

Published February 19th, 2020

## City council throws support behind school funding measure

By Pippa Fisher



Tom Mulvaney addresses the Lafayette City Council Feb. 10, seeking endorsement for Measure L. Photo Jeff Heyman, City of Lafayette

The Lafayette city council unanimously voted to endorse the Yes on L Campaign - Measure L, Lafayette School District's proposed parcel tax to secure additional funding for all district schools - at its Feb. 10 meeting.

LAFSD governing board President Meredith Meade introduced the campaign's co-chair Tom Mulvaney who told the council that the \$290 per year per parcel, or \$0.80 per day tax, is needed to attract and retain high quality teachers, and to prevent deep cuts to math, science, reading, language arts, engineering, technology and robotics programs. It will be necessary, said Mulvaney, in order to maintain manageable class sizes, keep facilities safe, clean and well maintained, and to preserve the high quality programs currently offered in music, visual and performing arts.

and house values strong. He explained that Measure L would last only seven years and could not be extended without a new vote. All funds, he said, would stay local for Lafayette TK-8 schools. It would be monitored by a citizen's oversight committee and would have mandatory audits to ensure proper spending. Furthermore, he explained, there is a senior exemption option whereby homeowners aged 65 or older can opt out.

Noting the "Green hills, great schools" slogan adopted by the city, Mulvaney pointed out the integral role excellent schools play in keeping Lafayette a desirable place to live

The district has slashed \$3 million over the past three years but even with these cuts the campaign chairs say the district does not receive adequate funding from the state to balance the budget. The campaign says that Measure L is needed to protect vital instructional programs and to avoid teacher layoffs.

According to a recent Stanford study, Getting Down to Facts, the cost of an "adequate level" annual per student spending is \$16,000, with New York providing \$24,000 per student annually. Lafayette's students receive just \$8,000 in funding from the state, supplemented by Lafayette Partners in Education to bring the total figure up to \$11,000 per student. State funding is determined by the Local Control Funding Formula which allocates more money to school districts with higher concentrations of English language learners, low income and/or foster youth. Out of 1,037 school districts in California, LAFSD consistently scores in the top 24 despite being the 11th lowest funded per student per year.

Mayor Mike Anderson spoke of the strong bond between the city council and the school districts and observed, "What's been done with the funding has been unbelievable."

All council members were supportive. Council Member Teresa Geringer quoted a phrase coined by Former Mayor Don Tatzin, saying that the schools are a part of the "virtuous circle" of what makes Lafayette a place people want to live.

The vote to endorse the measure was unanimous and was greeted by applause from the public.

The measure on the March 3 ballot needs a two-thirds majority to pass. No argument against Measure L has been filed.

Reach the reporter at: [pippa@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:pippa@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA