

Small School Districts Project Fund Request and Need Statement



1 - GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

Request Type:

☒ New Construction

☐ Renovation/Remodel

☐ Addition

☒ Elementary

☐ Middle School

☐ High School

☐ Other

LEA/District:

Piute County School District

School or Project Name:

Circleville & Oscarson Elementary School Replacement

2 - PROJECT SCOPE

Total Project Space (Gross Square Feet) 46,000 (30,000 CES - 16,000 OES)

New Space Constructed (GSF) 46,000 (30,000 CES - 16,000 OES)

Remodeled Space (GSF) 0

Space to be Demolished (GSF) 41,500 (23,500 CES - 18,000 OES)

Types of Space (describe the types and amounts of space proposed to meet the programmatic requirements)

The PK-6 elementary schools in Circleville Utah and Marysville Utah would be demolished. A new PK-6 elementary school (30,000 sq ft) would be constructed in Circleville Utah and Marysville Utah on the same lots. Both lots are large enough that construction would not interfere with school operations. Piute County School District would also pursue consolidating Antimony Elementary School with the new elementary in Circleville. Garfield County School District has expressed interest in consolidating that school with Circleville Elementary.

3 - CAPITAL FUNDING

Preliminary Cost Estimate: \$23,000,000 (\$8m OES - \$15m CES)

Previous State Funding: \$0

(Funding previously provided for the project such as planning, land purchase, etc.)

Other Sources of Funding: \$5,000,000 Revenue Bonds

(Other sources of funding such as donations, federal grants, institutional funds, etc.)

Total Requested Funding: \$18,000,000

LEA Capital Local Levy for Most Recent Fiscal Year

0.000039

Capital levy would be raised to 0.00225 for 2024 tax year to fund revenue bonds

Is the Funding in-hand?

No

Debt Repayment Source

Capital Levy

Depending on interest rates with revenue bonds, the full capital levy may not cover the full cost of the revenue bonds. In that case, a portion of voted levy revenue would also be used to cover debt payments.

4 - EXISTING FACILITY

Existing Space (square feet) Currently Occupied

51,000 (23,500 CES - 18,000 OES - 9,500 AES including detached gym)

4.1 Description of the current space (Include programmatic uses: Size, age, condition, etc.)

Circleville Elementary School sits on a 8 acre lot in the center of Circleville Town. About one third of the lot is taken by a softball/little league field. The school opened in 1968, 16 months after the old Circleville Elementary School burned down. Due to the sudden destruction of the old building, the school had to be rebuilt quickly and cheaply. Part of the reason it had to be built cheaply was that the school district had maxed out bonding capacity in 1961 with the construction of Piute High School and Oscarson Elementary School. The original design had no walls in the instructional portion of the building. The design was supposed to be innovative, but never worked out very well. Through multiple small renovations the octagon shaped classroom portion of the building was divided into 6 classrooms that are very uniquely shaped. Oscarson Elementary School: The school sits on a roughly 5 acre lot in the center of Marysvale Town. The school opened in 1961 and was built on the same lot as the old Marysvale High School. A new merged high school opened in Junction the same year. The school is just over 18,000 square feet. The community banded together to build a gymnasium for the school in 1975. Several small renovations have taken place over the years. Antimony Elementary School was built around 2008. The school uses portions of the town community center located directly in front of the school.

4.2 Why is the existing facility not able to meet your needs?

The Circleville and Marysvale elementary schools were built prior to the development of most modern teaching practices and building codes. In terms of safety, the schools do not have a fire suppression system, they do have some asbestos, and they were not built with considerations for current seismic standards. It is believed there is some unreinforced masonry, but that has not been confirmed. While parts of the electrical, mechanical, and plumbing infrastructure have been replaced, much is very out dated and could pose some risk. The building was not designed for the technology of life safety communications systems. Neither elementary school has proper drop off or pick up lanes around the building. In terms of educational efficiency the buildings leave much more to be desired. The CES library is an office space not large enough to hold the school's books and the OES library is on the stage. Neither of these schools were built with Special Education or Migrant Education in mind. The individual and small group Special Education services are provided in a triangle shaped 50 square foot closet in CES and an old hallway in OES. Migrant educational services are provided in a similarly sized storage space without a window. While it is inspiring how effectively our teachers have made the spaces available to them work for the needs of our students, there is a significant need for a more modern design.

4.3 What is the proposed use or disposition of the existing facility if your request is funded?

As part of this project the existing Circleville Elementary and Oscarson Elementary facilities would be demolished. The fate of the old Antimony Elementary School would be determined by Garfield County School District. The existing facilities would not be abandoned until the new schools are constructed. The space on the current lots is believed to be big enough that educational services would not be disrupted or need any special adaptations for construction.

