



Portola Valley School District
FACT SHEET:
(Community-Funded) Instructional Support

PORTOLA VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT VALUES ITS OUTSTANDING TK-8 SCHOOLS. Portola Valley's elementary and middle schools consistently rank among the best in the State, and it's one of the few districts with over 86% of its students meeting/exceeding standards in English/language arts and 83% in math. In addition to those core subjects, we run world class arts and music programs and have notable science and technology initiatives supporting Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STREAM) education. Exceptional teachers, small class sizes, challenging instructional programs, dedicated parent volunteers, and outstanding science, art and music curricula have prepared generations of local children to succeed in high school, college, and careers. Our goal is to continue that proud tradition.

MAINTAINING OUR SCHOOLS REQUIRES DEDICATED RESOURCES. While residents frequently compliment our schools and students, we realize that not everyone is aware of the significant hurdles our teachers, administrators, support staff, and volunteers face to ensure full value from every dollar invested. We believe we have a responsibility to explore every option to continue providing the great education programs to the students of the Portola Valley School District.

FACT: The State of California does not adequately fund its public schools, and community funded districts like Portola Valley schools suffer more than most. The current funding formula adopted in 2013 **limits** new state funding to our neighborhood schools while mandated costs (e.g. payroll taxes, health care, etc.,) continue to rise disproportionately year after year.

FACT: The State's funding across all its public schools is **well below** the national average, despite being one of the highest cost-of-living states. We rank 41st in per pupil funding and New York spends approximately twice what California does.

FACT: The Portola Valley School District has had a parcel tax measure to support the excellent programs over the past 35 years, if this measure is not renewed, the District will have to make significant program reductions. The District has made about \$1.2 million of cuts in the past 3 years. Another \$1.0 million in reductions over the next two years is under consideration.

FACT: Portola Valley School District is fortunate to be surrounded by a caring community. Each year, the Portola Valley School Foundation contributes significant funding to our School's annual budget to keep our classes small and maintain a rigorous curriculum.

INVESTING IN QUALITY SCHOOLS CREATES GOOD CIVIC OUTCOMES. Great schools are a central part of the community's identity and will continue to be the foundation of a thriving community.

WE APPRECIATE THE GENEROUS SUPPORT WE RECEIVE FROM OUR COMMUNITY. The level of school funding provided by the state of California is one of the lowest in the nation. We need local funding to fill in the gap. Fortunately, local voters have generously supported PVSD with school funding measures, most recently, voting to pass Measure O, a parcel tax, in 2013 and Measure Z, a school facilities bond, in 2018 to protect and maintain the local quality of education.

MEASURE O for Portola Valley School District is a parcel tax of \$581/per parcel/per year which supports grades TK-8 and maintains high-quality educational programs, including math, reading, and writing, and hands-on science instruction; attracts and retains qualified and experienced teachers; and supports art, music, and a well-rounded education. Measure O, approved for 8 years, will expire after the 2020-21 school year. Measure O cannot be extended without a new vote of Portola Valley School District voters. Without the renewal of Measure O, some existing local school funding will disappear from PVSD school budgets, requiring the district to make drastic cuts.

Accordingly, we are exploring the failure of Measure O's renewal (via Measure P) on the March 2020 ballot and how to improve our plan ahead of asking our community to renew this critical local funding source.

WE MUST WORK TOGETHER TO MAINTAIN QUALITY SCHOOLS WITH INPUT FROM OUR COMMUNITY. NO decisions have been made yet. PVSD leaders are seeking YOUR INPUT first, before critical decisions are made. Portola Valley School District welcomes input from opinion leaders and community stakeholders in our study process. We are working hard to identify exactly what is at stake and to keep our community informed to ensure quality TK-8 schools for the future.

For more information, OR to share input, visit our website at: PVSD.net OR contact: Roberta Zarea, Superintendent by phone: (650) 851-1777 OR by email: rzarea@pvsd.net.



Portola Valley School District Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is this Revenue Feasibility Study all about?

