise go to other school districts. Our district has, and will continue to, apply for funding from the State if and when it becomes available.

Lowell Joint Preschool ■ El Portal Elementary ■ Macy Elementary
Olita Elementary ■ Jordan Elementary ■ Meadow Green Elementary
Rancho-Starbuck Intermediate 🌟 www.ljbsd.org 📞 (562) 943-0211