4.4 Describe the future use of the existing facility. Include functions to be served, costs of remodeling or expansions as well as the amount of deferred maintenance and code compliance that will need to take place in the existing facility to enable it for continued use.

The existing facilities would be demolished with no renovations or expansions. Playgrounds and fields would be preserved for continued use as much as is practical. The future use of Antimony Elementary School would be determined by Garfield County School District. Should this application be approved, the school boards of the two districts would draft an agreement for educational services for Antimony students. That agreement would most likely include Garfield County School District determining the future use of the vacated building.

5.1 Describe the scope of the project.

The project involves building two new elementary schools on the same lots as the existing buildings, then demolishing the old Circleville Elementary School and Oscarson Elementary School. The new elementary school in Circleville would be built on the same lot but facing west rather than east. The new building would at least partially cover a field currently used as the high school softball field and little league field. The new elementary school in Marysvale would be built on the playing field west of the current building. As both schools have alternative playing fields, it is not anticipated that construction would interrupt educational services.

5.2 Explain how this project eliminates risks to student life and safety through renewal or replacement.

This project would first eliminate the natural safety risks that come with buildings aged beyond their depreciated value. Two buildings without life safety communications systems, without fire suppression systems, without considerations for seismic hazards, without proper ADA access, and with long out dated infrastructure would be replaced with new buildings that include modern school safety systems and designs. The new buildings would include proper student drop off and pick up points. The new buildings would include a single public entryway.

Currently student restrooms are not ADA accessible and this has been an issue at times. The narrow walkways and stalls are barely wider than an adults shoulders in places. Oscarson Elementary only has one set of very small restrooms and this creates a situation where teachers and students use the same restroom. While the school has made protocols to prevent this from causing problems, it is uncomfortable for students and staff. A new school would have a faculty and staff restroom to eliminate these potential risks.

The Oscarson Elementary gym was built as a community service project and some of its design is questionable. It may have unreinforced masonry. There have been structural concerns with this part of the building in the past.

Currently neither elementary school has a space for school nurse services. Students that are sick at school typically have to wait for a parent to pick them up in their classroom. New schools could include a school nurse station to help reduce this risk of holding sick students in class with healthy students.

- 5.3 Explain how this project addresses essential program growth and capacity. Estimate any increases in program capacity that will result if this request is funded.

Recently a family decided against enrolling their student at Circleville Elementary School due to a lack of proper Special Education facilities. This project would allow the school district to provide modern Special Education services and Migrant Education services in a standard classroom setting.

Antimony Elementary School is not at its lowest enrollment point currently, but its enrollment can vary significantly from year to year. This makes the building very difficult to staff properly. Consolidating with Circleville Elementary will grant these students access to a grade level specific teacher and several educational services that are either very limited or nonexistent currently; services such as preschool, Special Education, Migrant Education, Music and Art programs, counseling services, etc. The addition of the Antimony students to Circleville would also benefit Circleville Elementary students as most grades need just a few more students to be the optimal class size.

Currently Piute County School District is one of only a few school districts that do not have enough economies of scale to have a self sustaining food services program. The school district has to cover nearly 30% of food services expenses with general fund revenues, because not enough revenue is generated in the food services program. That is the case even without any full-time food services staff. One of the significant efficiencies of this project would be building a larger kitchen in one school that would provide meals for all district schools. The district would consolidate from three kitchens to one. It is believed this would improve the operations and efficiency of the district food services program.

The district would plan for the new building to potentially host Oscarson Elementary and Antimony Elementary if their numbers continue to suggest the schools should be consolidated. If those smaller elementary schools were combined there would be many potential efficiencies. Currently the three elementary schools require many part-time positions for services that would be easier to provide in a single location. Currently employees that provide elementary art instruction, elementary music instruction, and speech services travel between buildings.

- 5.4 Summarize your decision-making process that has led to this project request (e.g., construction of a new facility versus remodeling an existing building or a combination of build new and remodel existing). Explain how it provides a cost effective solution that is appropriate for the facility need.

Background: In 1961 Piute County consolidated the two high schools to one high school in Junction. Around the same time elementary schools were consolidated to one in Marysville and one in Circleville. The three schools allow most county residents quick access to at least one of the schools. Those schools are used as community centers for many events. As an example, Circleville Town just held their town Thanksgiving Dinner at Circleville Elementary and the Marysville Halloween Carnival was at their elementary. For this reason and others there is a deep love of having the small schools in these communities.

