

'Yes' vote on Measure Q would improve schools

Approving bond measure now would not increase taxes.

Voters in the Fresno Unified School District have a chance to improve every school in the district without increasing their taxes. Because the district's special leasing tax of 1978 is expiring, a \$280 million bond measure on the Nov. 2 ballot won't raise the tax rate in the district.

We urge Fresno Unified voters to vote "yes" on Measure Q on the Nov. 2 ballot. It will take the approval of 55% of voters to pass the bond.

This is an investment in Fresno's future by improving school facilities in a coordinated way under the guidance of a facilities advisory committee that studied Fresno's schools.

Approval of the bond would allow Fresno Unified to leverage local funds with state funds, and also take advantage of relatively low construction costs because of the economy. A side benefit would be creating jobs in our community because of the construction.

The district plans to allocate \$79 million to elementary schools, \$46 million to middle schools and \$98 million to the high schools. Another \$12 million would go to career technical education facili-

ties and \$8 million for alternative/continuing education.

The district has been holding community meetings explaining how the funding would be allocated if Measure Q passes.

The bonds can only be used for facilities and cannot be spent on teacher/administrator salaries or other ongoing operational costs.

The ballot argument in favor of Measure Q says it will help prepare children for 21st century jobs by investing in vocational education classrooms, equipment and laboratories. It also will help replace the deteriorating portable classrooms that were supposed to be a temporary fix years ago.

Under state law, there are several accountability requirements to ensure that the bond money is spent in the way voters intended. That includes an independent citizens oversight committee, performance and financial audits, and an annual report on the bond money collected and how it was spent.

This bond measure is an important investment in our local schools. Fresno Unified voters should approve it on Nov. 2.

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