



Arcata Elementary School District

Frequently Asked Questions for Measures H & I

Although it appears that our District is in good shape based on achievements by our students, our classrooms and facilities continue to need significant repairs and improvements. Faced with aging classrooms and the need to bring school facilities up to current standards, the Arcata Elementary School District placed Measure I on the upcoming November 2016 ballot. Passage of this bond measure will allow us to modernize and upgrade our infrastructure and address safety issues.

In addition to a bond measure, the District has placed Measure H on the November ballot, which, if passed, would allow us to maintain smaller class sizes and continue to provide art, music, and dance programs as well as mental health counseling for our students.

The following information is provided to assist voters in understanding the facts behind the two measures and how their passage will affect the District and our community.

What are Measures H & I?

Measure H is a \$59 renewal parcel tax which will continue our current parcel tax that sunsets in 2017, and Measure I is a \$3.4 million general obligation (G.O.) bond program. These measures will address the needs of the student population at Arcata Elementary and Sunny Brae Middle School.

What is a Parcel Tax?

Parcel taxes fund school needs that usually come out of the general fund. Parcel taxes are used to upgrade technology in classrooms and labs; maintain class sizes; expand music, art, and dance programs; make health and safety improvements; and fund physical and mental health programs.

What is a General Obligation (G.O.) bond?

G.O. bonds fund projects such as the renovation of existing classrooms and school facilities, as well as construction of new schools and classrooms. Similar to a home loan, G.O. bonds are typically repaid over 25 to 30 years. The loan repayment comes from a tax on all taxable property - residential, commercial, agricultural, and industrial - located within the District's boundaries.

Why is the District placing two measures on the ballot?

The scope of improvements needed in the Arcata Elementary School District is far greater than the current funding sources available. The per-pupil funding received by the District from the state is restricted to the day-to-day business of educating children, and cannot be used for upgrading, modernizing, and repairing facilities.

Over the years our District has made improvements to modernize, upgrade, and renovate many of our classrooms and school facilities. Today, we need to finish the job we started. A local school improvement measure would allow the District to improve the quality of the school facilities and education provided to local students.

How did the District establish the Needs List for Measures H & I?

Over the last several months, with input from staff, teachers, parents, community leaders and an architect, the District has prepared a Needs List for the bond and the parcel tax including:

- Replacing outdated and energy inefficient heating and ventilation systems
- Making health and safety improvements
- Maintaining class sizes
- Replacing temporary portables with permanent classrooms
- Maintaining or expanding art, music, and dance programs
- Addressing immediate maintenance and safety issues to increase student safety
- Retaining certified staff members
- Modernizing outdated classrooms, restrooms, and school facilities
- Providing counseling and mental health services for students

What will the passage of Measures H & I mean for our students and the community?

Passage of Measure H will maintain class sizes and programs that are critical to our children's success. Passage of Measure I will provide our students with a better learning environment by making repairs and upgrades to existing classrooms and school facilities, many of which are also used by and available to the community.

What will happen if Measures H & I do not pass?

If Measure H does not pass, class sizes will continue to grow, making it more difficult to give our students the attention they deserve. In addition, programs such as art, music, dance and counseling, as well as classroom teachers, will need to be cut or reduced. If Measure I does not pass, our classrooms and school facilities will continue to deteriorate. In addition, funds that would otherwise go to classroom instruction will need to be utilized to make critical safety repairs and improvements at each school. Major repairs will need to be postponed and as a result will potentially be more expensive to make.

What will Measures H & I cost?

Measure H is a flat tax of \$59 per parcel, which renews our parcel tax from 2012. The Measure I tax rate per property owner is estimated to be \$15.60 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation per year. Assessed valuation does not mean market value. An Assessed valuation is the value placed on property by the County and is typically lower than market value. Check your property tax statement for your current assessed valuation.

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

By law, all bond funds have to be spent locally and cannot be taken by the state; there must be annual audits and performance audits. An independent Citizens' Oversight Committee will be established to ensure that bond and parcel tax funds are properly spent.