LOS GATOS-SARATOGA UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT MEASURE A

To attract and retain highly qualified teachers, maintain strong core academic programs and high-quality science, technology, engineering, and math courses, support high student achievement and prepare students for top colleges and careers, shall Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District's measure be adopted, renewing its expiring education parcel tax at the current $49, plus $79/parcel, providing $2,520,000 annually for nine years, with annual adjustments, citizen oversight, senior exemptions, no funds for administrators, and every dollar benefiting local high schools?

Yes
No

COUNTY COUNSEL'S IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS OF MEASURE A

A school district may levy a special tax upon approval by two-thirds of the votes cast on a proposal pursuant to section 4 of article XIIIA of the California Constitution and sections 50075 *et seq.* of the California Government Code. The Board of Trustees (Board) of the Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District (District) has placed on the ballot a measure to enact a $128 per year school parcel tax that will commence on July 1, 2024, and continue for nine (9) years from that date, ending on June 30, 2033. The measure states that the parcel tax amount shall increase by a percentage amount equal to the annual percentage change in the Bay Area Consumer Price Index—All Urban Consumers, San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward area on July 1, 2025, and on each July 1 thereafter, to account for cost-of-living increases. If approved, the proposed tax would replace the existing special tax of $49 per parcel authorized by District voters in May 2016 as Measure A, which is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2025.

State law requires the District to state the specific purposes for which the tax proceeds will be used and only spend the proceeds of the tax for these purposes. The stated purposes of the tax proposed by this Measure A are to:

- Attract and retain highly qualified teachers and staff;
- Maintain strong core academic programs and high-quality science, math, technology, robotics, engineering, and AP courses;
- Provide college-and career-prep programs;
- Support high student achievement; and
- Ensure teacher salaries are competitive with surrounding districts.

No funds are to be used for administrator salaries or benefits. State law requires the District to provide additional accountability measures for the proceeds including (1) depositing the proceeds into a fund that is separate from other District funds, and (2) providing an annual written report to the Board detailing the amount of funds collected and expended and the status of any project authorized to be funded from the tax. An independent citizens' oversight committee will be appointed or designated by the Board to provide oversight regarding the expenditure of the proceeds of the proposed tax revenues.

Upon District approval, an exemption may be granted to parcels that are owner-occupied principal residences of one or more persons (1) 65 years of age or older on or before June 30 of the prior fiscal year, (2) receiving Supplemental Security Income for a disability, regardless of age, or (3) receiving Social Security Disability Insurance benefits, regardless of age, whose yearly income does not exceed 250 percent of the 2012 federal poverty guidelines issued by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Property owners who are currently exempt from any qualified special tax currently levied by the District will continue to be exempt without need to re-apply, subject to the District's right to verify continuing qualification.

COUNTY COUNSEL'S IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS OF MEASURE A-Continued

A "yes" vote is a vote to enact a tax of $128 per parcel, increasing annually, on parcels within the District for nine years.

A "no" vote is a vote to not enact the tax.

Tony LoPresti
County Counsel

By: Nick DeFiesta
Deputy County Counsel

COMPLETE TEXT OF MEASURE A

LOS GATOS-SARATOGA UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
The Los Gatos & Saratoga High Schools' Teacher Compensation & Academic Excellence Act of 2024

Measure A

FINDINGS

Los Gatos and Saratoga High Schools are recognized among two of the most distinguished public high schools in the state and nation. The campuses host rigorous academic programs, guiding students to success in top colleges and challenging careers. The draw of local schools attracts parents and community members to the area, keeping property values high and our sense of community strong.

However, the district's high schools have been losing teacher talent to neighboring districts in recent years. Despite the increasing cost of living and the demand for excellent education, state funding and local revenue for local high has stayed stagnant, and teacher compensation has fallen behind that of similar districts.

