



**MURRAY CITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**
We Are Murray!



MCS D BOND MEASURE FAQs

The Murray City community thrives on strong schools that provide a solid education foundation for children. The Murray City School District (MCS D) will propose a general obligation bond measure to voters on the November 2024 ballot to rebuild Riverview Junior High School and add a classroom wing to Murray High School.

WHAT IS A GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND?

The State of Utah does not provide school districts with funding to build or upgrade schools. However, it does provide a mechanism, in the form of a bond process, for school districts and property owners to work together to construct and update schools. Voters must approve a general obligation bond referendum in a November general election.

HOW IS A BOND FUNDED?

A bond works much like a home mortgage. The school district sells bonds for building construction and improvements, and residents pay back a portion of the principal and interest every year through their property taxes until the bond is paid off.

HOW OFTEN DOES THE DISTRICT SEEK A BOND?

In the past 40 years, MCS D has only sought two general obligation bonds: a \$41,000,000 bond in 2012 to rebuild Hillcrest Junior High School and provide seismic upgrades to all schools and a \$29,500,000 bond in 2001 to rebuild Murray High School.

HOW LONG DO BONDS LAST?

General obligation bonds are typically scheduled to be paid out over twenty years. MCS D has refinanced or refunded bonds to get a better rate on outstanding debt, saving millions of taxpayer dollars.

REFUNDING BONDS

MCS D understands that responsible financial management of taxpayer funds is essential. As allowed, the district takes advantage of refinancing or refunding bonds at a lower interest rate, saving substantial money overall. Since 2002, the district has saved \$4,864,216 through refunding bonds. By proactively managing our debt, we ensure that our district remains fiscally responsible while continuing to invest in our students and their future.

WHAT CAN BONDS BE USED FOR?

Under Utah law, school districts can issue bonds to construct buildings, acquire property, and improve or extend facilities.

WHY DOES MCS D NEED A BOND?

To rebuild the aging Riverview Junior High School, add a classroom wing to Murray High School, and improve security at Murray High School.

HOW MUCH WILL THE BOND BE FOR?

The bond request of voters is \$125 million. Of that, \$90 million will be used to replace Riverview Junior High School, and \$35 million will be used to add a classroom wing and security improvements at Murray High School.

WHY BOND NOW?

Construction costs continue to rise and will likely stay on that trajectory, given the solid economic development along the Wasatch Front. Delaying construction will only increase the cost to taxpayers.

WHY DOES IT COST SO MUCH?

Currently, it is approximately \$500/square foot to build a school. Compare that to our last rebuild (Hillcrest Junior High School) in 2012, which cost roughly \$180/square foot to build.

HOW MUCH WILL THIS BOND RAISE MY TAXES?

Based on conservative projections, the property tax on an average home in Murray City (valued at \$538,400) will increase by approximately \$172/year or \$14.33/month. On a business, property taxes will increase by approximately \$313/year or \$26.08/month.

WHAT HAS THE DISTRICT DONE IN THE PAST TO SHOW WISE USE OF BOND FUNDS?

The school district has been very conservative in bonding for new school buildings and cautious in how it constructs its schools. Our building designs have been very practical in meeting the school community's needs for decades, and we try not to overbuild.

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CAN MURRAY CITY PROPERTY TAXPAYERS AFFORD THIS?

We understand the concerns about the cost to the taxpayer. MCS D has been exceptionally financially responsible with taxpayer funds. School district property taxes for Murray City School District are the second lowest in Salt Lake County.

| <u>School District</u> | <u>Property Tax Rates</u> |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Salt Lake School District | .003964 |
| Murray City School District | .004742 |
| Canyons School District | .005705 |
| Jordan School District | .005737 |
| Granite School District | .006353 |

Additionally, the district has a proven track record of responsible spending. The last two school rebuilds (Murray High School and Hillcrest Junior High School) were done with an eye on building sustainable buildings for 50-75 years. We will work with independent financial advisors to ensure efficient use of funds.

HASN'T MURRAY CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT RAISED TAXES EACH YEAR?

Murray City School District has not raised taxes since the 2019-2020 school year. Below are the tax increases for the school district for the past ten years.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Amount</u> | <u>Purpose</u> |
|-------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 2019-20 | \$2,868,226 | Teacher Salary |
| 2015-16 | \$607,198 | Instruction Coaches, Charter Replacement |
| 2014-15 | \$187,109 | Class Size Reduction |
| 2013-14 | \$560,000 | Retirement, Class Size Reduction, Salaries |

SPECIFICALLY, HOW WILL THE BOND MONEY BE USED?

Bond funds would be used for the following two projects:

- Replacement of Riverview Junior High School
- Additional classroom wing at Murray High School with modifications for a secure/safe main entrance.

HAS THE DISTRICT EXPLORED OTHER OPTIONS/MEANS OF SECURING FUNDS?

