

PARENTS - RAISE YOUR VOICES!

WRITE A LETTER AND PUT \$19.6 MILLION BACK INTO OUR SCHOOLS

How CURRENT Education Funding Works

In California, public schools get a mixture of funding from the State General Fund and local property taxes. California sets schools' target funding based strictly on the number of pupils in each district, with additional funding for English language learners, foster youth, and students receiving free and reduced price meals. **There is no adjustment for regional cost of living.**

Redwood City Elementary gets the same amount of money per student as every other state funded school district in the state, even though it's much more expensive to run a school district in the Bay Area than in other parts of California. Redwood City Elementary would need about \$19.6 million more per year to be able to staff at the same level as the average district in California. **CURRENT STATE FUNDING TO SCHOOLS IS EQUAL—BUT IT IS NOT EQUITABLE.**

How Experts Say Education Funding SHOULD Work

The people who designed the current funding method including Michael Kirst (president of the State Board of Education and Stanford Professor of Education and Business Administration), wrote in their original proposal: "At its core, our proposal aims to link district revenue to student needs and **regional costs** while ensuring that all districts are held harmless at current funding levels." However, the State Legislature and Governor Brown did not include this key element when they adopted the current school funding plan in 2013.

It is time to correct this oversight! If California adjusted school funding based on regional costs, Redwood City Elementary would get \$19.6 million more per year – enough to meet its budget deficit and rebuild our education community. Please join us in advocating for the State Legislature to make this change to public school funding.



\$108,109

SAN MATEO COUNTY
AVERAGE COST OF LIVING FOR A FAMILY
WITH 2 PARENTS WORKING



\$75,952

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
AVERAGE COST OF LIVING FOR A FAMILY
WITH 2 PARENTS WORKING

DEAR REDWOOD CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT PARENTS,

Redwood City Elementary School District faces a budget shortfall of \$10 million (out of a total annual budget of \$100 million). Next year, to trim \$4 million, the Board has decided that four school sites will need to close, relocating 1,900 students. Over the following two years, another \$6 million needs to be cut. By the end of this process, it is likely that every single family in the district will feel the impact of the budget cuts, whether in the form of a neighborhood school closing, larger class sizes, larger schools, or the loss of enrichment like art, music, or afterschool programs.

Our district needs adequate revenue to provide a solid education for our children – to attract and retain quality teachers, to keep class sizes reasonable, and to keep our neighborhood schools open. Fortunately, there may be a way to make this happen. *If we can convince our State Legislature to **include a school funding supplement for regional cost of living**, Redwood City School District would have enough additional revenue to keep all of our neighborhood schools open.* If our community comes together and mobilizes behind this issue, we can address the public school funding pain suffered not only in our district but across the entire Bay Area.

PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING IS NOT ADJUSTED FOR REGIONAL COST OF LIVING DIFFERENCES

Every school receives the same amount for each child in each grade, supplemented only for student disadvantage. Yet the cost of living in San Mateo County is as much as 42% higher than the California average. It costs significantly more to run a school district in San Mateo County than in most of California. Teachers, custodians, staff and administrators need higher salaries to afford to live here. Ancillary support and supplies costs are higher.

Yet the money is here! San Mateo County collects enough property and income tax to supplement all our local state-funded school districts.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SAVE OUR SCHOOLS

Write a letter to your state assembly member and state senator today **asking them to pass immediate legislation to supplement K-12 public school funding in areas with a higher cost of living.** Members representing our county are listed below. There is a link on each member's website where you can send an email. Paper letters are even better. For your convenience, you may use the enclosed letter and simply write in your representative's name and include your signature and address. Follow up your letter with a phone call.



WRITE, EMAIL and CALL State Assembly Members

KEVIN MULLIN: Assembly District 22
<https://a22.asmdc.org> p. 650-349-2200
1528 S. El Camino Real, Ste #302; San Mateo, CA 94402

MARC BERMAN: Assembly District 24
<https://a24.asmdc.org> p. 650-691-2121
5050 El Camino Real; Suite 117; Los Altos, CA 94022

JERRY HILL: State Senate District 13
<https://sd13.senate.ca.gov> p. 650-212-3313
1528 S. El Camino Real; Ste #303; San Mateo, CA 94402

SCOTT WIENER: State Senate District 11
<https://sd11.senate.ca.gov> p. 916-651-4011
State Capitol, Room 5100, Sacramento, CA 95814

DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT

Copy your paper letter to one or more of the officials below:

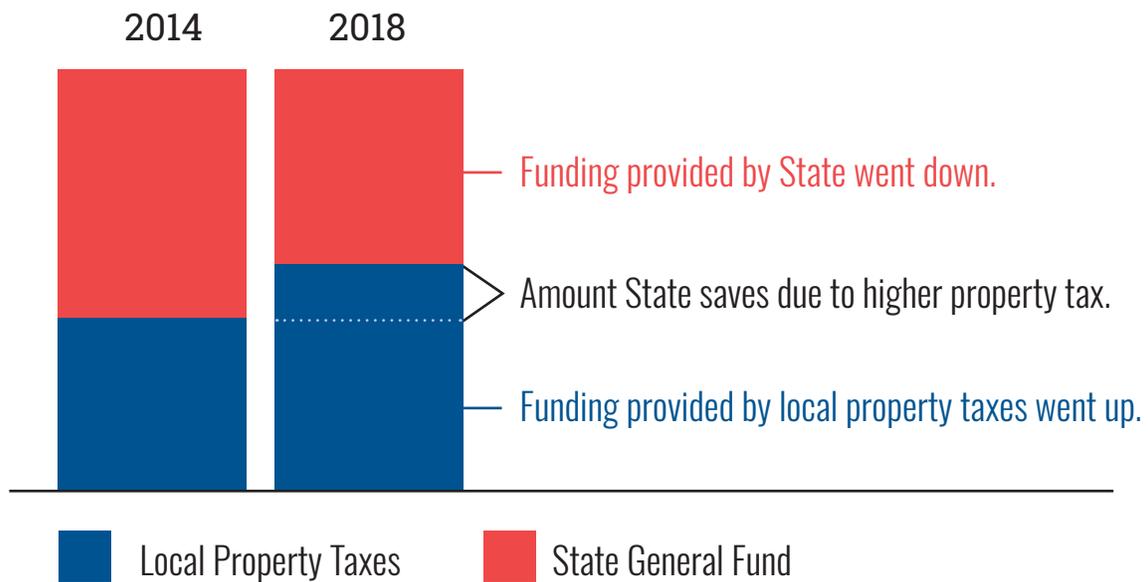
GOV. GAVIN NEWSOM:
State Capitol – Suite 1173; Sacramento, CA 95814 p. 916-445-2841

HON. TONY THURMOND: Supt. Public Instruction
1430 N Street #5602; Sacramento, CA 95814 p. 916-319-0800

DR. ILENE STRAUSS: State Board of Education
1430 N Street #5111; Sacramento, CA 95814

CHIEF CONSULTANT LYNN LORBER: Senate Education Committee
State Capitol #2083; Sacramento, CA 95814

CHIEF CONSULTANT RICK PRATT: Assembly Education Committee
1020 N Street #159; Sacramento, CA 95814



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Why aren't recent increases in local property tax revenues helping our schools? California funds public education based on a formula that provides a specific amount of money per pupil. The State provides money from its general fund to pay for the proportion of this cost that is not covered by local property tax revenue. As San Mateo County's property tax revenues have increased by 24% in the last 5 years, those taxes pay a bigger percentage of Redwood City School District's allotted per-pupil funding, but the total amount of school funding does not increase. **Therefore the true beneficiary of the recent real estate boom is the State of California**, which pays a smaller percentage of our school district's budget and can use the money they save elsewhere. Meanwhile, Redwood City school district has actually seen a decrease in revenue as students have moved out of the area due to the high cost of living.

In addition, the State gives school districts 20% more money for each student receiving free and reduced price meals. However, to qualify for free and reduced price meals a family of four needs a yearly income less than \$46,435. Families earning this can't afford housing in the Bay Area— so they're squeezed out. But children whose families earn just above this, who would be considered disadvantaged by any other measure in the Bay Area due to the high cost of living here, get no subsidy. So Bay Area schools are receiving even less revenue from the State.

San Mateo County residents subsidize services across California. San Mateo County residents pay \$4.5 billion a year in income tax – of which only \$0.3 billion is required to support our schools (for the amount not covered by local property taxes) and only \$0.6 billion accounts for our share of all other State costs (courts, prisons, roads, parks, etc.) We provide \$3.6 billion of income tax that subsidizes counties with fewer and lower wage earners. While this is well and good, doesn't our county, which provides so much money to the State, deserve school funding at a level that is equitable with other districts?



