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Lafayette school district seeks to quickly rectify parcel tax error

By Pippa Fisher



Lafayette taxpayers will be getting a refund as a result of an error recently discovered on the Measure B parcel tax bill

Measure B passed comfortably in 2014 with 73 percent voting it in as a means to support the high quality education that Lafayette expects. However, the initial parcel tax rate was incorrectly calculated when it took effect in July 2015.

Additionally the 2017-18 inflation rate adjustment exceeded the permitted 3 percent consumer price index cap by 0.8 percent.

Lafayette School District Superintendent Rachel Zinn says, "As a result the district owes a total of approximately \$400,000 for 2015-16 and 2016-17. For 2017-18 the county will be issuing revised tax bills to

Photo Pippa Fisher

those who have not already paid their taxes this year. For those who have already paid, the county will be issuing reimbursements to taxpayers. This calculates out to about \$26 per year, per taxpayer."

The errors came to light when a resident new to the area was examining his annual tax bill and brought questions to the school district.

Zinn says they are very grateful that the resident brought it to their attention so that they can rectify the problem as fast as possible.

"The refunds will come from the general fund or reserves, or some combination of the two," said Zinn. Taxpayers will be receiving a letter when the district has worked out the mechanics of refunding the money, including a process for "opting out" as a choice. The district is now working with SCI Consulting Group as they straighten out the problem.

Zinn says the reaction she has received so far has been overwhelmingly positive with many people suggesting they would rather the district keep the money.

Zinn, who says that no programs will need to be cut as they issue refunds, points out that the district really needed the parcel tax to support programs in the face of inadequate state funding.

"I am so grateful to the community for even passing a parcel tax to enable us to provide such a high quality education. We really regret that this happened and want to get it taken care of as quickly as possible."

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