The district does not receive regular state funding to pay for new school buildings. A general obligation bond is the least expensive option for financing a significant project such as a new school building or school addition. Interest rates for general obligation bonds are lower than those for other financing options

WHY DOES RIVERVIEW JR. HIGH SCHOOL NEED TO BE REBUILT?

Our children deserve the best possible learning environment. That's why the proposed bond to rebuild our aging junior high isn't just about a building; it's about unlocking our students' full potential. Here is a closer look at the rationale for rebuilding Riverview Junior High School.

Safety First: The aging building has outdated wiring, leaky roofs, inadequate ventilation, and deteriorating plumbing. A new school would prioritize modern safety features and a healthy learning environment. Modern schools can also incorporate energy-efficient features like LED lighting, water efficiency, and the possibility of geothermal ground loop systems for heating and cooling.

Learning for the 21st Century: Classrooms today require flexible spaces for technology integration and collaboration. A rebuild would provide modern learning environments to equip our students with the skills they need to succeed, including updated classrooms and science labs, a centralized library, performing arts spaces, and a commons area for students to gather, fostering a more engaging learning experience for all students.

The new school can also be designed to address the specific needs of diverse learners, including dedicated spaces for special education programs, resource rooms with advanced technology, and a counseling center to ensure all students receive the support they need to thrive.

Fiscally Responsible Plan: Riverview Junior High School was built in 1960, with small additions in 1962, 1965, 1972, and 1992. In 2018, the district had an independent contractor assess each of our elementary school buildings and Riverview Junior High School for the following: school site, structure and mechanical systems, plant maintainability, school building safety and security, educational adequacy, and environment for education. All seven elementary schools ranked as satisfactory, while Riverview ranked as fair. That assessment also specified that making all the needed repairs to Riverview Junior High School would cost \$18 million (closer to \$32 million in today's construction dollars). Patching up an aging building is a constant drain on resources. A new school with energy-efficient features will require less maintenance, freeing up funds for educational programs, resources, and other school buildings in the district.

Investing in Our Community: The new Riverview Junior High School would be a source of pride for our community, showcase the community's commitment to quality education, and provide similar learning spaces to Hillcrest Junior High School.

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WHY DOES MURRAY HIGH SCHOOL NEED AN ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM WING AND MODIFICATIONS TO THE CURRENT MAIN OFFICE?

Murray High School has been a cornerstone of the Murray community for generations. When the high school was rebuilt in 2002, the design included the option to add an addition when needed. The Board of Education feels that the time is now. To ensure a quality education for all, we're proposing a new classroom wing be added specifically to allow space for our 9th graders to learn and earn high school credit in the high school setting. An additional classroom wing will also allow us to reconfigure the main entrance and build a secure vestibule to enhance school safety. Here is a closer look at the rationale for adding a new wing.

Safety First: Adding a classroom wing onto the high school will allow us to reconfigure the front entrance to provide a secure vestibule with a single-entry point for visitors to verify identification before granting access to the building. This additional layer of protection promotes a safer learning environment for all students and staff.

Learning for the 21st Century: Credit for high school graduation is earned starting in the 9th. Having all high school students housed in the same building and overseen and tracked by the same administrators and counselors will allow continuity as we focus on graduation for our students. The Utah Core Curriculum Standards are banded for grades 9-10 and 11-12. Having our 9th-grade students at Murray High School will allow them increased opportunities for elective courses and additional access to Utah High School Activities Association (UHSA A) extracurricular activities.

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR COMPLETING THESE BOND PROJECTS?

If the bond is passed in November 2024, both projects are anticipated to be completed for the 2027-2028 school year.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE BOND AND THESE PROJECTS?

MCS D will hold informational meetings and provide detailed information on the bond proposal, including projected costs and the impact on property taxes.

WHO CAN I ASK MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BOND?

Bond questions can be directed to any Board of Education member. Their contact information can be found on the school district website at:

murrayschools.org/murray-board-of-education/

You may also contact the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Business Administrator, or Director of Support Services.

WHEN IS THE ELECTION?

The general election is Tuesday, November 5, 2024. The Salt Lake County Elections Office will send mail-in ballots on October 15, 2024.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE BOND MEASURE FAILS?

If the November 2024 bond measure fails, the district will consider other financing options for the addition to Murray High School, which will be more expensive for the school district and taxpayers. Riverview Junior High School will remain in its current building, housing students in grades 6 – 8, and repairs will be made as district funds allow.

WHEN WILL THE ARCHITECTURAL PLANS FOR THE BUILDINGS BE AVAILABLE?

Architectural plans and elevations will be available to view in early August. These will be 'lite' plans that allow the public to see the elevations of the buildings and programmatic areas (teaching spaces, gyms, auditoriums, etc.) and plans for reconfiguring parking lots, play fields, etc. These 'lite' plans will continue to be worked on and refined until the passage of the general obligation bond.

