

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 30, 2022

Santa Barbara Unified sells \$53 million in bonds

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — On September 28, 2022, the Santa Barbara Unified School District sold its last two increments of bonds (Series C) for both Measures I and J for a total of \$53 million combined.

The first \$51.8 million were sold in a matter of the first two hours.

According to investors, they were buoyed by the district's Aa1 credit rating, recently announced by Moody's, "a global integrated risk assessment firm that utilizes data, analytical solutions and insights to help decision-makers identify opportunities and manage the risks of doing business with others."

In its report on Santa Barbara Unified, Moody's said:

"(The district) benefits from its designation as a community funded district coupled with a large and diverse economy that supports strong full value per capita. Additionally, the district's financial profile will continue to benefit from prudent fiscal practices and management's commitment to adopted reserve policies. The district's credit profile also considers solid resident income, an elevated long term liabilities ratio and above average fixed costs."

Moody's listed the following as credit strengths:

- Strong property wealth;
- Sustained strengthening of reserves;
- Strong general fund financial profile;
- Status as a community-funded district, insulating the district from variations in state funding.
- [For the full Moody's report on Santa Barbara Unified, click here.](#)

"While internally we have felt that we were on solid financial footing, to have an external agency validate our fiscal practices is not only reassuring for us, but also for the community that invests in us," said Dr. Hilda Maldonado, the district's superintendent.

"It speaks to our fiscally responsible tactics in both our day-to-day operations, as well as with our long-term planning. Our fiscal team is top-notch, and to see investors jump at the chance to buy bonds and help us finish our facilities projects around the district is exciting. We are grateful for their trust and investment."

It is rare for Santa Barbara Unified to sell bonds, which investors said was another key selling point for them.

Measures I and J were approved by voters in 2016, with \$193 million dedicated to the modernization of the district's facilities.

In 2016, the following commitments were made to aid elementary schools through Measure J, a \$58-million bond:

- Replacement of old portables with new permanent classrooms
- Repair outdated underground utilities – water, sewer, and natural gas
- Repair playground surfaces and outdoor paving
- Modernization of classroom lighting, windows, heating, and ventilation systems
- Repair old, leaky roofs
- Modernization of old bathrooms

Recently, the district held a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Monroe Elementary, where five new classrooms were unveiled, all constructed with Measure J funds.

In addition, Measure I, a \$135-million bond, identified the following improvements needed for junior and senior high schools:

- Replacement of old portables with new permanent classrooms
- Repair outdated underground utilities – water, sewer, and natural gas
- Improve site drainage to avoid flooding
- Repair/replace outdated and unsafe electrical equipment
- Repair of kitchen and cafeteria facilities to meet health code standards
- Fix classroom lighting, windows, heating, and air circulation systems
- Repair or replace old, leaky roofs
- Replacement of old junior high PE facilities

“The taxpayers have been central to addressing our growing needs to improve our facilities around the district, and we thank them for their continued support,” said Dr. Maldonado.

“We can't wait to see how these newly-funded bonds will impact our employees and our children.”