

Great Teachers Providing Excellent Education for Culver City Students

Questions and Answers about Funding Excellence

How are Culver City Unified School District schools performing?

With highly qualified teachers and a graduation rate of 98%, Culver City USD graduates are accepted into selective colleges and go on to succeed in competitive careers. Our students receive an excellent education in all our schools -- including two K-5 Language Immersion schools, a preschool, Academy of Visual and Performing Arts, and career pathway programs that bring hands-on education into the classroom. Our strong local schools continue to improve, contributing to the quality of life that makes Culver City such a desirable place to live and helping to protect property values.

What challenges are facing Culver City schools today?

Culver City USD relies on the State for virtually all of our operating funds; however, the State has proven to be an unreliable funding partner, making the District vulnerable to budget cuts. In order to keep pace with 21st-century education needs, attract and keep our highly qualified teachers and enhance the academic programs that set Culver City schools apart, we need an additional source of local funding.

What solution is the Board of Education considering to maintain high-quality schools?

School districts have very limited options when it comes to accessing additional revenue. In order to protect the high-quality academic programs our community expects and to continue to attract and retain the best teachers, the District has voted to place a local funding measure on the November 2018 ballot to enable the District to continue the tradition of outstanding education for all students. The annual flat tax of \$189 per parcel would generate approximately \$2.3 million per year and would expire in seven years, unless renewed by voters.

Are Culver City teacher salaries competitive with those of teachers in other districts? Teacher salaries in Culver City USD were below the County median for a number of years. The passage of our previous local funding measure helped to bring our teacher salaries up to the County median, where they are today, allowing us to hire and keep some of the best teachers. However, with the recent expiration of the parcel tax and the inadequacy of State funding, keeping competitive salaries is a challenge.

Didn't Culver City voters already pass a parcel tax?

In 2009, Culver City voters approved a parcel tax of \$96 (Measure EE) which provided our schools with approximately \$1.2 million per year, but this measure expired in 2015.

What about funds from our local bond measure?

Use of funds from the District's local bond measure (Measure CC approved by voters in 2014) is restricted by law to facility improvements, for example, buildings, classroom equipment and technology. Bond measures cannot fund programs or salaries. Parcel taxes on the other hand may be used to maintain competitive teacher salaries and instructional programs.

Does our District have a strong track record of managing taxpayer dollars?

Yes. The District administration understands the importance of true partnership between administrators, teachers and school staff in supporting student success. The District has proven to be fiscally responsible in managing its own budget even as it faces continued challenges posed by unreliable State funding.

How would local funding from the local parcel tax funding measure be used?

Should voters approve the local parcel tax funding measure, Culver City Unified would have access to locally-controlled funding that could be used to maintain and continue to improve our schools. Specifically, funding uses would include:

- Maintaining and improving classes in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), English, writing and the arts
- Attracting quality teachers by offering salaries that are competitive with salaries in other local districts
- Continuing career education in technology and engineering to prepare students for modern careers
- Maintaining small class sizes and providing programs to help at-risk students succeed

Didn't the City recently give the District enough extra money to support teachers and programs?

No. The City recently refinanced their outstanding bonds, generating \$33 million in savings for the City. CCUSD will receive a portion of that savings for a total \$7.6M distributed over 11 years. These are one time funds, primarily restricted to use on school facilities, (for which the State also fails to provide adequate revenues to maintain). The majority of these funds will not be available to the District to pay for teachers and programs.

Are fiscal accountability provisions included in the local funding measure?

Yes, the measure continues our District's commitment to fiscal accountability. Every dollar from the local funding measure would stay in Culver City and be used to support CCUSD schools, and none of the funds could be taken away by the State or used for administrator salaries. Independent oversight is required to ensure funds are spent as promised.

Are exemptions available for senior citizens?

Yes, seniors age 65 and older are eligible for an exemption from the cost of the measure.

I don't have children in school; how will local funding benefit me?

Everyone benefits from living in a community with high quality schools. Culver City is a highly desirable place for families to live and move to in large part because of the reputation of our local schools. Strong schools enhance the quality of life in our community and help keep our property values strong.

Do other school districts in our region rely on local funding to support their local schools?

Yes. Many similar, high-performing districts depend on local parcel tax funding to support educational programs. In fact, Culver City Unified is one of the only high achieving districts in our region without a source of locally-controlled funding. For example, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District collects a parcel tax of \$346 per year, South Pasadena Unified School District collects \$288 and Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District collects \$374.

How can I learn more? Your opinions and involvement are valuable and we hope that you share your comments and questions with us. Please feel free to contact Superintendent Leslie Lockhart or Assistant Superintendent Robert Quinn by phone at (310) 842-4220. To learn more, visit: www.ccusd.org/LocalFunding.