Portola Valley TK-8 schools are rated among the best in the State. Families move to our community—and stay here—in large part because of our excellent schools. We work hard every day to maintain the outstanding quality of education provided in our neighborhood schools. Unfortunately, education funding from the State is woefully inadequate, and with the expiration of our existing community supported parcel tax Measure O, it leaves us with a projected budget shortfall of \$1.2 million. Measure O, approved for 8 years, cannot be extended without a new vote of Portola Valley School District voters. Without the renewal of Measure O, some existing local school funding will disappear from PVSD school budgets, requiring the district to make drastic cuts.

Accordingly, we are exploring the failure of Measure O's renewal (via Measure P) on the March 2020 ballot and how to improve our plan ahead of asking our community to renew this critical local funding source.

Why now?

Measure O expires after the 2020-21 school year. Without the renewal of Measure O, some existing local school funding will disappear from PVSD school budgets, requiring the district to make drastic cuts to academic programs, increase class sizes, and maintain only basics at our schools. Renewing Measure O (without increasing the tax rate) won't address all our funding needs, but it will help retain exceptional teachers and protect core programs.

What is Measure O?

Measure O for Portola Valley School District is a parcel tax of \$581/per parcel/per year which supports grades TK-8 and maintains high-quality educational programs, including math, reading, and writing, and hands-on science instruction; attracts and retains qualified and experienced teachers; and supports art, music, and a well-rounded education. Measure O, approved for 8 years, will expire after the 2020-21 school year. Measure O cannot be extended without a new vote of Portola Valley School District voters.

What does Measure O funding support?

- **Maintaining** quality math, science, reading, and writing instruction;

- **Developing** advanced programs in engineering and technology;
- **Keeping** class sizes small;
- **Supporting** art and music programs; and
- **Retaining** qualified/experienced teachers (*currently funds 8 full time teachers*)

Why is school funding from State and Federal governments not enough? What is LCFF?

Government budgets are limited. The current way that California public schools are funded, known as the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), allocates more funding to school districts that have high concentrations of students who are English language learners, low income, and/or foster youth. Our current total revenues are 6% State, 1% Federal, and 93% locally funded by our Portola Valley community. This, coupled with rising operating costs, and the expiration of our existing Measure O, simply does not provide the level of funding for instructional programs that our students, families, and community have come to expect and deserve.

What programs are at risk?

The Portola Valley School District offers a number of instructional programs and services that are highly valued and exceptional. While many other school districts cut electives, special programs and key instructional services years ago, our district has tried to maintain these programs as we know they contribute greatly to a well-rounded education. Without additional funding, PVSD may have to increase class sizes, risk losing (and certainly not attracting) the very best teachers, and reduce or even worse, completely eliminate high-value instructional programs—programs like reading intervention, library services, math intervention, technology integration in the classroom, science programs, and music— just to name a few.

What has the District done to tighten its belt?

Over the past three years, Portola Valley School District leaders have invested many long hours in educating parents, teachers, staff, and community members about our budget. Additionally, over the past 3 years your locally elected Governing Board cut \$1.2 million in staff and instructional programs from the District’s General Fund budget. Even with these cuts, we are still not receiving adequate funding from the State to balance our budget and continue to face a budget shortfall.

What is a parcel tax?

This is the common term for a school district “qualified special tax.” It is usually applied as a flat tax to each parcel of land within a school district’s boundaries. It provides revenue for a district’s operating budget as a locally controlled source of funding that cannot be taken away by the State. In California, passage of a local parcel tax requires two-thirds (66.7%) approval by voters casting ballots on the measure.

How much would a parcel tax cost?

A potential cost per parcel has not yet been decided. The District and Governing Board are looking at all available solutions to the current budget shortfall, and are engaging community feedback including a recent survey and a formal poll of residents. One option under

consideration is to renew the existing Measure O parcel tax, without increasing tax rates for another 8 years. Decisions about cost would likely happen in the Winter of 2020/21.

What about the Lottery? Wasn't the Lottery supposed to fix our schools?

