

PIEDMONT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Randall Booker, Superintendent

DATE: April 24, 2019

RE: SCHOOL SUPPORT TAX POLLING RESULTS

I. SUPPORT INFORMATION

Since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, the Piedmont community has conducted a series of successful annual fundraising campaigns to save school programs threatened by cutbacks in state funds. Recognizing that the community could not sustain annual fundraising campaigns forever, the community identified the school support tax authorization as a means for Piedmont to maintain a measure of local control to preserve excellence in Piedmont's public schools. In 1985, the first parcel tax was passed. To date, Piedmont residents have approved Parcel Taxes eight times to preserve and maintain important educational programs and services in the schools.

On March 5, 2013, citizens approved the current School Support Tax, which is in effect until June 30, 2021. Measure A superseded and replaced the Measure B Parcel Tax, which was set to expire on June 30, 2014. Measure A was a renewal of Measure B and maintained Piedmont's excellent quality of public education by attracting, training and retaining qualified teachers, maintaining small class sizes, and protecting instructional programs and services, including art and music, world language, advanced placement, school libraries, classroom technology and student counseling.

Measure A currently raises \$10,414,176 to support Piedmont Schools.

- \$2,656 per parcel
- 3921 taxable parcels in Piedmont

Earlier parcel taxes had a tax rate that varied relative to the size of the parcel. However, due to a decision in the California Court of Appeals, *Borikas v. Alameda Unified School District*, Measure A provided for a uniform flat tax rate that applies to every property. Measure A currently allows for an annual increase in the levy rate of no more than 2% above the previous rate.

Because the current Measure A School Support Tax is set to expire on June 30, 2021, the Board of Education has requested that the community begin discussions on a renewal effort. Additionally, at the Board's request, True North Research conducted a community poll that gauged voter's interest in supporting the renewal of the PUSD School Support Tax.

True North Research is a full-service survey research firm that is dedicated to providing public agencies with a clear understanding of the values, perceptions, priorities and concerns of their residents and voters. Through designing and implementing scientific surveys, focus groups and one-on-one interviews, as well as expert interpretation of the findings, True North helps school districts and other public agencies make strategic planning decisions.

The primary purpose of this study was to produce an unbiased, statistically reliable evaluation of voters' interest in supporting the renewal of the District's School Support Tax. Additionally, should the District decide to move forward with a renewal measure, the survey data provides guidance as to how to structure a measure so that it is consistent with the community's priorities and expressed needs. Specifically, the survey was designed to:

- Gauge current, baseline support for a local school support tax to maintain Piedmont's excellent quality of public education by attracting, training and retaining qualified teachers and classified staff, maintaining small class sizes, and protecting instructional programs and services, including art and music, world language, advanced placement, school libraries, classroom technology and student counseling.
- Identify the types of programs and services that voters are most interested in funding, should the measure pass
- Expose voters to arguments in favor of—and against—the proposed school support tax to gauge how information affects support for the measure, *and*
- Estimate support for the measure once voters are presented with the types of information they will likely be exposed to during the election cycle.

II. **RECOMMENDATION: INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION**

Review the PUSD School Support Tax – Community polling results.