

Measuring up

Measure TT would repair buildings and restore pride in local schools

By [Audry Durden](#) , [Peter Dreier](#) 10/30/2008

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A strong community needs good schools. That's why we support Measure TT, the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) facilities improvement bond for Pasadena, Altadena and Sierra Madre on Tuesday's ballot.

Most PUSD schools are more than 70 years old. These aging buildings need serious repair, renovation and modernization. Without a school bond, rising maintenance costs will eat into funds for classroom education.

While half of all PUSD schools were built before 1927, the community has passed just one school bond in over 40 years — fewer than any neighboring district. Even though our schools are much older, we have invested less to maintain our historic buildings than surrounding communities. Two years ago, for example, voters in the Arcadia school district, which is half the size of PUSD and has only one high school, passed a \$212 million school bond. PUSD is at the low end of tax rates in Los Angeles County and lower than all surrounding districts.

Our young people deserve schools that enhance their learning. Forcing children (and teachers) to work in rundown schools sends the message that we don't care about them.

Measure TT is needed to meet basic safety codes, expand computers in classrooms, make energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable repairs and upgrade classrooms, science labs and athletic facilities.

Measure TT, which will beautify our neighborhoods, increase property values and invest in our children, will also have immediate and long-term payoffs in terms of improving the business climate, expanding opportunities and reducing crime and social tensions.

So if you live, work or have a business in Pasadena, Sierra Madre or Altadena — even if you don't have children in the public schools — you have a stake in PUSD and in Measure TT.

At a cost of 31 cents a day for the typical homeowner, Measure TT is an investment we need to make in our kids and our community.

PUSD has been making steady progress, with improved test scores, exciting programs and growing support for public education from the wider community. In the year since he's been in charge of PUSD, Superintendent Edwin Diaz has tightened the district's budget oversight and recruited a top-notch new management team. We are confident that Superintendent Diaz, who oversaw a successful facilities improvement program in his prior position, has the experience to guarantee that Measure TT will be administered efficiently, equitably, on time and on budget.

Following dozens of public meetings and community forums, and with the help of parents, community leaders and two outside architectural planning firms, PUSD drafted a detailed plan for implementing Measure TT.

The plan can be viewed at pusd.us/fmp. Moreover, an independent oversight committee of local business and civic leaders will help PUSD carry out the plan and report regularly to the public on its progress.

Measure TT has been endorsed by a broad spectrum of civic leaders, community groups, clergy, business organizations, educators and others, including Democrats, Republicans and independents.

Supporters include the Pasadena-Foothill Association of Realtors, the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO), the West Pasadena Residents Association, the League of Women Voters, the Senior Advisory Council, the Ecumenical Council of Pasadena Area Churches, the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, the Parent Teachers Association (PTA), United Teachers of Pasadena, the Pasadena and Altadena chapters of the NAACP, the Latino Forum, the Pasadena Educational Foundation, the Pasadena Education Network, Teamsters Local 911, ACT, the Sierra Madre Chamber of Commerce and the Altadena Chamber of Commerce.

In addition, Measure TT has been endorsed by Pasadena Mayor Bill Bogaard and the Pasadena City Council, Pasadena Police Chief Bernard Melekian, the Sierra Madre City Council, the Pasadena City College Board of Trustees, Assemblymember Anthony Portantino, state Sen. Jack Scott, Marvin Schachter of California AARP, Richard Gray (President of La Salle High School), Debby Reed (head of Polytechnic School), John Higgins (headmaster of High Point Academy), Robert Nafie (headmaster of Clairbourn School), Doreen Oleson (head of Saint Mark's School), Jeanne Register (former head of Mayfield Senior School), Fran Scoble (former head of Westridge School), Matt Alio (director of Walden School), Josh Brody (director of Sequoyah School), John Finch (head of Chandler School), Rev. Ed Bacon, Rabbi Joshua Levine-Grater and many others.

To get the basic facts about Measure TT, please visit the Web site: YesOnTT.org

Measure TT is the last item on the ballot, but first in importance for our children.

We urge you to vote Yes Tuesday on Measure TT.

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