San Mateo county residents pay \$4.5 billion in income tax per year. Of this \$4.5 billion, only \$0.9 billion comes back into our county, of which \$0.3 billion (less than 7%) is for education.

KEY POINTS to INCLUDE if WRITING YOUR OWN LETTER:

- Personal impact of Redwood City Elementary budget cuts
- Propose indexing public school funding to regional cost of living
- High cost of living and high cost of running a school district in San Mateo County
- Inequity in funding every school district in California based just on student head count
- Lack of fairness that our county's property and income tax revenue subsidizes much of California while our school districts face budget cuts

Thank you for your help advocating for fair and equitable funding for our public schools.

Sincerely,

Vanja Douglas, MD - Adelante

Meredyth Hite - Adelante and Kennedy

Lindsay Holland - Roosevelt

Laura Garcia - Selby Lane

Lilli Milton - Orion

Ann Hyneczek - Adelante

Magdalena Dorywalska - Adelante

Averi Johnston- Crofts - Clifford

Aracely Tamayo - Adelante

Carol Anne Bauman - Orion and North Star

Kari Allegri - Roy Cloud

Deborah Vieira - North Star and Roy Cloud

Yesenia Lombera - John Gill

Colleen Lewcock - Henry Ford

Ellen Jacobson - Henry Ford

REFERENCES:

COST OF LIVING ASSESSMENT:

Cost of living for a family with 2 working parents in SMC: \$108,109. Statewide average: \$75,952. SMC is 42% higher than statewide average.

Cost of living for a family with 1 working parent in SMC: \$85,020. Statewide average: \$59,338. SMC is 43% higher than statewide average.

California Budget and Policy Center: Making Ends Meet

<https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/making-ends-meet-much-cost-support-family-california/>

ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE & REDUCED PRICE MEALS:

Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals: family of 4 needs an annual income of less than \$46,435.

Federal Register - Child Nutrition Programs: Income Eligibility Guidelines

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/05/08/2018-09679/child-nutrition-programs-income-eligibility-guidelines>

ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 125:

Some legislators, including San Mateo's State Senator Jerry Hill, are talking about adjusting early childhood education based on regional costs. This bill aims to "Compensate all teachers and providers for the true cost of providing care by reimbursing them at rates that reflect the economic diversity of California."

California Legislative Information - AB-125 Early Childhood Education: Reimbursement Rates

http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB125

EDUCATIONAL FUNDING BY COUNTY & DISTRICT:

Redwood City Elementary: \$93,933,093 (2016-17)
San Mateo County: \$1,104,869,598 (2016-17)

Current Expense of Education

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/fd/ec/currentexpense.asp>

SAN MATEO COUNTY PROPERTY TAX REVENUE 2016-17

<https://controller.smcgov.org/sites/controller.smcgov.org/files/documents/files/2017-ptb.pdf>

2017-18

https://www.smcacre.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/2017-18annualreport_0.pdf

HOW CALIFORNIA'S SCHOOLS ARE FUNDED:

Public Policy Institute of California: Financing California's Public Schools

<https://www.ppic.org/publication/financing-californias-public-schools/>

THE LOCAL CONTROL FUNDING FORMULA:

Overview of the LCFF

<https://lao.ca.gov/handouts/education/2018/Overview-LCFF-041018.pdf>

News Article

<https://edsource.org/2013/michael-kirst-father-of-new-school-funding-formula-looks-back-and-at-the-work-ahead/33408>

Bersin-Kirst-Liu Brief:

<https://edsource.org/wp-content/uploads/old/FinanceReform07.pdf>

EDUCATIONAL REVENUE AUGMENTATION FUND:

San Mateo County already collects enough property taxes to pay for a regional cost of living supplement. San Mateo County currently collects 1.9 billion dollars in property taxes annually, of which \$1.1 billion is supposed to fund education. Because of decisions made by the State Legislature during financial downturns decades ago, the State redirects \$300 million of the property tax that was originally meant to fund education to other county agencies (they call this "excess Educational Revenue Augmentation Funding"). However, during good economic times, this money was never returned to school districts and current state law does not allow school districts to access this funding. It would cost about \$135 million—less than half of the 'excess' property tax revenue earmarked for but not used for education—to provide a regional cost of living supplement to school districts in our county.