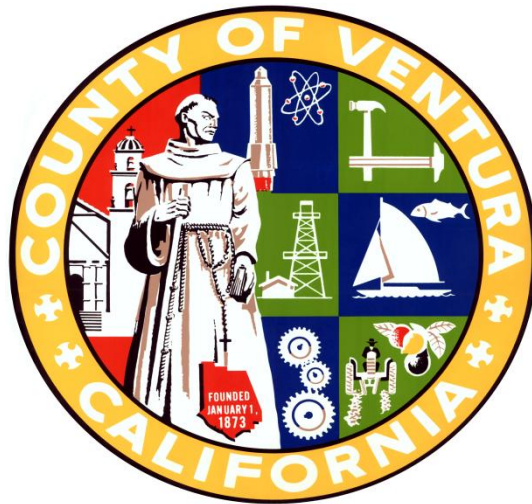


# **Ventura County Grand Jury 2012 - 2013**



## **Final Report**

### **Oxnard Union High School District and Measure H**

**June 28, 2013**

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## **Oxnard Union High School District and Measure H**

### **Summary**

The 2012-2013 Ventura County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) opened an investigation into the policies, procedures, and practices of the Oxnard Union High School District (District) and Measure H (Bond). In November, 2004, Measure H was approved by 62.7% of the District voters. This allowed the District to raise \$135 million in bond money to build two new high schools. Measure H, proposed by the District, called for “. . . new schools facilities toward reducing overcrowding and making upgrades to existing school facilities for health, safety and improvements of grounds and facilities.” It is important to note that Adolfo Camarillo High School attempted, unsuccessfully, to withdraw from the Oxnard Union High School District and merge with the Pleasant Valley Union School District in 2008. (Att-01)

Eight years later the District announced on March 16, 2012 that a new high school would be built in the City of Camarillo. This new school would be an Academy High School that could accommodate up to 700 students. “The proposed campus would have three academies focused on arts and media, design and engineering, and biomedical studies.” [Ref-12] Students from Camarillo and Somis could attend the school, which initially would be built for 700 students. District officials said, “...it would later expand to hold 2,250 students.” [Ref-12]

Some members of the community believe an Academy high school will not address the current overcrowded conditions in the District.

The District created a Bond Oversight Committee (BOC). The BOC reviews all expenditures for compliance with Proposition 39. To improve the methods of how best to spend Bond proceeds for the purposes approved by the voters the Grand Jury recommends that the BOC be used to review proposed expenditures of Bond monies for consistency with the language in Bond Measure H as approved by voters.

### **Background**

Three bond measures have been proposed to reduce or modify the District’s overcrowding issues. The District proposed bond measures in 1994, 1996 and 2004.

- The Bond as proposed by the District in November, 2004, is a \$135 million bond “. . . to repair and renovate every high school in the District, relieve student overcrowding by building and acquiring high schools and classrooms throughout the District and to become eligible for State matching funds.” The Bond was approved by 62.7% of the voters. [Ref-01, 02] (Att-02)
- Prior to the passage of the Bond in 2004, voters in the Pleasant Valley School District attempted to unify Adolfo Camarillo High School with the other schools in the City of Camarillo. If the voters had approved this unification, Adolfo Camarillo High School would leave the District and be

unified with Pleasant Valley School District. After several court cases, the attempt was defeated in 2008. In an effort to address the concerns of the citizens of Camarillo, the District stated that one school would be built in Camarillo and another in Oxnard. The proposed Bond language did not specify where the two schools would be built. [Ref-02-04]

- Two years after the defeat of the unification attempt, on October 19, 2010, the District rejected plans for a new Camarillo High School. The Board voted in favor of improving the existing high school. [Ref-06, 07]
- Recognizing the need for a high school in the City of Camarillo, the District purchased a 77-acre property next to the current City of Camarillo Library. The purchase of the property was approved in October, 2004. Actual transfer of title for the property occurred in January, 2005. After the passage of the Bond, a Bond Oversight Committee (BOC) was formed. The BOC met once in 2005 and failed to meet again until 2011. (Ref-04)
- In November, 2010, the District changed leadership and the new Board reversed past decisions and moved forward with building a new high school in the City of Camarillo. The first \$50 million in bonds was issued, and several months later, the BOC reconvened. [Ref-8-10]

The Grand Jury decided to examine methods used by the District for determining to use Bond monies to build the Camarillo Academy High School.

