TAM 21st Century

The Report 2011

A Publication of the Tamalpais Union High School District

A Message From Superintendent Laurie Kimbrel

Dr. Laurie Kimbrel has been the superintendent of the Tamalpais Union High School District since 2008. She has worked in education for over 23 years and is passionate about ensuring that every student is prepared for success in the twenty first century. Laurie lives with her husband, Tim, and their two teenage children in Larkspur.

School is Back in Session!

It's always an absolute pleasure to be part of a new academic year at the Tamalpais Union High School District (TUHSD). Every August, our five high school campuses come alive with energetic teens brimming with optimism about the new school year. This fall our students return to construction-free campuses that house our excellent and, in many cases, award-winning academic programs. Despite what is happening around the state, TUHSD has NOT cut academic programs, has NOT increased class sizes, and has NOT cut teaching or counseling staff. In short, we have managed to maintain the excellent teaching and learning programs that have come to define our schools and local communities. Our commitment to the development of creative, passionate, self-motivated learners that are prepared for success beyond high school is evident in all that we do!

Impact of the Economy on the Tam District

I am often asked by local residents, "How has TUHSD been able to keep all of its teachers and academic programs when so many other California schools have cut so much?" Like many in our communities, the district has also tightened its belt considerably over the past several years. However, we have tried to do so in a manner that has had the least impact on our students. When our revenues dropped due to drastic reductions in state funding, as well as the changing economy, we responded by making $4.5 million in cuts. As would happen with any financially responsible family, when our income dropped, we had to change the way we live by spending less. Over the past three years we have cut 33% of our district office administration and 9% of our support staff. These cuts were painful, but necessary to ensure our future financial security.

Parcel Tax Renewal Slated for November 8 Ballot

In May, the Tamalpais Union High School District Board of Trustees voted unanimously to place a parcel tax renewal – Measure B– on the November 8, 2011 ballot. This measure will ask the voters to renew the current parcel tax with no increase beyond extending the annual adjustment. This local tax amounts to $238.78 per parcel per year or approximately $20 per month for a period of 10 years beginning on July 1, 2012. A property owner 65 and older may apply for an exemption.

The current parcel tax allows the district to maintain quality high school education by providing exceptional academic programs and a superb teaching staff. It comprises 16% of the district's $55 million annual budget. All funds generated by the parcel tax remain under local control and directly benefit the Tam District's five high schools: Drake, Tam, Redwood, San Andreas, and Tamiscal. Failure to renew the parcel tax would result in approximately $8.8 million in budget cuts, including the elimination of teaching and counseling positions, and the severe reduction of crucial academic programs and services for our students.

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Your Parcel Tax Dollars

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the parcel tax?
This parcel tax will continue to provide stable local funding to the Tamalpais Union High School District (TUHSD) in order to maintain quality education and exceptional academic programs for the district's 3800 students. The current parcel tax expires in June 2012. Measure B on the November 8 ballot will ask voters to renew this financial commitment. Measure B is not a new tax, but rather a continuation of the current parcel tax and the existing minimal annual adjustment.

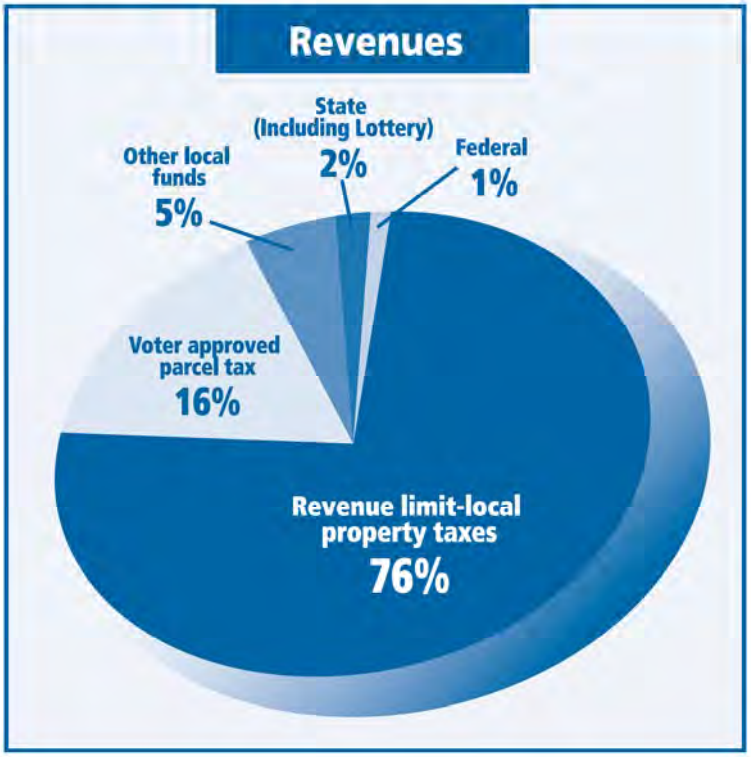
How much is the proposed parcel tax renewal? How long is the term of the tax? Will there be an annual adjustment?
Measure B will renew the existing parcel tax that the voters have supported since 1989. This local tax, deductible from federal and state incomes taxes, amounts to $238.78 per parcel annually or approximately $20 per month, beginning on July 1, 2012, with a 3% annual adjustment. The term is for a period of 10 years. Currently, the TUHSD parcel tax is the lowest in southern and central Marin.

