



ORANGE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Education Center

1401 North Handy Street • Orange, CA 92867-4334

714.628.4000 • 714.628.4046 (Fax)

www.orangeusd.org

January 2014

Dear Parents and Community Members,

It is an exciting time at Orange Unified School District. We are starting to develop plans to upgrade aging classrooms, science labs and school facilities at each of our four comprehensive high schools: Canyon, El Modena, Villa Park and Orange. Each of these schools is working with an architectural firm to identify urgent needs and opportunities for improvement.

By utilizing state facility funding programs and other creative sources, we've managed to upgrade five of our elementary schools and two middle schools. Unfortunately, there are no more funds available to continue the upgrades and our aging high schools have significant needs. In fact, recent professional engineering assessments indicate that just basic building and infrastructure improvements at our high schools will cost approximately \$200 million. Moreover, this amount could grow to over \$270 million in ten years as the problems grow increasingly worse and construction costs escalate. In other words: We must act now to keep our students safe and keep costs under control.

Even our newest high school, Canyon, is over 40 years old. It needs extensive plumbing and electrical upgrades; earthquake safety and campus security upgrades; and improved access for students with disabilities. The problems at our oldest high school, 60-year-old Orange High, are even more extensive and urgent. In addition to basic upgrades needed to make each of our four high schools safe and functional, the outdated science labs and classroom technology make it difficult for our teachers to deliver a modern curriculum and prepare students for college and a demanding job market. We must promote our schools to a level of excellence that our students and community demand and deserve.

For years, our maintenance staff has done their best to keep our aging facilities functional. However, the facility needs today are greater than simple maintenance. Our high schools are due for improvements that will allow them to serve another generation of students. Unfortunately, the State of California does not provide school districts with the funding needed to keep up with basic building code changes, let alone the upgrades necessary to create a 21st Century learning environment.

Community input throughout this process is essential and your opinions are important. Please complete and return the attached survey ranking your facility modernization priorities. You may also complete the survey online at www.orangeusd.org/facilities/survey.

Thank you in advance for your time and input. Together we will ensure that our amazing teachers and students have the safe, modern campus facilities, classrooms and science labs needed for a high-quality education.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Christensen
Superintendent