
MEASURE SUBMITTED TO THE VOTERS

SCHOOL

**NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
PARCEL TAX RENEWAL TO MAINTAIN QUALITY
PUBLIC EDUCATION AND SERVICES
MEASURE A**

A To reduce the impact of unprecedented school funding cuts and protect quality education in Novato's schools by preserving essential educational programs; maintaining small class sizes in math, science, English and elementary grades; retaining teachers and avoiding extensive layoffs; and keeping school libraries open shall Novato Unified School District extend its expiring school parcel tax for six years at \$155 per parcel, with an exemption for seniors, no money for administrator salaries, and all money benefiting Novato schools?

**NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
PARCEL TAX RENEWAL TO MAINTAIN QUALITY
PUBLIC EDUCATION AND SERVICES
FULL BALLOT TEXT
MEASURE A**

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 reduce the impact of unprecedented school funding cuts and protect quality education in Novato's schools by preserving essential educational programs; maintaining small class sizes in math, science, English and elementary grades; retaining teachers and avoiding extensive layoffs; and keeping school libraries open shall Novato Unified School District extend its expiring school parcel tax for six years at \$155 per parcel, with an exemption for seniors, no money for administrator salaries, and all money benefiting Novato schools?

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

- Keep small class sizes in grades K-8
- Restore smaller high school class sizes in core subjects
- Keep school libraries open
- Keep school counselors
- Keep classroom technology
- Keep music education K-12
- Support essential programs to ensure all students meet basic standards
- Retain teachers / staff avoiding extensive layoffs

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 XIIB 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 Citizen's Oversight Committee shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees to ensure that the special tax proceeds are spent for their authorized purposes, 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 A**

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 Fifty Five Dollars (\$155.00) on each parcel of land within the District each year for six (6) 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: December 17, 2004

PATRICK K. FAULKNER
County Counsel

ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST

THIS MEASURE

START ON THE NEXT PAGE

MEASURE A CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE A

Since 1992, our local school parcel tax has provided supplemental funding for our schools. It will expire in June and Novato schools will lose nearly \$2 million each year in addition to state education funding cuts.

Following the narrow defeat of Measure E in November, the Novato Unified School District Board of Trustees was forced to begin making unprecedented budget cuts, including:

- Consolidating schools
- Teacher and staff layoffs
- Eliminating school librarians and school libraries
- Eliminating all music education
- Eliminating funding for athletics and physical education specialists
- Eliminating student transportation
- Further reducing administration and support staff

These reductions are in addition to previous cuts to administration, high school counselors, school librarians, class size reduction, classroom technology and reading specialists.

There is no more administration to cut - it is already at the minimum required for schools to function safely. Grants and donations have been sought. No untapped sources of funding exist.

The only way to prevent deep cuts to core educational programs is to ask local voters to approve an extension and modest increase of our school parcel tax. This is the only way the Novato Unified School District can generate funds to prevent the most devastating cuts.

Measure A is a scaled back and carefully crafted plan that will not prevent all cuts but will help preserve essential programs, including:

- Maintaining manageable class sizes in math, science, English and elementary grades
- Avoiding extensive teacher layoffs
- Keeping school libraries open and staffed
- Maintaining music education

Measure A will be in effect for six years and cost homeowners less than \$3 a week. Seniors are eligible for an exemption.

Every penny from Measure A will stay local to directly benefit Novato schools. A citizens' oversight committee will ensure funds are spent only to protect the essentials. No Measure A funds will be used for administrator salaries.

Please vote Yes on Measure A.

s/ Alfredo Angulo
32 Year Resident/Retired Microbiology

s/ Mary Jane Burke
Marin County Superintendent of Schools

s/ Dennis Hagerty
Novato Business Owner

s/ Peter N. Bretan
Parent/Physician

s/ Martha Patsy White
Former President, League of Women Voters of Marin

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE A

A Novato parent addressed District trustees recently with an *Advance* upheld and said, "No more 'doom-and-gloom'!", then went forward with positive input.

That was just days *before* this pro-Measure A argument was submitted, full of extremes, full of doom-and-gloom. Pro-A's argument rests on the hinge that no way will Novatoans give voluntarily year-after-year to our schools. What?