Has the community approved TUHSD parcel taxes before?
Yes, the community has consistently recognized the value of quality local high school education and has been very supportive of the needs of our students and schools. Voters initially passed a parcel tax in 1989. Subsequently, the voters approved renewals in 1997 and 2004.

Will senior citizens be exempt from paying this tax?
An exemption is available to a property owner who has attained the age of 65 prior to May 1 of the assessment year and uses the parcel as his or her principal residence. To obtain a parcel tax exemption application and find out more information on the process, please contact Kaley Cloney in the district office at 945-3709.

Do renters pay a parcel tax? What about condominium or business owners?
The parcel tax is levied on each parcel and is the responsibility of the owner, not the renter. Each unit in a condominium complex is assessed and taxed as a separate parcel. Thus, condominium owners pay the same parcel tax as all other residential property owners. A business owner does not necessarily pay the parcel tax directly, unless that individual is the owner of the property where the business is located.

Who is served by the parcel tax?
The parcel tax supports the district's three comprehensive high schools (*Tam, Redwood, and Drake*), a continuation high school (*San Andreas*) and an independent study high school (*Tamiscal*). These five schools serve 3800 students from ten K-8 elementary feeder districts that represent eighteen communities in southern and central Marin including Belvedere, Bolinas, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Greenbrae, Kentfield, Lagunitas, Larkspur, Marin City, Mill Valley, Muir Beach, Nicasio, Ross, San Anselmo, Sausalito, Stinson Beach, Tiburon, and Woodacre.



What programs are supported by the parcel tax?
The funds generated by the parcel tax are used to support all aspects of the district's exceptional educational program for its students. These include science and technology, Advanced Placement and Honors courses, a seven period day for students, alternative education programs, student counseling services, fine arts programs, up-to-date instructional materials and equipment, and the recruitment and retention of highly qualified and experienced teachers and staff.

How much revenue does the parcel tax provide the Tam District? What revenues does the District receive from the state and other sources?
For the 2011-2012 school year, the parcel tax will generate $8,820,573. This represents 16% of the Tam District's $55,881,139 budget. The district receives funding from several sources, as shown in the chart, above. In addition to these funding sources, an active parent community also supports school and athletic programs. Parents contribute countless volunteer hours and provide financial support through contributions to the school foundations and parent clubs.

How many votes are needed to pass Measure B?
Any parcel tax, including Measure B, requires a 2/3 majority of votes cast in order to pass.

What would happen if the voters did not approve the parcel tax renewal?
The district would need to cut approximately $8.8 million from the budget. Teaching positions would be eliminated and academic programs for students severely curtailed. The direct result would be a decline in the quality of local high school education.

How do the district's graduation requirements compare to those of the state of California, and how does TUHSD perform on accountability measures?
The district's graduation requirements exceed those of the state of California in science, math, English, social studies, fine arts, and computer literacy. Over 95% of our 10th graders pass the California High School Exit Exam graduation requirement on their first attempt. The high school graduation rate for TUHSD students is 98% compared to a state average of 70%. Each year, TUHSD graduates enroll in over 80 different universities ranging from the UCs to the Ivy League, as well as specialized art and drama schools. Redwood, Tam, and Tamiscal have all earned the highest score on the state's accountability measure (API); San Andreas improved its API score by 70 points and has been named a "Model Continuation High School." Redwood, Tam, Drake, and Tamiscal have received the California Distinguished School Award, and Redwood has been designated as a National Blue Ribbon School. Tamiscal is the only school in California to have earned both the California Distinguished School Award and the State Independent Achievement School Award.

