Measure M Myths VS Facts

Measure M is supported by the League of Women Voters of Marin County, local high school teachers, the Marin IJ, Congressman Jared Huffman, State Senator Mike McGuire, State Assemblymember Marc Levine and hundreds of community leaders throughout our District because our community recognizes that outstanding local high schools are essential.

And yet, some voters still have misconceptions about the measure – and we want to correct the myths and share the facts.

Myth #1: **If the Tam District Board ultimately decides to change the name of Drake High School/High School 1327, the District is going to use Measure M money to pay related costs.**

Fact The District has been very clear that, in the event a name change is approved by the Board, no public funds from current District revenue sources nor potential future sources, such as any parcel tax measure, may be spent on a name change. If Measure M fails and the Tam District loses nearly 20% of funding, all 5,200 current Tam District students will be directly impacted and the quality of education in our high schools diminished. The discussion of a potential name change is unrelated to Measure M and the need to renew locally controlled funding for our high schools.

Myth #2: **We are unhappy with distance learning and voting no on Measure M will send a message to the District.**

Fact The outcome of the vote on Measure M has no impact on the process or timeline for bringing students back to campus. That decision will be made based on public health data as well as input from parents, teachers, staff, students and other stakeholders. Voting no on M only starves the Tam District, and its 5,200 students, of essential funding that has been relied upon for over 30 years. Deep and devastating cuts to teachers and academic programs will do nothing to accelerate a safe return to in-person learning and may introduce new obstacles to safe in-person learning.

Myth #3: **Measure M is not urgent. We can wait and pass Measure M at a later date.**

Fact Measure M renews funding that accounts for 17% of the District budget and provides $16.8 million each year. If Measure M fails on November 3, the Tam District will begin the process to identify the necessary cuts – nearly 1/5 of its District budget. Cuts of this magnitude will include eliminating course offerings for students and laying off dozens of teachers.

Myth #4: **Measure M should be a square-footage parcel tax.**

Fact State law requires parcel taxes to be applied "uniformly" to all parcels in a community. While a couple school districts have attempted square-footage-based parcel taxes, some have faced legal challenges and it is not clear that a square-footage formula meets the "uniformity" requirement. Switching from a flat per parcel rate to a square-footage rate could subject the Tam District to a costly lawsuit that puts the District's parcel tax funding in jeopardy. Our community has supported a flat rate parcel tax for over 30 years. All other school parcel taxes in Marin County use a flat rate methodology.

Myth #5: **Measure M is really just going to pay for pensions.**

Fact Nearly 90% of Tam District funds, including parcel tax funds, are used to employ teachers, counselors and other school staff. Compensation for these employees includes salary, health and retirement benefits. Tam District does not have a role in setting pension rates for employees. These rates are set at the state level and local school districts are required to pay their share for their employees. Defeating Measure M will do nothing to decrease pension rates. That can only happen at the state level. Without Measure M, the students of our community will lose vital educational programs and many of our outstanding teachers will be laid off.

Myth #6: **If Prop. 15 passes, we don't need Measure M.**

Fact Pinning our hopes on a controversial statewide initiative that may not be approved and could be held up in litigation for years is irresponsible. For over 30 years, local parcel tax funding has made local high schools less dependent on unstable and inconsistent state funding from Sacramento that other school districts must rely on. Counting on Prop. 15 reduces local control and means our schools have to hope for a fair share from the State. Voting Yes on M maintains local and locally generated funding we can count on for our schools.

Myth #7: **We just voted on a parcel tax and we don't need Measure M.**

Fact In 2018 local voters approved Measure J, a temporary supplemental parcel tax measure to fund costs related to growing student enrollment and limit budget cuts at that time. That funding is now set to expire along with the District's longstanding parcel tax that has been in place for over 30 years. If both of these funding sources expire, the District will lose over $16 million in annual funding and devastating budget cuts will be required. After a measure to renew and increase the District's parcel taxes was narrowly defeated in March 2020 amidst the onset of the Coronavirus, District leaders listened to community feedback and placed Measure M on the ballot to **extend current funding at the existing rate without increasing taxes.**

YES ON M

PROTECT TAM DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS WITHOUT INCREASING TAXES

Learn the Facts and Vote YES on M for Tamalpais Union High School District Students

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