## **Methodology**

The Grand Jury investigation was conducted on the basis of interviews with public officials, contractors and concerned citizens of the District. Also, the Grand Jury reviewed District documents, City of Camarillo documents, consultant reports, and other documents. The Grand Jury also reviewed relevant newspaper articles from *The Acorn*, *Ventura County Star* and *The Los Angeles Times*, and conducted Internet searches.

## **Facts**

- FA-01.** In 1994, the District voters approved a \$45 million ballot measure to build a high school. [Ref-14]
- FA-02.** In November, 1996, the District voters approved a \$57 million Bond Measure Y to construct new classrooms, facilities and to reduce overcrowding. [Ref-01, 14]
- FA-03.** In November, 2004, the District proposed a \$135 million Bond Measure H. The Bond, as proposed by the District, stated the District's need for new school facilities toward reducing overcrowding and making upgrades to existing school facilities for health, safety and improvements of grounds and facilities. (Att-01, 02) [Ref-02-04, 06-12, 14]
- FA-04.** In October, 2004, the District bought property next to the new Camarillo Library. Actual transfer of title of the property occurred January, 2005, prior to issuance of bonds for Measure H. [Ref-03-04]

- FA-05.** The District, prior to the passage of the Bond, indicated in statements and flyers that one school would be built in Camarillo and another in Oxnard. Measure H did not specify where the two schools would be built. [Ref-02-09] (Att-01, 02)
- FA-06.** Flyers were provided in two formats. One flyer for Oxnard area voters indicated "Local high schools in Oxnard and Hueneme are overcrowded due to increasing numbers of students entering each year." There was no mention of a new high school for Camarillo. (Att-02)
- FA-07.** Another flyer for Camarillo area voters indicated "Measure H will add a new high school right here in Camarillo . . . Vote YES on Measure H to help Camarillo High School and add a new high school in our community." (Att-02)
- FA-08.** The Bond Measure H passed by 62.7% of the District voters. [Ref-05, 11]
- FA-09.** The BOC was established as required by Proposition 39. It met once in March, 2005, and did not meet again until March, 2011. District officials delayed issuing funds from the \$135 million in authorized bonds while the Camarillo school unification proposal was considered. [Ref-05-07]
- FA-10.** In 2008, Measure U was placed before the voters of the Oxnard Union High School District. This ballot measure called for Camarillo to separate from the District to form a unified school district with grades K-12. Measure U was defeated by the voters of the District. [Ref-02, 03, 05-07, 10]
- FA-11.** On October 19, 2010, the Board rejected plans for a new Camarillo High School. It voted in favor of improving the existing high school. [Ref-06-08]
- FA-12.** In 2011, after the election of new board members, the District reversed an earlier decision and agreed to build a new high school in the City of Camarillo. [Ref-07-12]
- FA-13.** On March 22, 2011, the BOC met for the second time regarding the requirements of Proposition 39. The BOC asked the Board for clarification and a response was received stating that the BOC was in compliance with Proposition 39. [Ref-11]
- FA-14.** District student enrollment was at 16,138 in 2004, when the Bond was passed by the voters of the District. Student enrollment peaked in the school year 2008 – 2009 to a total enrollment of 16,885. In the school year 2011 - 2012 enrollment was at 16,790, down 95 students. In 2004, the Board indicated that it was overcrowded to the equivalent of one comprehensive high school. [Ref-14]
- FA-15.** Adolfo Camarillo High School enrollment for the 2011 – 2012 school year is at 2,493, up from the 2004 enrollment of 2,378. This reflects an increase of 115 students. [Ref-14]