Now take notice of NO on Measure A's argument: upbeat, can-do. That's because Novatoans *are* upbeat, can-do.

Only eight weeks ago, 27,217 Novatoans voted their passionate interest in our kids' education. They're Novatoans; can't they be counted on for a tax-deductible \$155 *gift* yearly to the 501 (c)(3) Novato Foundation for Public Education?

Instead, NUSD calls this costly (\$200,000 to 300,000 *minimum*...where is this money coming from?) election, denying the possibility of a tax-deductible *gift* of from \$4.2 to \$5 million, earmarked for the District.

Someone well-placed in the District said, "They have the resources and the people. They just don't want to go to the trouble of getting the money through funding." Another, well-placed in the County, said, "Fund-raising is probably the easiest to do. You just get the people with a passion for the cause."

Passion for Novato's school kids fuels voluntarily given, ample, tax-deductible funds.

Doom-and-Gloom fuels fear, frustration, anger. Parcel taxing chokes.

Vote again: Vote NO on Measure A. Let Novatoans Give.

www.noparceltax.org

s/ Victor S. Aguila

s/ Carlos A. Aguila

s/ Sara Lockwood

s/ Randy Dodd



ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE A

In November, Novatoans voted on NUSD's request for eight more years and the doubling of a non-deductible parcel tax for funding that is possible through *proven* alternative means, (others are doing it; we've mentioned Pleasanton USD as but one success story).

The November election saw 9,259 Novatoans say "no" to this proposed parcel tax, as did two-thirds of precincts, thereby defeating the measure. And even though this tax was defeated, the NUSD showed, by immediately calling for a second vote, that it does not respect the democratic process or the opinions of those who voted against the measure.

Of course, this time they are doing it in a special, off-year election where they can count on a low voter turnout to push them over the top. A small activist minority will once again be in a position to impose its will on the rest of us. The cynicism of this maneuver is exceeded only by the price tag of the election, some \$200,000 to \$300,000!

The issues in this "let's keep voting until the uneducated voter gets it right" election remain the same:

- Core subjects won't be suspended – they can't be!
- "More money" is not always the answer (Pleasanton's 14 schools exceed the State's standard with equal spending per student and *without* a parcel tax)
- Get all kids to class to get an additional \$1.3 million annually
- Give tax-deductible gifts to the Novato Foundation for Public Education
- Get Novato its fair share of state funds

Give generously to our schools if you believe they deserve more money. But reject this hypocritical, revote of an issue that was decided fair and square. Help respect the views of 9,259 members of our community and the integrity of the election process. Vote "NO" on Measure A.

s/ Sara Lockwood

s/ Randy Dodd

s/ Victor Aguila

s/ Carlos A. Aguila

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE A

The cuts to our schools are real and the impact on more than 7,000 students who attend Novato's public schools will be significant.

Measure A is a scaled back proposal that will not prevent all cuts, but will prevent the most devastating. Without Measure A, many more teachers will be laid off, music education will be eliminated, and school libraries will close.

Please consider the facts:

FACT: NUSD has just \$7,210 to spend per student – the lowest in Marin County. Other districts in Marin County have thousands more to spend per student. Novato schools are already among the most lean and efficient and have nothing left to cut but instructional programs.

FACT: Following the very narrow defeat of Measure E in November, NUSD received input from all sectors of the community. The cost was reduced from \$185 to \$155. The duration was shortened from 8 years to 6 years. The scope of programs to be funded was curtailed to focus only on preventing cuts that impact classroom instruction.

FACT: Families move to Novato so their children can attend our schools. Demand for housing affects your home's value: good schools keep our property values high. Whether or not you have children in Novato schools, Measure A is an investment in your home and the quality of life in our community.

Don't let Novato children be the victims of budget cuts. Join the parents, teachers, seniors, business leaders, realtors and thousands of Novato residents who support our public schools by voting Yes on A.

s/ Cynthia L. Murray
Marin County Supervisor – 5th District

s/ Ernie Gray
Mayor Emeritus – 37 Year Novato Resident

s/ Emily Gates
San Marin High Music Teacher/30 Year Novato Resident

s/ Anita Chiesa
Parent/Past PTSA President Novato High School

s/ Chuck Bennett
Novato Businessman

END OF MEASURE A

