



Parcel Taxes: Locally Controlled Education Funding

Santa Rosa City Schools

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Parcel Tax Basics

- A parcel tax measure requires 66.7% support from those voting on the measure
- Variable terms of the measure: use of funds, tax rate, duration, exemptions, accountability provisions
- *Borikas v. Alameda Unified School District* helps us understand the requirement in state law that “parcel taxes apply uniformly to all taxpayers or all real property within the school district”
- An optimal election date, tax rate and other measure features should be selected based on up-to-date opinion research data
- All planning and preparation of a renewal measure for the ballot may be coordinated and funded by SRCS
- All advocacy campaigning for a measure must be coordinated by an independent campaign committee and privately funded

Sample Flat Parcel Tax

June 2012: 66.9% Yes

MEASURE D: To protect quality education with local funding that cannot be taken by the state, shall Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District preserve reading, writing, math and science programs; keep school libraries open and available for students; protect art, music and vocational instruction; and attract/retain qualified teachers by levying \$89 per parcel annually for five years, no money for administrators' salaries, and all funds staying local?

Sample Square Foot Parcel Tax

November 2016: 74.3% Yes

Measure B1: To maintain high-quality Alameda schools by protecting small class sizes; core academic, art, music, science, innovative, and athletic programs; neighborhood schools; and retaining excellent teachers; shall Alameda Unified School District continue for seven years, without increase, its existing parcel tax rate of \$0.32 per building square foot not to exceed \$7,999 per parcel, with senior exemptions, strict accountability measures (annual audits and independent citizen oversight), and all approximately \$12,000,000 raised annually staying in Alameda schools?

Sample Parcel Tax Uses

Moneys raised under this Measure shall be authorized to be used only for the following purposes in accordance with priorities established by the Board and to the extent of available funds:

- Preserve reading and writing programs
- Preserve math and science programs
- Keep school libraries open and information technology services available for students
- Attract and retain qualified and experienced teachers and staff
- Protect art and music instruction for a well-rounded education
- Provide 21st century vocational education to prepare graduates for a competitive job market
- Minimize class size increases to ensure students receive individual attention from teachers
- Minimize further budget cuts resulting from reductions in state funding for local schools
- No parcel tax funds will be spent on administrative salaries

SRCS Parcel Tax Rates and Durations

High School District

Approx. Parcels:	65,000
Est. Exemptions:	6,500
Taxable Parcels:	58,500
\$25 Tax Rate:	\$1.5 million
\$50 Tax Rate:	\$2.9 million
\$75 Tax Rate:	\$4.4 million
\$100 Tax Rate:	\$5.9 million

Elementary District

Approx. Parcels:	20,500
Est. Exemptions:	2,050
Taxable Parcels:	18,450
\$25 Tax Rate:	\$460,000
\$50 Tax Rate:	\$923,000
\$75 Tax Rate:	\$1.4 million
\$100 Tax Rate:	\$1.9 million

Typical Durations for Initial School Parcel Taxes: 4-8 years

Parcel Tax Considerations

- Tradeoffs between additional funding (amount) and funding stability (time)
- Current and projected education funding environment
- Potential for competing tax proposals
- Current and projected District needs over next 5 to 10 years
- Community priorities
- Potential for a strong advocacy effort supporting the measure

Potential Election Dates

2018

November – Gubernatorial General Election/Board Election

2019

March – Polling Place Special Election

May – Mail Ballot Special Election

June – Polling Place Special Election

Takes effect on FY 2019-20
property tax bills

August - Mail Ballot Special Election

November – Polling Place Special Election

2020

March – Presidential Primary Election

May – Mail Ballot Special Election

June – CA Statewide Primary Election

Takes effect on FY 2020-21
property tax bills

The Parcel Tax Process



→ Poll

→ Election timing

→ Tax rate

→ Programs

→ Political landscape

→ Competing issues

→ Potential controversy

The Parcel Tax Process



→ Inform and engage internal school community

→ Parents

→ Faculty/Staff

→ Students

→ PTAs and Boosters

→ Inform and engage external community

→ Elected leaders

→ Business leaders

→ Faith community

→ Neighborhood leaders

→ Voters at-large

The Parcel Tax Process



- Resolution calling election
- Ballot question
- Rate structure/Duration/Exemptions
- Uses of Funds
- Board vote

The Parcel Tax Process



- Private fundraising
- Lawn signs
- Direct mail
- Endorsements

- Phone banks
- Precinct walks
- Social/Digital strategies

The Parcel Tax Process



- Ensure strong parent participation
- Ensure strong supporter participation
- Remind supporters to vote
- Track votes to a win

November 2018 Parcel Tax Timeline