- FA-16.** Rio Mesa High School, which includes 400 to 500 Camarillo area students, had a total enrollment of 2,098 in the 2004 - 2005 school year. Student enrollment peaked at 2,305 in the 2008 - 2009 school year. In the school year 2011 - 2012 the student population was at 2,034, which is below the 2004 - 2005 school year. [Ref-12, 14]
- FA-17.** In 2012, the Initial Study by LSA Associates, Inc. for the District, identified the need for a new high school to serve the needs of the students from zip codes 93010, 93012, (all of Camarillo) and 93066 (Somis and Saticoy). The Initial Study stated the District could allow the students who currently attend Rio Mesa to attend the new high school in Camarillo. It would also allow other students from zip code 93066 to attend the new school. [Ref-12]

## **Findings**

- FI-01.** The District, due to growth in the Ventura area, proposed various bonds to update facilities from the years 1994, 1996 and 2004. (FA-01-08)
- FI-02.** The Bond was approved by 62.7% of the voters of the District. It called for \$135 million in bonds to be sold to update school facilities and to build two high schools in the District. (FA-03, 06-08)
- FI-03.** The Bond authorized " . . . new school facilities toward reducing overcrowding . . ." (FA-03-08) (Att-02)
- FI-04.** In numerous news articles, campaign flyers and interviews, the District indicated that one school would be built in Oxnard and another in Camarillo. However, these locations were not stated in any proposal put before the voters of the District. (FA-05-07, 10)
- FI-05.** The District delayed the sale of the bonds until Measure U, the unification measure for the Pleasant Valley School District, was resolved. This action resulted in 19% reduction in buying power of the approved bond money. [Ref-13]
- FI-06.** Measure U failed. However, the District continued to delay actions in relieving the overcrowded conditions. (FA-08, 11)
- FI-07.** The Adolfo Camarillo High School has more students enrolled than in 2004 and continues to be overcrowded. (FA-14-17)
- FI-08.** Rio Mesa High School is at capacity with an average of 2,034 students. (FA-15-17)
- FI-09.** Some community members believe that the current plan for the Academy High School in Camarillo does not fulfill the Bond's purpose because it would not alleviate the District's overcrowded conditions as much as a comprehensive high school would. (FA-14-17)
- FI-10.** The District did not meet the requirements of Proposition 39 in that the BOC must be formed within 60 days of the passage of the bond measure. If the District chose not to sell the bonds that does not relieve it of the

requirement of the BOC. It should also be noted that the BOC is required to provide oversight of the expenditures. These expenditures must be those included within specified bond measure, placed before the voters of the District. (FA-09, 12-13)

- FI-11.** The Initial Study and other District documents called for a school to include students in zip codes, 93010, 93012 and 93066. The report projected that 700 to 1,000 students could attend. In addition, the District can allow students enrolled at Frontier High School, who are eligible, to attend the new Camarillo High School. This would include an additional 100 to 200 students, which would increase the student enrollment to the same student enrollment as Rio Mesa High School. Overcrowded schools can then seek placement of students at Rio Mesa High School on a volunteer basis. (FA-13-17) [Ref-10 -13]

## **Recommendations**

- R-01.** The Grand Jury recommends that the District ensure the Bond Oversight Committee fulfill its obligation as required in Proposition 39.
- R-02.** The Grand Jury recommends that the District utilize the Bond Oversight Committee to review all proposed expenditures of Bond monies for consistency with the language in Bond Measure H, as approved by the voters.
- R-03.** The Grand Jury recommends that the District follow Proposition 39 requirements and adhere to Bond Measure H.

## **Responses**

### Responses Required From:

Board of Trustees, Oxnard Union High School District,  
(FI-01, FI-02, FI-03, FI-04, FI-05, FI-06, FI-07, FI-08, FI-09, FI-10, FI-11)  
(R-01, R-02, R-03)

### Responses Requested From:

Bond Oversight Committee  
(FI-09, FI-10) (R-01, R-02, R-03)

## **References**

- Ref-01.** "Voter's Guide." The Star. October 27, 1996.
- Ref-02.** Hutkin, Erinn. "Some unsure about school bond measure." Ventura County Star. October 4, 2004.
- Ref-03.** Wilson, Kathleen. "Oxnard Union Oks school site purchase." Camarillo Star. October 28, 2004. Pages B1, B2.