Lottery funds do help supplement classroom instruction. However, the funding our school district receives from the Lottery each year comprises less than 1% of our annual General Fund budget. Thus, Lottery funds alone are simply not enough to fund the extensive instructional programs that our schools need.

My children are grown up. Why should I pay attention to this process?

Good schools are the foundation of any healthy, thriving community. Good schools protect property values and keep neighborhoods strong—particularly here in Portola Valley.

I am a senior citizen. Would I have to pay a parcel tax?

No. If the school districts board places a parcel tax on the ballot, they will include a senior exemption. We do not want this measure to become a burden to those living on a fixed income.

Does Portola Valley School District already have a parcel tax? Why are you looking into another one?

Yes. In May 2013, voters approved an 8 year tax measure of \$581 parcel tax. This measure expires June 30, 2021. We are considering renewing this measure to continue the excellent education programs this current measure has funded over the past 35 years. This current parcel tax constitutes 8% of our General Fund revenues. Inadequate State funding is simply not enough to maintain the high quality of our schools, retain the best teachers and prepare students for high school and beyond. Even with an additional 6% of revenue support from Portola Valley Partners in Education and our parent organizations, we still have a 2021 general fund deficit of \$1.0 million that we will need to be cut from our budget if Measure O is not renewed.

Will this effort improve instruction?

We strive for teaching and learning excellence in every educational setting. Exceptional teachers, challenging instructional programs, dedicated parent volunteers, and outstanding science, art, and music programs are essential to student achievement and have prepared generations of local children to succeed in high school, college, and careers. Renewing our parcel tax will allow PVSD to overcome the challenge of non-existent state funding and maintain the outstanding quality of education students receive at our schools. Teaching and learning benefit by maintaining these programs.

If the Portola Valley School District decides to ask voters to support a parcel tax, how can we be assured that the money would be spent properly?

If the Governing Board chooses to place a parcel tax on the ballot, and voters approve the measure, taxpayer protections would be required. The funds would be used only to support our

local schools and excellent instruction, nothing could be taken away by the State. Independent citizens oversight and annual audits are required to ensure the funds are used as promised.

Would businesses share in a parcel tax cost?

Yes, both commercial and residential property owners would be subject to a proposed assessment.

Who makes the final decision on a parcel tax?

The locally elected Portola Valley School District Board of Education is the legal entity that would call for an election. REGISTERED VOTERS in the Portola Valley School District would have the final say in voting for or against a measure. The Governing Board has not made any decisions yet, and will not until Winter 2020-21.

What is the difference between a Proposition 39 school bond measure and a parcel tax?

A parcel tax is a flat assessment on each parcel of land. Unlike school bond measures, which can only be used to fund school facility improvements, parcel tax revenues are used to fund programs and services. School districts use parcel tax revenues to preserve, restore, or enhance instructional programs. A parcel tax measure requires two-thirds (66.7%) approval from registered voters who vote in the election where the parcel tax measure appears on the ballot. A Proposition 39 school bond only requires 55%, plus one additional vote, to pass. No revenue generated by a local parcel tax can be taken away by the State. All parcel tax revenue stays local to benefit our local PVSD schools and students.

Isn't student enrollment expected to decline at PVSD?

Student enrollment will fluctuate over the years. PVSD's student enrollment is expected to be somewhere between 500 - 530 over the next 3 years. What cannot fluctuate are PVSD's high-quality educational programs and need to retain its experienced teachers. Various factors affect enrollment numbers, including: housing turnover, large graduating class sizes, low kindergarten numbers, housing development and more. For example, Stanford is trying to develop multiple housing units in Portola. They are still in the planning stages. If this does proceed it would likely mean an increase to student enrolment at PVSD. For more information on this please visit: <https://portolaterrace.stanford.edu/>.

Where can I get more information?

For more information, OR to share input, visit our website at: PVSD.net OR contact: Roberta Zarea, Superintendent by phone: (650) 851-1777 OR by email: rzarea@pvsd.net.