



Frequently Asked Questions: Local Funding for Arcadia Unified Schools

General Local Funding Questions

How are Arcadia Unified schools and students performing?

AUSD schools rank in the top 4% of all school districts in California and student test scores are well above the California standard for excellence. Over 90% of students who graduate from Arcadia Unified schools go on to college or other post-secondary training. Arcadia High School has been named a Gold Medal School three times by U.S. News and World Report in its annual ranking of the best public high schools in the United States. Less than three percent of schools nationwide earn that distinction. Arcadia High School also landed on a recent Newsweek ranking of the top public high schools in America.

How has local school funding impacted Arcadia Unified schools and students?

The local school funding has ensured high quality schools in our community. As a result of the Great Recession and state budget crisis, Arcadia Unified schools endured deep budget cuts that included teacher layoffs, increases to class sizes and cuts to academic programs. To help offset state funding reductions and protect teachers and essential instructional programs from budget cuts, in 2012, 67% of Arcadia voters approved Measure A to provide locally controlled funding for our schools that cannot be taken away by the state. Funds from Measure A have been used to retain qualified and experienced teachers and protect core academic programs in math, science, reading and writing. Since the passage of Measure A, an independent oversight committee has reviewed the use of funds and confirmed they have been spent as promised.

How much longer will this local funding continue?

Local school funding approved in 2012 automatically expires after five years. This funding will expire next year and Arcadia Unified schools will lose over \$3 million in annual funding. A funding loss of this magnitude would mean deep cuts including teacher layoffs, increases in class sizes, and elimination of many instructional programs for students.

Is there a plan to renew local school funding?

Yes. In order to continue local school funding, the Arcadia Unified School District Board of Education placed a measure on the March 7, 2017 ballot to renew local school funding at \$288 per parcel annually. This measure would continue to require strict accountability protections such as an independent citizens' oversight committee and annual audits as well as requirements that all funds must stay local to benefit Arcadia Unified schools and cannot be taken by Sacramento.

How would funding from the renewal measure be used?

Funds from the renewal measure could be used for:

- Retaining and attracting high quality teachers
- Keeping schools safe and clean
- Protecting quality math, science, reading, art and music programs
- Maintaining advanced placement and honors courses, in such subjects as physics, chemistry and biology

Isn't state funding being restored?

While state education funding has stabilized since the recession, funding per student in California is among the lowest in the nation and Arcadia ranks among the lowest funded school districts in LA County. Without local funding for Arcadia Unified schools, deep cuts would be required that would directly impact teachers and instructional programs in our local schools.

What happens if this funding expires?

Arcadia Unified schools will lose over \$3 million in annual funding when the current Measure A expires at the end of the current school year. A funding loss of this magnitude would mean deep cuts including teacher layoffs, increases in class sizes, and elimination of many instructional programs for students.

Have voters in other local communities approved supplemental local funding for their schools?

Yes. Virtually all of the high-performing school districts in our region have voter-approved parcel taxes to provide locally-controlled school funding. For example, La Cañada Unified School District collects \$450 per parcel, South Pasadena Unified School District collects \$386 per parcel and San Marino Unified School District collects \$1,125 per parcel for their local schools.





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Fiscal Accountability/Cost

Could funds from the renewal measure be taken away by the State?

No. By law, all funds generated by the renewal measure must be used locally to benefit Arcadia Unified schools and, by law, no funds may be taken away by the state.

Can funds from the renewal measure be used to increase administrator salaries?

No funds may be used for district office administrators' salaries and benefits.

Does this measure increase the amount we pay?

AUSD's current school parcel tax is \$228 per parcel annually. The renewal measure increases the rate to \$288 per parcel, an increase of \$60. Funding from the increase will be used to account for inflation and the increasing cost of providing programs and services over the life of the measure.

How long will the renewal measure last?

Sacramento has been an unreliable partner for funding our schools. Funding per student in California is among the lowest in the nation and Arcadia ranks among the lowest funded school districts in LA County. The renewal measure is designed to last for 18 years to ensure Arcadia students born now will have an education protected from deep budget cuts by locally controlled school funding until they graduate from high school.

Exemptions

Will senior citizens continue to be eligible for an exemption?

Yes. Senior citizen homeowners, aged 65 and older, may continue to opt to receive an exemption from the cost of the measure for their primary residence. To learn more about the exemption or to apply, please call (626) 821-8300 ext. 6728.

Are other exemptions available?

Yes. Low-income homeowners with disabilities are eligible for an exemption from the cost of the measure for their primary residence. To learn more about the exemption or to apply, please call (626) 821-8300 ext. 6728.

Voting Questions

When will we vote on the renewal measure?

The measure to renew local school funding will appear on the March 7, 2017 ballot.

Will other items be on the March 7 ballot?

Yes, a countywide sales tax proposal to fund services for the homeless will be on the March 7 ballot in addition to the renewal measure. These are the only two items that will be on the ballot in Arcadia.

What level of support is required for this funding to be renewed?

In order for this local school funding to continue, the renewal measure must receive support from at least 66.7% of those voters who cast a ballot on the measure.

Questions/Feedback

Where can I get more information or share my opinions?

Please contact the Superintendent's Office at (626) 821-8300 ext. 6728 or email localfunding@ausd.net with your feedback and questions. For updates or more information, visit: www.localfunding.ausd.net.