The District seeks to maintain its excellent local schools with award-winning academic programs and top teachers by renewing its expiring source of parcel tax funding. The Los Gatos & Saratoga High Schools' Teacher Compensation & Academic Excellence Act of 2024 would allow local high schools to continue the innovative academic programs and retain the highly qualified teachers that set local high schools apart.

TERMS

Moneys raised under this Measure shall be authorized to be used only for the following purposes in accordance with priorities established by the Board and to the extent of available funds:

- Attract and retain highly qualified teachers and school staff;
- Maintain strong core academic programs and high-quality science, math, technology, robotics, engineering and AP courses;
- Provide programs that prepare students for college and future careers;
- Support high student achievement; and
- Ensure teacher salaries are competitive with surrounding districts.

No funds will be spent on administrative salaries or benefits.

A. <u>Amount and Basis of Tax</u>

This Measure shall authorize the District to annually levy a qualified special tax of $49 plus $79, for a total of $128 per Parcel of Taxable Real Property beginning July 1, 2024, and continuing for a period of nine (9) years ("Parcel Tax").

Beginning on July 1, 2025, and each year thereafter, the rate of the Parcel Tax shall be increased from the rate levied in the prior tax year by a cost-of-living adjustment equal to the annual average percentage change in the Bay Area Consumer Price Index-All Urban Consumers,

COMPLETE TEXT OF MEASURE A-Continued

San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward area over the prior twelve months, as of December 1 of the prior fiscal year, as published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. If, in any given year, that index is not available, then the rate will be adjusted based on the changes in the Consumer Price Index-All Urban Consumers (CPI-U).

The Parcel Tax is estimated to raise $2,520,000 in annual local funding for District schools. The amount of annual local funding raised by this Parcel Tax will vary from year-to-year due to changes in the number of parcels subject to the levy and cost of living adjustments.

To the extent allowed by law, for the purposes of the Parcel Tax, "Parcel of Taxable Real Property" shall be defined as:

(a) Any unit of real property wholly or partially in the District that receives a separate tax bill for *ad valorem* property taxes from the County of Santa Clara or County of Santa Cruz.

(b) All property that is otherwise exempt from or upon which are levied no *ad valorem* property taxes in any year shall not be considered a Parcel of Taxable Real Property for purposes of the Parcel Tax in such year.

(c) Multiple parcels which are contiguous, under identical ownership, and used solely for owner-occupied single-family residential purposes may, pursuant to procedures determined by the District, be treated as a single Parcel of Taxable Real Property for purposes of the Parcel Tax.

If any portion of this definition is deemed contrary to law, the Board declares and the voters, by approving the Measure concur, that every other section and part of this definition has independent value, and the Board and voters would have adopted each other section and part hereof regardless of every other section or part hereof. If all sections or parts of this definition are deemed contrary to law, "Parcel of Taxable Real Property" shall be defined as any real property wholly or partially in the District assigned an assessor's parcel number. The Board declares, and the voters by approving the Measure concur, they understand and intend that the modifications allowed by this paragraph would result in an increase in the number of parcels subject to the Parcel Tax.

The existing qualified special tax approved by voters as Measure A in 2016 shall cease to be levied after June 30, 2025. This Measure will replace the existing Measure A, and the Measure A qualified special tax shall not be collected in any year in which this Measure is collected. In the event this Measure is not approved, the existing Measure A qualified special tax shall continue in effect until its scheduled expiration date.

B. <u>Exemptions</u>

Under procedures and deadlines adopted by the District, an exemption from payment of the Parcel Tax may be granted on any parcel owned by one or more persons who is/are:

1. Sixty-five (65) years of age or over on or before June 30 of the fiscal year immediately preceding the year in which the tax would apply and occupying said parcel as a principal residence ("Senior Citizen Exemption");

2. Receiving Supplemental Security Income for a disability, regardless of age and occupying said parcel as a principal residence ("SSI Exemption"); or

3. Receiving Social Security Disability Insurance benefits, regardless of age, whose yearly income does not exceed 250 percent of the 2012 federal poverty guidelines issued by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and occupying said parcel as a principal residence ("SSDI Exemption").