Why are our high school students so successful?
The academic achievement of the students in all Tamalpais District schools is a direct reflection of the quality academic programs offered, a highly trained teaching and professional staff, the degree of involvement and assistance provided by parents, and the level of commitment and financial support from the entire high school district community.

Refunding of General Obligation Bonds Saves Taxpayers Millions

In the summer of 2010, TUHSD refinanced its 2001 general obligation bonds, which paid for modernization of all district schools. This refinancing has dramatically lowered the district's debt service costs to the taxpayers. The bond refunding achieved a savings of 8.46% equating to $4.35 million in present value terms. While this is great news, it does not save the district any money; however, it is a savings to the taxpayers who will now benefit from an interest cost of only 3.29% and a reduction in the bond portion of their tax bills.

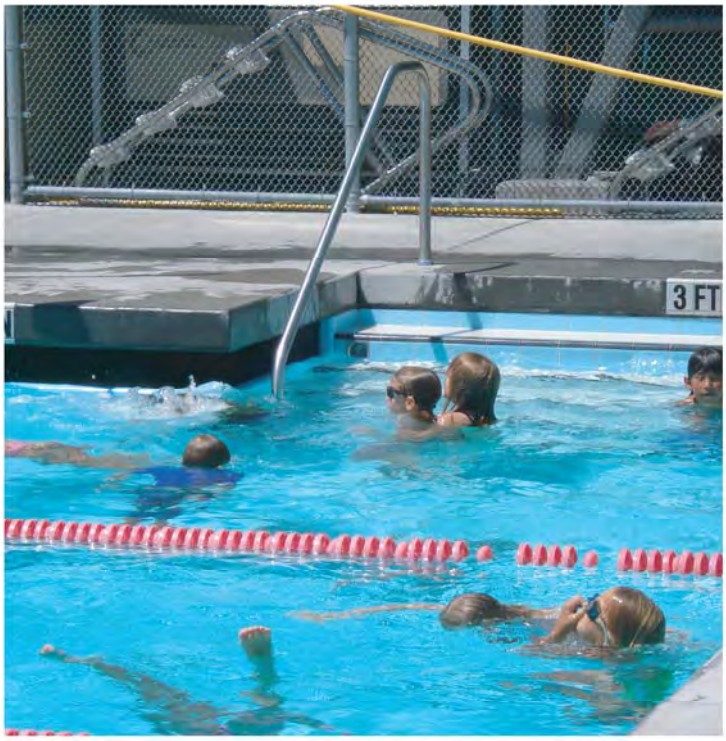
Prior to the bond sale, Standard & Poor's affirmed the district's long-term AAA credit rating. This is the highest possible investment grade rating available and is rare for a school district in the state of California. In fact, the Tam District's rating is six notches higher than the S&P rating for the state of California. Standard and Poor's noted that it is difficult to maintain a balanced budget in the current fiscal climate in California. Their rating commended the Tam District Board of Trustees for taking prudent steps to maintain the fiscal integrity and solvency of the district.

Are the Tam Union High School District Facilities Open to the Community?

The facilities at the three comprehensive high schools - Tam in Mill Valley, Redwood in Larkspur, and Sir Francis Drake in San Anselmo - are available to the community except when they are being used by school classes, athletic teams or scheduled organized events. The Tamalpais District high school athletic fields, tracks, pools, gymnasiums, tennis courts, and outdoor basketball courts are almost in constant use by community members and local groups during non-school hours.

In addition, many of the buildings from classrooms to theaters are available for rental at reasonable rates. Rental rates are kept at a minimum and are imposed to cover utilities, maintenance, and custodial services. Some of the many groups who enjoy our facilities include Little League baseball, youth and adult soccer, softball, football, rugby, lacrosse and volleyball, summer camps, swim clubs, and local theater companies. To find out more about the rental of TUHSD facilities, please contact the Director of Community Programs, Chris McCune, at cmccune@tamdistrict.org or 945-1022.

The Tamalpais District Community and Adult Education Program also offers hundreds of courses for all ages throughout the year. A sampling includes mastering the ins and outs of the internet, learning a second language, planning your retirement, water aerobics, or reducing everyday stress through yoga. To view the class offerings, log onto the website at www.marinlearn.com or call 945-3730 to receive a catalogue.



If you have any additional questions or need more information please visit our website at www.tamdistrict.org

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