



## Local ballot measure: U – Santa Cruz Elem parcel tax

# U

### Santa Cruz Elementary School District parcel tax

#### Ballot question

To continue funding core programs in science, art and music that support student achievement at Santa Cruz elementary and middle schools, attract/retain highly qualified teachers, provide library and counseling services, and maintain smaller class sizes, shall the Santa Cruz City Elementary School District’s measure renewing the expiring Santa Cruz City Elementary School District’s and Santa Cruz City High School District’s parcel tax at a rate of \$208 per parcel be adopted, providing \$3.2 million in annual school funding until ended by voters, including senior exemptions, and all money staying local?

#### Pregunta de Boleta

Para continuar financiando programas básicos en ciencia, arte y música que apoyan el rendimiento estudiantil en las escuelas primarias y secundarias de Santa Cruz, atraer/retener maestros altamente calificados, proporcionar servicios de biblioteca y asesoramiento, y mantener clases más pequeñas, ¿deberá adoptarse la medida del Distrito de escuelas primarias de la ciudad de Santa Cruz que renueva el impuesto a las parcelas, próximo a expirar, del Distrito de escuelas primarias de la ciudad de Santa Cruz y del Distrito de escuelas secundarias de la ciudad de Santa Cruz a una tasa de \$208 por parcela que se adopte, proporcionando \$3.2 millones en fondos escolares anuales hasta que los votantes lo cancelen, incluidas exenciones para personas de la tercera edad, y que todo el dinero permanezca local?

#### What your vote means

YES	NO
A "Yes" vote is a vote to authorize a special parcel tax of \$208 annually with no end date.	A "No" vote is a vote against the special parcel tax.

#### For and against Measure U

FOR	AGAINST
<p><b>Fred Keeley</b> Former State Assembly Member/County Supervisor/County Treasurer</p> <p><b>Shiri Gradek</b> DeLaveaga Elementary School Parent &amp; Civic Leader</p> <p><b>Hilary Bryant</b> Former Santa Cruz Mayor &amp; SCCS Parent</p> <p><b>Amariah Hernandez</b> 19 year Educator, Gault Elementary Principal, Parent &amp; Life-Long Resident</p> <p><b>Ryan Coonerty</b> Santa Cruz County Supervisor &amp; SCCS Alum</p>	<p><b>No argument against Measure U was filed.</b></p>



## Local ballot measure: U – Santa Cruz Elem parcel tax

Arguments are the opinions of the authors. We print them exactly as submitted, including errors.

---

### Argument for Measure U

---

**VOTE YES on Measure U to maintain the quality of education** in Santa Cruz K-8 schools – Bay View, DeLaveaga, Gault, Monarch and Westlake Elementary Schools, and Branciforte and Mission Hill Middle Schools. Nothing is more important than helping our children prepare for success in high school, college, careers and life.

The State of California's education funding formula is under-funding Santa Cruz City Schools (SCCS). Thankfully, our community has stepped in to fill the gap, repeatedly approving local parcel taxes that fund exceptional teachers, small class sizes, challenging instructional programs, outstanding science, art and music curricula, and essential student-support services.

Your YES VOTE on U authorizes three things to continue these protections: 1) **renewal** of existing locally-controlled funding for instructional enrichment and student-support services; 2) **simplifying by combining** two existing parcel taxes into **one** stable funding source; and 3) **adding** a small increase, just \$18 a year (\$1.50 per month), to maintain essential elementary and middle school programs. That's a small price to protect the quality of education in SCCS schools.

Measure U will:

- Attract and retain highly qualified teachers
- Protect small class sizes
- Maintain instructional programs in science, music and the arts
- Provide library and counseling services
- Support programs that help students at risk of falling behind or dropping out.

**Senior citizens will continue to be eligible for an exemption.**

REQUIRED TAXPAYER SAFEGUARDS:

- **ALL funds STAY LOCAL** for Santa Cruz K-8 schools.
- NO funds are allowed for administrators' salaries.
- Independent Citizens' Oversight and mandatory audits ensure proper spending.
- These funds cannot be taken by the State or used for other purposes.