Exemptions granted under prior qualified special taxes levied by the District will not require re-approval, subject to the District's right to verify a property owner's continuing qualification for exemption.

The District may establish administrative procedures to periodically verify the continuance of any previously granted exemption.

The District shall annually provide to the appropriate county official a list of parcels that the District has approved for an exemption.

C. Claim/Exemption Procedures

With respect to all general property tax matters within its jurisdiction, the appropriate county tax official shall make all final determinations of tax exemption or relief for any reason, and that decision shall be final and binding. With respect to matters specific to the levy of the Parcel Tax, including the exemptions provided by the Parcel Tax, the application of the definition of "Parcel of Taxable Real Property" to any parcel(s) or any other disputed matter specific to the application of the Parcel Tax, the decisions of the District shall be final and binding. The procedures described herein, and any additional procedures established by the District shall be the exclusive claims procedure for claimants seeking an exemption, refund, reduction, or re-computation of the Parcel Tax. Whether any particular claim is to be resolved by the District or a county tax official shall be determined by the District, in coordination with the county tax official as necessary.

D. Appropriations Limit

Pursuant to California Constitution and applicable laws, the appropriations limit for the District will be adjusted periodically by the aggregate sum collected by levy of the Parcel Tax.

E. Accountability Measures

1. *Specific Purposes*. The proceeds of the Parcel Tax shall be applied only to the specific purposes identified above. The proceeds of the Parcel Tax shall be deposited into a fund, which shall be kept separate and apart from other funds of the District, pursuant to the Government Code.

2. *Annual Reports*. No later than December 31 of each year while the tax is in effect, the District shall prepare and file with the Board a report detailing the amount of funds collected and expended during the prior fiscal year, and the status of any project authorized to be funded by this measure. The report may relate to the calendar year, fiscal year, or other appropriate annual period, as said officer shall determine, and may be incorporated into or filed with the annual budget, audit, or other appropriate routine report to the Board.

COMPLETE TEXT OF MEASURE A-Continued

3. *Independent Oversight Committee*. An independent oversight committee shall be appointed or designated by the Board to ensure that the Parcel Tax proceeds are spent for their authorized purposes, and to report annually to the Board and the public regarding the expenditure of such funds. The Board shall provide by resolution for the composition, duties, funding, and other necessary information regarding the committee's formation and operation. The Board shall have the option to designate any current independent oversight committee and its membership to serve as the independent oversight committee for this Measure.

F. Protection of Funding

Current law forbids any decrease in State or federal funding to the District resulting from the adoption of an education parcel tax. However, if any such funding is reduced or affected because of the adoption of this local funding measure, then the Board may reduce the amount of the Parcel Tax levied as necessary in order to restore such State or federal funding and/or maximize the District's fiscal position for the benefit of the educational program. As a result, whether directly or indirectly, no funding from this measure may be taken away by the State or federal governments.

G. Severability

The Board hereby declares, and the voters by approving this measure concur, that every section and part of this measure has independent value, and the Board and the voters would have adopted each provision hereof regardless of every other provision hereof. Upon approval of this measure by the voters, should any part of the measure or taxing formula be found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid for any reason, all remaining parts of the measure or taxing formula hereof shall remain in full force and effect to the fullest extent allowed by law.

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE A

Vote Yes on A—protect what sets Los Gatos and Saratoga High Schools apart: excellent teachers and outstanding academics.

Los Gatos and Saratoga High Schools are among the most successful public high schools in the state and nation, influencing why many people choose to live here. Their exceptional teachers and rigorous academic programs strengthen our community and keep our property values high.

