

130 Utah schools are **vulnerable**, but we can help these schools become **safer**

UTAH'S EARTHQUAKE RISK

There is greater than a 43% chance of a magnitude (M) 6.75-7.6 earthquake on the Wasatch Fault in the next 50 years — essentially a coin toss. A M7.0 earthquake would release **90 times the energy** of the 2020 Magna earthquake and would be among the **deadliest disasters in US history**.



URM BUILDINGS AND RISKS

Unreinforced masonry (URM) buildings in Utah pose a grave threat, especially in schools, where at least **72,000 children are at risk**. While URM construction ended in 1976, a 2022 inventory identified around 130 remaining school campuses with URM buildings, impacting 12% of K-12 public school students across 20 counties and 30 school districts.



A POTENTIAL CATASTROPHE

The 2020 Magna earthquake caused significant damage to Westlake Junior High School, a partial URM, necessitating a \$60 million replacement. Students and staff would likely have been injured or killed if the COVID-19 pandemic had not caused the school to be closed that day.



IS YOUR SCHOOL A URM?
SCAN TO FIND OUT.



West Lake STEM Junior High after the Magna earthquake in 2020. (Photo provided by Salt Lake Tribune)

IMPROVING STUDENT SAFETY AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

The Utah Seismic Safety Commission strongly recommends \$4 million to be allocated to evaluate retrofitting or replacing all 130 URM school campuses.

Addressing URM school vulnerabilities is not just about protecting students and staff but is also crucial for swift recovery after a disaster. Functioning school buildings often serve as emergency shelters in the days and weeks after a disaster. And communities can't return to normal until students are back in the classroom.

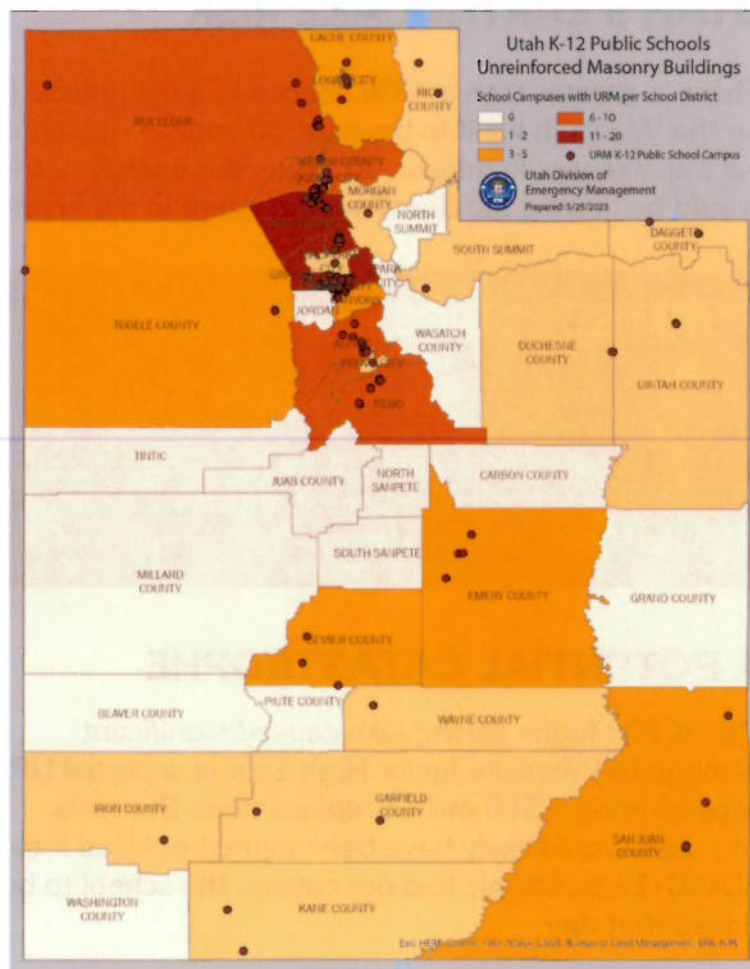
A LITTLE BIT OF FUNDING GOES A LONG WAY

\$4 million would fund a multidisciplinary analysis for each URM school that would evaluate the cost for retrofitting or replacing the building, while looking not just at seismic resilience but also at mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and other issues.

Once armed with the information from these studies, districts could decide what steps to take, apply for federal grants, and propose local bond issues. Those districts who have already completed such an analysis could put the money toward grant writing or design costs.

LEGAL SAFEGUARDS

Conducting seismic safety evaluations does not heighten potential liability for school districts or the state, as per Utah Code (53G-4-608).



JOIN US IN CREATING SAFER SCHOOLS

This funding request is a top priority recommendation from the Utah Seismic Safety Commission. Your support can accelerate local efforts and pave the way for a more resilient future. For more information visit [USSC Report and Recommendations](#).