

Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District



Building Futures

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Spring 2025

Malibu Schools

Building Futures: Powering Malibu Schools for a Reliable Tomorrow

During the 2024–25 school year, Malibu schools faced increasingly unreliable electrical power. In past years, outages were infrequent and brief, but this year, up to five days of potential school instruction were lost due to power disruptions. This situation has highlighted a growing need for reliable alternative power solutions to ensure educational continuity and student safety.



Understanding the Issue

Power outages in Malibu fall into two main categories, each with distinct impacts and needs:

Immediate Power Outages:

These occur without warning and are typically short-term, often happening during school hours. In these cases, critical systems must remain functional, including:

- Communication with District offices and emergency services
- Fire alarm systems
- Campus communication (phones, public announcement systems, bells/clocks)
- Emergency lighting

Additional, but non-critical, systems include:

- Heating, Ventilation systems (excluding air conditioning)
- Kitchen equipment
- Internet and other low-voltage infrastructure

Extended Power Outages:



Often initiated by Southern California Edison's Public Safety Power Shutoff events, these can last a full day or longer and may be linked to wildfires, storms, or infrastructure damage. In these cases, the school requires full operational capacity, excluding only air conditioning, to safely open and serve students.

Short-Term Solutions Underway

To respond quickly and maintain operations during outages, the District has initiated several efforts:

Battery Backup for Immediate Outages:

Facilities and education technology departments are collaborating on a temporary battery pack solution to support critical systems during unexpected outages.



Generators for Extended Outages

To address extended outages, the District is implementing a temporary generator solution:

Quick-Connect Infrastructure Installation:

Under the Palisades Fire/Weather Emergency Action Plan, the District is contracting with Schneider Electric to install quick connect/docking stations at Malibu middle and high schools, Webster and Malibu elementary schools. This will allow generators to be rapidly connected without the need for high-voltage electricians.



Installation Timeline:

- Final Design & Contract: April 2025
- Procurement: May 2025
- Installation: July 2025
- Commissioning: August 2025

Total Cost: \$662,128 (funded by Measure MM)

On-Call Generator Vendor Contract

A Request for Proposals (RFP) is being developed to secure a vendor who can provide 24-hour delivery of generators in the event of an outage. The contract will include delivery, connection, maintenance, and refueling services.

- **Funding:** General fund (cost determined per event)

Long-Term Solutions in Progress

Thanks to voter-approved Measure MM funding, the District is designing permanent alternative power systems for all Malibu campuses. An RFP has been issued to hire a design-build firm, with proposals due soon. Once selected, this firm will develop customized solutions for each school site.



Webster and Malibu Elementary Schools:

A hybrid system is being explored, likely to include:

- **Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Systems**

- Webster already has a PV system under a Power Purchase Agreement that supplies 95% of its peak daily demand.
- MES generates 55% of its peak demand via solar.
- The District may renegotiate or purchase these systems for greater control during outages.

- **Battery Backup**

Designed to power school operations (excluding A/C) for a full day.

- **Supplemental Generators**

Used when solar and battery power are insufficient. The type (diesel, natural gas, etc.) and whether portable or permanent will be determined during the design process.

Malibu Middle and High School

The campus will be equipped with an integrated system including:

- **Multiple PV Systems**

- 118 kW on Building AB (existing)
- 382 kW on the new high school building
- A new PV system for the middle school gym
- A planned 534 kW solar farm on the slope near the football field, fully approved and part of the CEQA Environmental Impact Review

- **Battery Energy Storage System**

Will connect all PV systems, allowing full campus operations during outages and reducing electricity costs through peak shaving.

- **Supplemental Generator**

To be used when solar and battery systems can't meet demand. The type and installation plan will be developed by the selected firm.

Goal: Full system operation by fall 2026

- **Funding:** Measure MM

Looking Ahead

These layered solutions, immediate, short-term, and long-term are being pursued with urgency and purpose. Our goal is to provide safe, uninterrupted learning for Malibu students, regardless of weather, wildfires, or infrastructure issues, as long as otherwise safe to do so.



With the community's continued support and the critical funding from Measure MM, we are building a future where reliable power is one less thing our students and staff have to worry about.