Yet you may not know that our high schools rank dead last in many key funding metrics. In fact, high schools in Palo Alto, Mountain View, Los Altos, Santa Clara, Cupertino and Sunnyvale all provide higher teacher salaries than Los Gatos and Saratoga High Schools. Simply put, without additional funding, we are going to lose top teacher talent to higher-paying districts.

That's where Measure A comes in.

It renews our District's expiring parcel tax, which is currently the lowest among the nearly 30 school districts in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties that rely on parcel tax funding.

Even with Measure A, our parcel tax will be among the lowest in Silicon Valley, but we'll be able to protect award-winning academic programs and keep the best and brightest teachers in local high schools without overburdening local taxpayers.

Vote Yes on A: Top Teachers, Excellent Education, Successful Students

- Attract and retain highly qualified teachers and school staff
- Maintain strong core academic programs and high-quality science, math, technology and engineering courses
- Prepare students for success in college, careers and life

Strict Accountability Keeps Measure A Local

- All funds are locally controlled and cannot be taken by the State
- Citizens' oversight and annual audits ensure all funds are spent as promised
- No funds can be spent on administrators' salaries
- Senior citizens are eligible for an exemption

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE A-Continued

Measure A protects the excellent education our community expects and our students deserve. Join us in voting Yes.

Cynthia Chang
Retired Board Member (24 years), Los Gatos-Saratoga High School District; Member, Organization of Chinese American Women, Silicon Valley Chapter; Member, League of Women Voters, Southwest Santa Clara Valley Chapter & 39-Year Saratoga Resident

Catherine R. Messenger
Teacher & 24-Year Monte Sereno Resident

Lee Fagot
Former Member, Los Gatos-Saratoga Parcel Tax Oversight Committee & 39-Year Los Gatos Resident

Lucy Wedemeyer
Local Realtor and 37-Year Los Gatos Resident

Bill Cooper
Small Business Owner and First Saratoga High School Freshman Class

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE A

Our children's education is vital—we all agree.

So are their parents' finances.

Government schools, including LGSUHSD's, have neglected both.

When 1/5 to 1/4 of children fall below standards in "core" academics—at rates worse than last period…

…it is possible LGSUHSD is approaching their job wrong.

They keep saying our mounting tax payments will "maintain" (why not "improve"?) core academics…

…yet academics keep weakening.

If we cave whenever LGSUHSD pleads for money, **they will never get motivated to triage their budget or truly improve.**

Help motivate LGSUHSD … vote NO.

When enrollment declines…

…it is possible LGSUHSD is disregarding constituents' needs.

Government schools are not monopolies. Witness the surging popularity of homeschooling and private-tutoring franchises. Americans are victims of monetary-inflation policies' skyrocketing prices...

…LGSUHSD should tighten its belt—as we all are.

With $314,914/classroom being lavished on everything but the teacher, reallocating some administrative expenses into academics would be a sensible start—even demonstrating concern for parents' pocketbooks.

Remember: money is fungible, so don't be impressed by claims of no funds for administration.

Proposed new tax
(nine years)

Year:	2024	2025	2026	2027	…	…	2031	2032	**Total**
Current tax:	$49	$49	$0	$0	…	…	$0	$0	**$ 98**
Proposed:	$128	$128	$128	$128	…	…	$128	$128	**- 1,152**
								New tax:	**$ 1,054**

(Imagine your family having $1,054 extra.)

Neighbors, parents … please join us in voting NO on Measure A.

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE A-Continued

Silicon Valley Taxpayers Association's volunteers fight for taxpayers throughout Santa Clara County (SVTaxpayers.org).

[Data source: Education Data Partnership, Ed-Data.org]

Mark W.A. Hinkle
President, Silicon Valley Taxpayers Association

Joe Dehn
Chair, Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County

Kathryn A. Hingle
District Resident

Jack Faraone
District Resident

ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE A

The justification for 2016's temporary $49 parcel tax? "...maintain outstanding core academic programs...."

