

MEASURE SUBMITTED TO THE VOTERS

SCHOOL

**NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL PARCEL TAX FOR
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
MEASURE E**

E To maintain, restore and improve essential educational programs in Novato's neighborhood schools with emphasis on math, science, and English, attracting and retaining qualified and experienced teachers and employees, reducing class sizes and supporting school library services and classroom technology shall the Novato Unified School District extend its existing special tax and increase it to \$185 per parcel for eight years, with an exemption for seniors, all money staying in our community and no money for administrator salaries?

**NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL PARCEL TAX FOR
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
FULL TEXT OF MEASURE E**

The following is the full ballot text of the proposition to be presented to the voters by the Novato Unified School District in the ballot pamphlet:

To maintain, restore and improve essential educational programs in Novato's neighborhood schools with emphasis on math, science, and English, attracting and retaining qualified and experienced teachers and employees, reducing class sizes and supporting school library services and classroom technology shall the Novato Unified School District extend its existing special tax and increase it to \$185 per parcel for eight years, with an exemption for seniors, all money staying in our community and no money for administrator salaries?

Parcel tax funds shall be used to support educational programs, such as the following:

- Reduce class size in grades K-3, grades 8-9 English and math courses, and high school science courses;
- Library services and materials;
- Elementary music and physical education;
- Classroom technology support;
- School counseling programs;
- Teacher training;
- Augmenting compensation to attract and retain qualified and experienced teachers and staff.

Basis of Tax

The tax shall be levied on all parcels of taxable real property in the District. "Parcel of taxable real property" is defined as any unit of real property in the District that receives a separate tax bill for *ad valorem* property taxes from the Marin County Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office; provided, however, that any parcels that are contiguous, used solely for owner-occupied single family residential purposes and held under identical ownership may, upon approval of any application of the owners thereof submitted to the Board of Trustees be treated as a single parcel of taxable real property. All property that is otherwise exempt from or upon which are levied no *ad valorem* property taxes in any year shall also be exempt from the special tax in such year.

An exemption may be granted on any parcel owned by one or more persons aged 65 years or older who occupies said parcel as a principal residence, upon application for exemption.

With respect to all general property tax matters within its jurisdiction, the Marin County Tax Assessor or other appropriate County tax official shall make all final determinations of tax exemption or relief for any reason, and that decision shall be final and binding. With respect to matters specific to the levy of the special tax, including the Senior Citizen Exemption and contiguous parcel determination, the decisions of the District shall be final and binding.

Pursuant to California Constitution Article XIII B and applicable laws, the appropriations limit for the District will be adjusted periodically by the aggregate sum collected by levy of this special tax.

Accountability Measures

The proceeds of the special tax shall be applied only to the specific purposes identified above. The proceeds of the special tax shall be deposited into a fund, which shall be kept separate and apart from other funds of the District. No later than January 1 of each year while the tax is in effect, the District shall prepare and file with the Board of Trustees a report detailing the amount of funds collected and expended, and the status of any project authorized to be funded by this measure.

In addition, an independent Citizens' Oversight Committee shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees to ensure that the special tax proceeds are spent for the purposes identified in this measure, and to report annually to the Board of Trustees and the public regarding the expenditure of such funds.

Severability

The Board of Trustees hereby declares, and the voters by approving this measure concur, that every section and part of this measure has independent value, and the Board of Trustees 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.

**IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS BY COUNTY COUNSEL
MEASURE E**

If this Measure is approved by a two thirds vote, the Novato Unified School District will be authorized to levy a special tax of One Hundred Eighty Five Dollars (\$185.00) on each parcel of land within the District each year for eight (8) fiscal years, beginning July 1, 2005. The proceeds of the tax may be used only for the purposes set forth in the Measure.

Exemptions will be available for individuals who have attained the age of 65, as set forth in the Measure.

Dated: August 17, 2004

PATRICK K. FAULKNER
County Counsel



ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE E

The Novato Unified School District, the largest school district in the county, receives less money per student than any other school district in Marin County. Since 1992, local voters have approved special supplemental funding, known as "A+ for Kids", to support Novato schools. Without approval of Measure E, this funding will expire next year, forcing our schools to cut almost \$2 million per year from classroom instruction.

Measure E will provide funds to:

- Attract and retain qualified and experienced teachers and staff;
- Maintain, restore and improve, English, science and math programs for children;
- Maintain library services and school librarians;
- Maintain physical education and music programs for elementary school children;
- Reduce class sizes;
- Support classroom technology;
- Improve school counseling programs.

All Measure E funds will stay in our community to benefit local children and local schools.

Measure E contains proper fiscal controls and accountability. Audits will be conducted annually. An Independent Citizens Oversight Committee will monitor all expenditures to ensure funds are spent properly.

Good neighborhood schools are the foundation of a quality community. Good schools protect property values and attract quality families to our community.

Measure E will be in effect for 8 years only and must be re-approved by voters. No Measure E funds may be used for administrator salaries and all money must be used for improved classroom instruction.

To make sure this assessment does not become a burden to those living on a fixed income, a full exemption from this assessment will be available for property owners over the age of 65.