- Ref-04.** "Grant Deed." OTR to Oxnard Union High School District. January 4, 2005. Recorded, February 2, 2005.
- Ref-05.** Knight, Michelle. "Measure H oversight committee expected to regroup." Camarillo Acorn. September 24, 2010.
- Ref-06.** Hernandez, Marjorie. "New school OK'd for Oxnard but not Camarillo – No majority reached on district board vote." Ventura County Star. October 15, 2010.
- Ref-07.** Ventura County Star. "Bait-and-switch – on voters." Ventura County Star, Opinion. October 22, 2010.
- Ref-08.** Foxman, Adam. "In Camarillo, campus plans gain ground." Ventura County Star. March 16, 2012.
- Ref-09.** Soumakian, Gabe. "Soumakian: A sneak peek at the future." Ventura County Star. May 5, 2012.
- Ref-10.** "Editorial: New high school in Camarillo is a promise to keep." Ventura County Star. July 10, 2012.
- Ref-11.** Measure H Bond Oversight Committee, Minutes of the Initial Meeting. March 22, 2011.  
[http://www.ouhsd.k12.ca.us/business\\_services/schoolbond/minutes/2011/03.22.11.pdf](http://www.ouhsd.k12.ca.us/business_services/schoolbond/minutes/2011/03.22.11.pdf)
- Ref-12.** LSA Associate. "Initial Study." 2012.  
[http://www.ouhsd.k12.ca.us/business\\_services/schoolbond/docs/study.pdf](http://www.ouhsd.k12.ca.us/business_services/schoolbond/docs/study.pdf)
- Ref-13.** The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. "What is a dollar worth?"  
<http://www.minneapolisfed.org/>
- Ref-14.** Ed Data, Fiscal, Demographic, and Performance Data on California's K-12 Schools. [http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/App\\_Resx/EdDataClassic/fsTwoPanel.aspx?#!bottom=/layouts/EdDataClassic/profile.asp?reportNumber=16&level=06&fyr=1011&county=56&district=72546](http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/App_Resx/EdDataClassic/fsTwoPanel.aspx?#!bottom=/layouts/EdDataClassic/profile.asp?reportNumber=16&level=06&fyr=1011&county=56&district=72546)
- Ref-15.** Measure H Citizen Bond Oversight Committee. Annual Report for 2012. Approved for Submittal. February 4, 2013.  
[http://www.ouhsd.k12.ca.us/business\\_services/schoolbond/docs/report-2012.pdf](http://www.ouhsd.k12.ca.us/business_services/schoolbond/docs/report-2012.pdf)

## **Attachments**

- Att-01.** Ballot Measure H, as proposed by the District.
- Att-02.** Paid Political Advertisement. "Camarillo Voters are being Duped." Oxnard Press Courier. October 29, 2004. Page 23.



## **Disclaimer**

This report is issued by the 2012-2013 Ventura County Grand Jury. Due to a potential conflict of interest, a member of this Grand Jury was excused from participating in any aspect of the production of this report.

## **Glossary**

**TERM****DEFINITION**

BOC

Bond Oversight Committee

Bond

Bond Measure H

Comprehensive high  
schoolthe most common form of public high school,  
meant to serve the needs of all students

District

Oxnard Union High School District

Grand Jury

2012-2013 Ventura County Grand Jury

## **Attachment 01**

### **Ballot Measure H as proposed by the District**

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## EXHIBIT A

BALLOT MEASURE  
FULL TEXT OF MEASURELIST OF SCHOOL FACILITIES PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED  
WITH PROCEEDS OF BONDS

The Governing Board of Oxnard Union High School District has evaluated the district's need for new school facilities toward reducing overcrowding and making upgrades to existing school facilities for health, safety and improvement of grounds and facilities.