Has Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District ***earned*** Measure A's ***new tax* of $1,152/parcel?**

Proposed new tax

($49 + $79, nine years)

Year:	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	**Total**
Current tax:	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	= **ZERO**
Proposed:	$128	$128	$128	$128	$128	$128	$128	$128	$128	= **$1,152**

(What would your family choose to do with *your* $1,152?)

Did LGSUHD indeed maintain core academics? Let's examine test results:

English/Literacy

- 2018-19: **13.83% of students were falling below state standards.**
- 2022-23: **21.47% fell below standards!**

Mathematics

- 2018-19: **22.05% of students were falling below state standards.**
- 2022-23: **26.66% fell below standards!**

Alas, in core academics, LGSUHD **has let down even more of our children**… and broken its promise to voters!

No wonder enrollment declined by 251 since 2018-19.

Should you, the voter, award **pay raises to those producing failure rates** of **21.47% to 26.66%**?

No? Then vote **NO on Measure A**.

LGSUHD **spends $22,093/student** (2021-22). With average class size approximating 21, **that's $463,953/classroom.** Teachers' average salary is $113,819 (2020-21), plus benefits up to $35,220.

That leaves a whopping $314,914/classroom for other expenses … but **LGSUHD's insatiable administration *wants more of your hard-earned money*** to pad their salaries and fat pension plans.

Wait … didn't they claim no funds will go to administrators?

Well, funds generated *separately* from this parcel tax *can* go to administration expenses—without limit! So, that assurance is a shell game—do not be fooled.

Parents know: If you reward failure, you will get more failure!

ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE A-Continued

You can be FOR children, FOR teachers, FOR learning … and AGAINST big spending!

Neighbors, parents … please join us in voting NO on Measure A.

For information: *SVTaxpayers.org*

[Data source: Education Data Partnership, Ed-Data.org]

Mark W. A. Hinkle
President, Silicon Valley Taxpayers Association

Joe Dehn
Chair, Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County

Kathryn A. Hingle
District Resident

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE A

Measure A is about our kids, our students and our community, yet two of Measure A's opponents don't live here. Why are they concerned about renewing expiring funding for Los Gatos and Saratoga High Schools? Why are they using misleading facts to take $2,500,000 in annual local funding from our students and teachers?

Los Gatos and Saratoga High Schools are two of the highest-performing high schools in the state and nation. In the State of California, our district is ranked first in mathematics of all high school districts; Niche ranked us 3rd out of 504 California districts; and US News & World Report puts both high schools in the top 3% in the country. We all benefit from high property values and a strong community because of our excellent high schools.

Teachers at Los Gatos and Saratoga High Schools are paid less than teachers in all neighboring districts, including in Palo Alto, Mountain View, Los Altos, Santa Clara, Cupertino and Sunnyvale. Without Measure A, we just aren't competitive in hiring teachers.

The current $49 parcel tax, soon to expire, hasn't increased in over 13 years and is the lowest of all Silicon Valley districts that rely on parcel tax funding. Even with Measure A's modest $79 increase, we'll still rank near the bottom. By renewing this critical source of funding, we can keep our schools and community strong without overburdening local taxpayers.

Don't be fooled by a few idealogues with an agenda. They are not supportive of our students or community.

Let's keep the best teachers and excellent academics in local high schools—vote Yes on A.

Jak Van Nada
Founder, Los Gatos Community Alliance & 53-year Los Gatos Resident

Kathleen Granger
Chairperson, Los Gatos-Saratoga UHSD Budget Advisory Committee, 12-year Monte Sereno Resident & Accounting Professional

Howard Miller
Former Mayor of Saratoga, 30-year Saratoga Resident & West Valley College Professor

Patti Hughes
55-year Santa Cruz Mountains Residents & Retired Educator

Sangita Seshadri
27-year Saratoga Resident, Former President of Saratoga Rotary Club, Ph.D in Biochemistry