

SUPERINTENDENT’S MESSAGE 2019

June 2019

I would like to thank the entire community for playing such a critical role in supporting our schools and students. Thanks to your support, our district consistently ranks in the top 1% of more than 1,000 districts across California and our students regularly score in the top 1% on achievement tests.

For nearly 30 years our community has supported our award-winning schools with voter-approved, local funding to deliver the excellent education we’ve come to expect in Los Altos School District. Since 1989, LASD voters have consistently approved parcel taxes to supplement district revenues. Our parcel taxes help sustain core academic programs, expand innovative STEM programs, attract and retain top-quality teachers and many more critical services.

Such community-based support is more critical than ever because state and federal funding has declined as a share of total LASD revenues, and stands at only about 10% today. Under California’s recently reformed education funding formula, districts with higher percentages of disadvantaged students receive the bulk of new state funding, which further increases our dependence on local revenue sources.

We truly appreciate your ongoing support and vote of confidence in our district. Thank you for helping keep our schools among the very best!



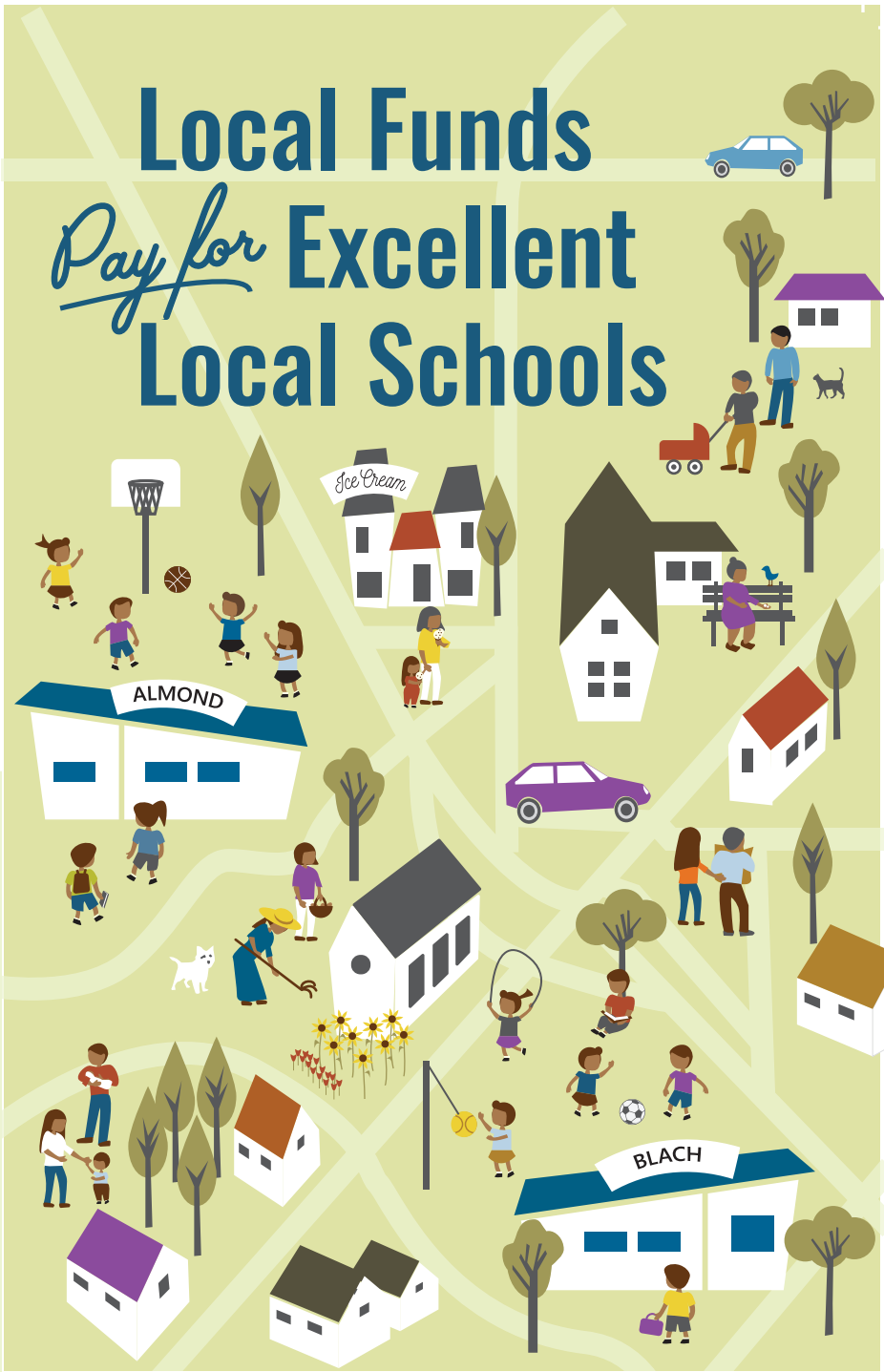
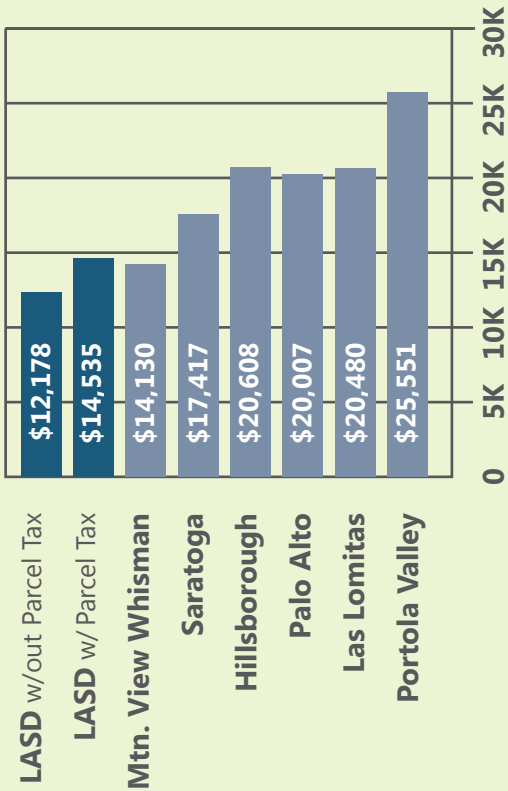
Jeffrey Baier, Superintendent