## RENOVATION, UPGRADE AND MAJOR REPAIR OF EXISTING FACILITIES

Project costs for renovation upgrade and major repair of existing school facilities may include, but is not limited to, the following: repair and replacement of lighting and electrical systems; heating, air and ventilation systems; flooring, roofs, windows, wall systems; plumbing, painting, fixtures and accessories, communication, bell and fire alarm systems, security systems, fencing, site improvements; walkways, parking lots, landscaping, athletic facilities and the addition of handicap accessibility improvements to ancillary facilities.	
<b>Oxnard High School:</b> Plumbing, electrical, mechanical systems and school facilities repairs and grounds improvements. Campus security, safety, technology and accessibility projects.	<b>Channel Islands High School:</b> Plumbing, electrical, mechanical systems and school facilities repairs and grounds improvements. Campus security, safety, technology and accessibility projects.
<b>Adolfo Camarillo High School:</b> Plumbing, electrical, mechanical systems and school facilities repairs and grounds improvements. Campus security, safety, technology and accessibility projects.	<b>Rio Mesa High School:</b> Plumbing, electrical, mechanical systems and school facilities repairs and grounds improvements. Campus security, safety, technology and accessibility projects.
<b>Hueneme High School:</b> Plumbing, electrical, mechanical systems and school facilities repairs and grounds improvements. Campus security, safety, technology and accessibility projects.	<b>Pacifica High School:</b> Plumbing, electrical, mechanical systems and school facilities repairs and grounds improvements. Campus security, safety, technology and accessibility projects.
<b>Frontier High School:</b> Relocation of facility or renovation of plumbing, electrical, mechanical systems and school facilities repairs and grounds improvements. Campus security, safety, technology and accessibility projects.	<b>Pacific View High School:</b> Plumbing, electrical, mechanical systems and school facilities repairs and grounds improvements. Campus security, safety, technology and accessibility projects.
<b>Puente High School:</b> Plumbing, electrical, mechanical systems and school facilities repairs and grounds improvements. Campus security, safety, technology and accessibility projects.	<b>District Office and other:</b> Construction related to student growth and increased state testing and reporting requirements.
<b>Transportation Facilities:</b> Garage expansion and construction, parking lot expansion and repair, plumbing, painting, flooring, lighting, fencing, electrical, security and communications.	

**CONSTRUCTION OF NEW SCHOOL FACILITIES**

Project costs for the construction of new schools may include, but not be limited to, site acquisition, architectural design, engineering, site improvements, inspection and testing services, plan review fees and interim financing, furniture and equipment, science and technology.

**High School #1:** District wide student enrollments currently exceed student capacity of existing facilities by an amount equal to one comprehensive high school. District will immediately begin process to add one high school.

**High School #2:** Begin process to build high school #2 when student enrollment exceeds existing capacity by an amount sufficient to justify the construction of an additional school facility.

The project list assumes state matching funding from current and/or future statewide bond measures. Oxnard Union High School District will aggressively pursue state funding and other types of funding to maximize funding for projects on this list. Bond funds cannot be used for administrative salaries.

## **Attachment 02**

**Paid Political Advertisement. "Camarillo Voters are being Duped"**

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Friday, Oct. 29, 2004 C • The Star

Paid Political Advertisement Paid Political Advertisement Paid Political Advertisement

# Camarillo Voters are being **DUPED!**

**Measure H Supporters & Oxnard Union High School District**  
are sending out **SEPARATE MAILINGS**  
to Camarillo and Oxnard/Hueneme voters...  
making **CONTRADICTING PROMISES** they can't keep!

**OXNARD VERSION:**  
NO mention of a new  
high school for  
Camarillo!

**CAMARILLO VERSION:**  
Misleading promises of  
a Camarillo high school!

**LOOK CLOSER**

**What YOU need to know about Measure H:**

- The OUHSD Board of Trustees has never voted to build a new high school in Camarillo.
- Actual language in the measure does NOT earmark funds for a Camarillo High School.
- Oxnard residents are being led to believe they'll be getting 2 new high schools.
- The measure will cost Camarillo tax payers over \$50 Million**
- The passage of the measure will further financially commit Camarillo to Oxnard Union High School District.
- This measure is supported by those who OPPOSE unification.**
- This measure is opposed by those who SUPPORT fiscal responsibility.**

**Keep Camarillo Bond Money in Camarillo, NOT OXNARD**

# NO on H