Please join Novato parents, teachers, business and community leaders in support of Measure E.

Vote YES on E. Extend "A+ for Kids".

s/ Jon R. Dick
Teacher, Novato High School

s/ Nancy Marsh Sangster
Senior Advocate

s/ Amy S. Peele
Writer/Parent

s/ Kimberly Petrini
CEO, Circle Bank - Novato

s/ Charles W. Bennett
Businessman

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE E

The Novato Unified School District asks voters for another eight years of a parcel tax at double the cost and after already having poured in \$9 million since 1997, when barely 6000 voters out of 30,000 registered imposed the tax. But consider the following:

- NUSD said in '97 it wanted to "restore" essential programs such as math, science, and English. Today's test scores say that didn't happen. And, these are required *core* subjects that *must* be taught!
- Teacher-retention a problem? Average tenure is 10 years, with some teachers there since the 60's.
- Class size reduction is no cure-all and comes at a high cost.
- Kids missing school lost us \$1.3 million in funding last year; how about fixing *that* problem first?
- Parcel taxes are regressive, meaning the poorest among us pay the highest percentage of their incomes.
- "More money" doesn't assure quality. Over half of NUSD's schools missed the State standard, but comparable Pleasanton USD's 14 schools exceeded the State's performance standard despite equal cost per student and *without* a parcel tax.

Yes, NUSD gets less from the government per student than any other district in the county. With Kerry Mazzoni and John Burton in key State positions, why hasn't the funding formula been fixed? We pay our fair share of taxes; we should be getting our fair share in return. Fix the funding formula; don't pass this non-deductible tax. Vote "No" on E and contact info@noparceltax.org.

s/ Edwin Lockwood, Homeowner
And Business Owner

s/ Donna A. Morris, Past President
SMPTSA

s/ Sara Lockwood
Mother of Nine

MEASURE E CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE E

There are many reasons to vote against the eight year extension and doubling of the parcel tax which Measure E will impose on the residents of the Novato Unified School District. Perhaps most importantly, it is a regressive tax that impacts most households in Novato, without regard for ability to pay. The poorest among us will pay too, because landlords will inevitably pass along the extra cost in the form of a rent increase.

Second, year after year we have passed billions of dollars worth of bond measures to support schools (remember the recent \$107,000,000.00 Novato School District bond?). *And it is never enough!* Every time, it is an emergency. And every time we say "yes", the activist minority and special interests behind the bond measures are emboldened to ask for more. We are already paying among the highest taxes of every sort in the nation. And, there have been ever-increasing property tax revenues from skyrocketing home prices and sales during the past years. Where is all this extra revenue going?

It is right that teachers get paid fairly and adequately for their work. But the means to achieve that should not always be "more taxes". How about, for example, better management of school attendance? This past year NUSD lost close to \$1.3 million from general revenues simply because *some kids didn't come to class*. And more can and should be done to encourage *voluntary* donations to schools, rather than compulsory "donations" through this non-tax deductible parcel tax.

It is fair and right that the elderly among us can opt out of this tax, if passed. We simply ask that when seniors vote, and when you vote, give the rest of us that same opportunity by voting "NO" on Measure E.

s/ Edwin J. Lockwood
Novato Resident for Twenty-Six Years

s/ Donna A. Morris
Past President, San Marin High School PTA

s/ Sara J. Lockwood
Mother, Nine Children

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE E

Measure E is about one thing: improving the quality of our local schools. Our opponents may mean well, but they are seriously misinformed.

Here are the facts:

- Due to State budget cuts, Novato Unified has been forced to cut millions of dollars from its budget over the last 5 years. At least \$2 million more in cuts are on the way.
- There are no "extras" left to cut. The next level of cuts will cut into the basics-including teacher layoffs, increasing class sizes, elimination of essential educational programs and school librarians, and more. Budget cuts will affect every classroom.
- By law funds can only be spent on Measure E items approved by voters: e.g. keeping quality teachers and staff, restoring critical English, science and math programs, keeping school libraries open with professional staff, maintaining reduced class sizes, improving classroom technology and school counseling programs.
- Measure E will last 8 years only. Property owners age 65 or older qualify for a full exemption on their primary residence.
- None of this money will go to pay administrators. An Independent Citizens Oversight Committee will monitor all expenditures to ensure funds are spent properly.
- Measure E provides a prudent, responsible plan to improve our local quality of education and a stable funding source for Novato schools that cannot be raided by the State. Every dollar raised by Measure E will stay in our community to benefit our local children.

Quality schools protect everyone's property values.

Please vote YES.

s/ Barbara Desmond Roddie
Parent/PTA Volunteer San Marin and Novato High

s/ Martin D. Sleath
Parent/Consultant; 27 Year Resident

s/ M. Denise Athas
Past President Novato Chamber of Commerce/Real Estate Broker

s/ Fran Rozoff
Teacher/Elementary Vice-President Novato Federation of Teachers

s/ Mary Jane Burke
Marin County Superintendent of Schools

END OF MEASURE E

