

West Sonoma County Union High School District

Frequently Asked Questions Handout – Measure A

The West Sonoma County Union High School District has placed Measure A on the upcoming March 2021 ballot to maintain the arts, career education and college prep classes for our Analy, El Molino and Laguna High School campuses.

The following information is provided to assist voters in understanding the facts behind Measure A and how its passage will affect the District and our community.

What is Measure A?

Measure A is a \$48 tax per parcel for three years. Funds raised by this local measure will be used to provide short-term bridge funding to maintain music, arts, and career-technical education programming for all West Sonoma County Union High School District students while strategic planning takes place to determine the best long-term solution for students in our District.

What is a Parcel Tax?

Parcel taxes fund needs at the District that usually come out of the general fund. Current parcel taxes are used to upgrade technology in classrooms, maintain small class sizes, provide counseling and library services, and maintain music, art, and drama programs.

Why did the District place Measure A on the ballot?

The scope of needs at the West Sonoma County Union High School District is far more than the current funding sources available. The District relies on a local parcel tax for part of its funding. Current parcel taxes fund critical programs for all of our schools. Additional funds are needed to provide short term bridge funding to support the District in planning for the future of our campuses and maintaining the quality of our programs and services.

How did the District come up with the needs list for Measure A?

Over the last several months with input from staff, teachers, parents, and community leaders, the District prepared a Needs list for the parcel tax. This list includes:

- Maintaining and improving the schools' shop, culinary, technology and other career education programs
- Maintaining and improving the schools' art, music and drama programs
- Allowing the District to work with county and state leaders to attract outside dollars to maintain programs and electives for the next three years, and possibly beyond
- Maintaining and improving the schools' college prep programs
- Enabling El Molino and Analy High Schools to continue to offer competitive sports programs, including football, soccer, tennis and more

What will Measure A mean for our students and the community?

Measure A will support a three-year bridge funding solution that will provide the time needed to examine how to best serve West County students into the future. The monies will be used exclusively to maintain a full range of classes and programming for all students during this transition period.

What will happen if Measure A does not pass?

If Measure A does not pass, funding for programs and teachers will need to be reduced. Budget challenges have forced the District to consider consolidating our high school campuses. In the absence of additional funds to support postponement of this option, consolidation could occur as early as the 2021 – 2022 school year.

What will Measure A cost?

Measure A is a flat tax of \$48 per parcel annually for three years.

How can I be sure that funds will be spent on improving our local high schools?

By law, all Measure A funds have to be spent locally and cannot be taken by the state.

We just passed Measure B. Why another one so soon?

Measure B is a \$79 tax that was passed to keep libraries open and support both teachers and school support staff. Measure A would be used as bridge funding to maintain programs and electives at all campuses while strategic planning continues.

Isn't this just "kicking the can down the road" - why doesn't the district balance its budget?

Measure A will provide our schools the time to transition to an ongoing sustainable budget with quality educational programming through a well-informed process rather than through a crisis response.

Times are tough, can the community bear more taxes?

The programmatic needs in the West Sonoma County Union High School District are far greater than what current funding sources can support, especially during the added challenges of the COVID 19 pandemic. The District has relied on local parcel taxes since 1993 to support varied educational programs and staffing, and this measure would allow the District to continue to provide a quality education to local students.

What is this money for? Isn't there also a TOT measure on the ballot for the same thing?

If approved, the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) would provide available funds to all schools in West Sonoma County. In addition, only 50% of the funds from the transient occupancy tax (TOT) measure will be available to our local schools. (The other 50% of the TOT funds would support local fire districts.) This amount will not adequately cover the projected school funding shortfall.

Why should every property owner pay to keep the schools afloat? I don't have any kids or grandkids in the district & I think the parents should fund them.

Good schools benefit the entire community. Whether that is through safer neighborhoods or improved property values.