Piute County School District selected KMA Architects to conduct an evaluation of school buildings in June 2023. KMA felt that it would not be cost effective to do any type of full-scale remodel of buildings built in the 1960's due to the extensive work that would be required to bring the buildings up to modern building standards. Circleville Elementary has maintained enrollment numbers much more consistently than Oscarson Elementary. The options were narrowed to building a combined elementary school in Junction or building a new Circleville Elementary in Circleville. The idea was that Circleville Elementary would be rebuilt first and Oscarson Elementary would come later. On August 31st the school board passed a resolution to put the prioritized plan of combining the elementary schools in Junction on the November ballot. At the election on Tuesday November 21st, that bond failed.

Through the process of conducting public meetings for the bond election it became clear that if the consolidation plan failed, both elementary school communities would believe their elementary was a higher priority to be replaced. The school district now believes the best way to get community support for reconstructing the two elementary schools is to do the two projects as close together as possible. Piute County School District does not have any full-time maintenance staff and no staff that are experienced in construction. As the school district will need outside support for any construction project, the school district believes that there could be significant savings in rebuilding both elementary schools together.

During the bond election process the possibility of consolidating Antimony Elementary with Circleville Elementary became stronger. Both school districts have an interest in the idea and a new school would make that consolidation more likely to happen.

- 5.5 Explain how this request comports with the school district's provision of matching funds and sufficient revenues for ongoing operation and maintenance.

Piute County School District would meet the match for this grant by raising the Capital Levy from its current .000039 to .00225. This would qualify the school district for the 4:1 matching grant. The school district would use the revenue generated from the tax increase to pay for the revenue bonds needed for the local match. This increase would be an 80% tax increase in the four levies controlled by the school board (Board Levy, Voted Levy, Debt Levy, and Capital Levy). The school district can cut that tax increase to 47% by paying the remaining three years of payments on the high school bond from other sources and doing away with the debt service levy. It will be a huge local sacrifice and a very significant tax increase no matter how it's structured.

It is expected that with a more efficient and modern building design the ongoing maintenance cost of the new buildings would be less than the current buildings.

- 5.6 How would this facility benefit the District and enhance efficiency of use; including combining necessarily existent schools.

1. Energy Efficiency: The new schools would incorporate energy-efficient technologies, reducing utility costs and maintenance expense.
2. Enhanced Learning Environment: The new schools designs would include more flexible learning spaces, better acoustics, and improved lighting, creating a more conducive environment for learning.
3. Enhanced Support Services: The efficiencies of additional space would be a significant positive impact on Special Education, Migrant Education services, and School Meals services as described in question 5.2.
4. Access to Technology: The new schools would be equipped with up-to-date technology infrastructure, promoting digital literacy and providing students with access to more efficient educational tools and resources.
5. Community Use: As educational needs have changed since the 1960's, so have community needs. Piute County has a very unique way of providing extensive public access to schools. The district wants the community to use the schools as much as possible, but the school district also wants that use to be as safe and effective as possible. A new design could make community uses of the buildings more efficient and allow for safer access with more programmable access points.
6. Adaptation to Modern Teaching Methods: The new school would be designed to support more modern teaching methods, such as project-based learning, STEM education, and collaborative learning.

The district would plan for the new Circleville building to host Antimony Elementary. Combining smaller elementary schools has many potential efficiencies such as those below...

1. More efficient classrooms: no combined grade level classrooms. Likewise for special education services and Tier II and Tier III educational services. Small group instruction frequently becomes one-on-one instruction in each school, small groups would be more efficient in a combined school.
2. More efficient teachers: no significant travel time between schools for teachers that currently travel to each elementary. Proximity to the high school also provides options for more shared teacher services between schools.
3. More efficient educational programming and services: there would be no more time coordinating curriculums, supplies, PLC's, registrations, reporting, events, or other school operations between two schools.
4. More efficient food services: The district would consolidate from maintaining three kitchens to one that provides food for the elementary schools and the high school.

- 5.7 (Optional:) Additional information for consideration.

Piute County is Utah's poorest county by median household income. There are few middle to high income employment opportunities in the county. Only a small portion of the land in Piute County is taxable and even Wayne County collects \$3 to \$1 in Piute County for a single tax increment. In 2010 Piute County School District raised school related property taxes 87% to do a remodel and rebuild of Piute High School. That extraordinary tax sacrifice by the community at the most opportune time possible (as far as building costs) only replaced 40% of the square footage of the building. Piute County School District does not have the local fundraising ability to build a completely new building and hasn't built a completely new building since 1967. With two new elementary schools, this grant could buy Piute County several decades without a significant new building project.

Raising the Capital Levy from where it is to 0.00225 would be a more than 52% increase in total school related property taxes (Including Basic and Charter Levies). Raising 5 million locally may seem like a small local effort, but it is actually an enormous local sacrifice for our county.