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 26
LOS ALTOS
CARRIER ROUTE,
PRE-SORT

LASD
Los Altos School District
201 Covington Road
Los Altos, CA 94024

POSTAL CUSTOMER

2017-18 REVENUES PER STUDENT
LASD Compared to Similar Districts



Los Altos School District
REPORT CARD TO THE COMMUNITY
Annual Accountability Report To Taxpayers

90% OF LASD FUNDING COMES FROM OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Los Altos School District (LASD) revenues come mostly from our property taxes, parcel taxes, and developer (impact) fees.



Property taxes are based on the assessed value of a property

Parcel taxes are fixed amounts per parcel

Developer fees are one-time assessments collected when commercial and residential owners improve their properties.

Since 1982, LASD has also received sizable annual grants from the Los Altos Educational Foundation (LAEF).

OUR PARCEL TAXES PROVIDE 17% OF LASD FUNDING

A voter-approved permanent special tax assessment of \$597 per parcel generates over \$7.5 million annually. Voters approved and recently reauthorized a second tax of \$223 per parcel, which will expire in 2025. In total, parcel taxes provide approximately \$10 million annually to LASD.

Seniors who are owner-occupants of their homes may apply for an exemption from parcel taxes. For more information, contact LASD at 650-947-1150 or www.losaltos.k12.ca.us.

2017-18 PARCEL TAX EXPENDITURES

Class Size / Electives.....	6,359,000
Small School Size.....	914,000
Enrichment / Teacher Training.....	68,000
Health / Safety / Cleanliness.....	1,315,000
Facilities Upkeep.....	191,000
School Support Staff.....	430,000
Technology Support.....	643,000

TOTAL PARCEL TAX INCOME.....\$9,920,000

The table above is a reasonable representation of how parcel tax proceeds were spent.

PARCEL TAXES ALLOW LASD TO INNOVATE AND EXPAND PROGRAMS

LASD has been a top-performing, innovative school district for many years. Parcel taxes allow LASD to maintain outstanding core academic programs and attract and retain high quality teachers. They allow the District to explore leading edge STEM programs and new modes of learning to keep LASD at the forefront of education in California. Additionally, parcel taxes help lower class sizes; fund teacher training in new techniques, content and curriculum; provide technology in our classrooms; and support junior high electives. Funds also keep our schools safe and clean by paying for custodians, grounds maintenance, counseling services, nurses, and emergency supplies.

CACF PROVIDES OVERSIGHT OF PARCEL TAX USES

The Citizens’ Advisory Committee for Finance (CACF) is an independent committee of community members appointed by the Board of Trustees to provide oversight and accountability for parcel tax uses. The committee also reviews and monitors enrollment and revenue forecasts, staff compensation and other expenditures. It analyzes how competing district needs will impact the district’s overall budget, and makes budget and policy recommendations to the Board.

OUR DISTRICT FACES FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

While the LASD Board of Trustees, administration and staff do an effective job keeping expenses in line with revenues, there are challenges on the horizon. For example, district revenue growth is reliant on property tax growth. Any economic downturn could result in revenues growing significantly slower than expenses. In addition, state-mandated staff pension and health care costs are increasing faster than revenues, and our competitive job market and high cost of living makes recruiting and retaining high quality teachers more difficult.

In the past, the District has maintained healthy reserves to blunt short-term impacts of adverse economic events. However, over the last several years rising expenses and facility maintenance and repair costs have reduced our reserves. Those reserves are projected to continue to decline. We expect the Board to continue to exercise fiscal discipline, to keep the District in sound financial shape and well-positioned to overcome these and other unforeseeable challenges.