Stand with parents, teachers, local business and civic leaders and residents across Santa Cruz who know that good schools are the foundation of a healthy, thriving community.

**Please – for our children and our community - VOTE YES on U.**

[www.friendsofsantacruzcityschools.com](http://www.friendsofsantacruzcityschools.com)

**Fred Keeley**

Former State Assembly Member/County Supervisor/County Treasurer

**Shiri Gradek**

DeLaveaga Elementary School Parent & Civic Leader

**Hilary Bryant**

Former Santa Cruz Mayor & SCCS Parent

**Amariah Hernandez**

19 year Educator, Gault Elementary Principal, Parent & Life-Long Resident

**Ryan Coonerty**

Santa Cruz County Supervisor & SCCS Alum

---

**No argument against Measure U was filed.**



## Local ballot measure: U – Santa Cruz Elem parcel tax

### Impartial Analysis of Measure U

Jason Heath, County Counsel

By: Ruby Márquez, Assistant County Counsel

Under the California Constitution and other governing laws, school districts may levy an education parcel tax if approved by at least 66% percent (two-thirds) of voters within the boundaries of that district. Parcel taxes are paid equally by all property owners, regardless of the size or value of the property.

The Governing Board of the Santa Cruz City Elementary and High School Districts (“the School Districts”) propose a parcel tax in the amount of \$208 per parcel annually to take effect July 1, 2020. The School Districts anticipate this tax would raise \$3.2 million annually. This parcel tax does not have an end date and would continue indefinitely until ended by voters.

The School Districts seek to combine and replace several parcel taxes currently in effect. In the June 2012 election, voters approved Measure J, a parcel tax of \$85, for a period of eight years, from July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2021. In the November 2015 election, voters approved two additional measures for a period of eight years, from July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2024. For the Elementary School District, voters approved Measure P, a parcel tax of \$105. For the High School District, voters approved Measure O, a parcel tax of \$72, a portion of which has been used to maintain middle school educational programs. If the current measure passes, all three of the above measures would end.

Within the full body of the proposed measure, the School Districts have designated the funds solely for the following specific purposes:

- Continuing to fund programs in science, art and music for elementary and middle schools as well after-school athletic, enrichment, and academic support programs;
- Attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers;
- Providing library and counseling services; and
- Maintaining smaller class sizes.

As required by law, the School Districts must follow certain accountability provisions during the duration of the parcel tax. This includes: creating a special account for the tax proceeds, publishing an annual report describing the amount of taxes collected and expended as well as the status of any projects, and appointing an independent Citizens’ Oversight Committee to oversee the expenditures of the tax proceeds.

If this measure passes, certain property owners may apply with the School Districts to request an exemption from paying the parcel tax. This includes persons who are 65 years of age or older and/or specified recipients of SSI and SSDI regardless of age.

Measure U was placed on the ballot by the Governing Board of the Santa Cruz City Elementary and High School Districts.

A “yes” vote on Measure U is a vote to authorize a special parcel tax of \$208 annually with no end date.

A “no” vote on Measure U is a vote against the special parcel tax.

### Full text of Measure U

#### INTRODUCTION

To continue funding core programs in science, art and music that support student achievement at Santa Cruz elementary and middle schools, attract/retain highly qualified teachers, provide library and counseling services, and maintain smaller class sizes, shall the Santa Cruz City Elementary School District’s measure renewing the expiring Santa Cruz City Elementary School District’s and Santa Cruz City High School District’s parcel tax at a rate of \$208 per parcel be adopted, providing \$3.2 million in annual school funding until ended by voters, including senior exemptions, and all money staying local?

#### PURPOSES

To provide local revenue that cannot be taken by the State and to maintain high-quality public education in Elementary and Middle Schools, the Santa Cruz City Elementary School District proposes to levy and collect an education parcel tax annually without any time limit, as more fully described below under “EDUCATION PARCEL TAX AND PROCEDURES,” and to implement accountability measures in connection with the education parcel tax and to provide oversight and accountability to ensure that funds are used only for the following specific purposes:

- Continue funding programs in science, art, and music for elementary and middle schools; and after-school athletic, enrichment, and academic support programs; to keep students safe, healthy, and engaged,
- Attract and retain highly qualified teachers,
- Provide library and counseling services, and
- Maintain smaller class sizes.

The Board of Education will not fund any program other than those listed above from the proceeds of the education parcel tax.



## Local ballot measure: U – Santa Cruz Elem parcel tax

### EDUCATION PARCEL TAX AND PROCEDURES

*Amount of Education Parcel Tax.* Subject to two-thirds approval of the voters, the education parcel tax of \$208 per parcel (except exempt parcels, as described below) shall become effective commencing with fiscal year 2020-21 and be collected by the Santa Cruz County Tax Collector at the same time as and along with, and shall be subject to the same penalties as general *ad valorem* taxes collected by said tax collector. The tax shall be levied annually until ended by the voters.

*Definition of Parcel.* A parcel shall be defined as any unit of land in the District that receives a separate tax bill from the Santa Cruz County Tax Collector.

*Exemptions.* The following exemptions shall apply to the levy of the qualified special tax.

- *Otherwise Exempt Property.* All property that would otherwise be exempt from property taxes shall also be exempt from the education parcel tax.
- *Senior Citizen Exemption.* An exemption shall be available to persons who are 65 years or older and own and occupy as a principal residence a parcel subject to the education parcel tax.

Property owners seeking the Senior Citizen Exemption must apply to the Common Administration District for such exemption under procedures established by the Common Administration District or otherwise as required by law or by the Santa Cruz County Tax Collector.

*Exclusive Procedures.* The procedures described herein with respect to the levy and collection of the education parcel tax and exemptions, and any additional procedures established by the Board of Education of the Common Administration District, shall be the exclusive claims procedure for claimants seeking an exemption, refund, reduction, or re-computation of the qualified special tax. Whether any particular claim is to be resolved by the Common Administration District or by the County shall be determined by the Common Administration District, in coordination with the County as necessary. The Common Administration District's Board of Education may adopt such additional or supplemental procedures as it deems necessary or convenient for the administration of the education parcel tax.

### ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

*Government Code Accountability.* In accordance with the requirements of California Government Code sections 50075.1 and 50075.3, the following accountability measures, among others, shall apply to the qualified special taxes levied in accordance with this Measure:

- the specific purposes of the education parcel tax shall be those purposes identified above under the heading "PURPOSES,"
- the proceeds of the education parcel tax shall be applied only to those specific purposes identified above under the heading "PURPOSES,"
- a separate, special account shall be created into which the proceeds of the education parcel tax must be deposited, and
- the chief fiscal officer of the Common Administration District shall file an annual written report with the Board of Education of the Common Administration District no later than July 1 of the year following the fiscal year during which the monies were expended, showing (1) the amount of funds collected and expended from the proceeds of the education parcel tax and (2) the status of any projects, programs, or purposes identified above under the heading "PURPOSES."

*Citizens' Oversight Committee.* In addition to the accountability measures required by the Government Code, an independent Citizens' Oversight Committee shall be appointed by the Board of the Common Administration District to advise the Board on the expenditures funded by the measure in order to ensure that said funds are spent for the purposes approved by the voters. The Citizens' Oversight Committee will monitor the expenditures of these funds and will report on an annual basis to the Board and community on how these funds have been spent.

### PROTECTION OF FUNDING

Current law forbids any decrease in State or Federal funding to the Elementary School District because of its adoption of an education parcel tax. However, if any such funds are reduced because of the adoption of this education parcel tax, then the amount of the education parcel tax will be reduced annually as necessary in order to restore such State or Federal funding.

### SEVERABILITY

The Board of Education of the Elementary School District hereby declares, and the voters by approving this measure concur, that every section, paragraph, sentence, and clause of this measure has independent value, and the Board of Education and the voters would have adopted each provision hereof regardless of every other provision hereof. Upon approval of this measure by the voters, should any part be found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid for any reason, all remaining parts hereof shall remain in full force and effect to the fullest extent allowed by law.