



Cambrian School District

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ):

2026 School Program Support Project

What is this revenue feasibility study all about?

Cambrian School District has served as the bedrock of this community for more than 160 years, as a place where generations of students have come to learn, grow, and explore. Today, we serve over 3,000 students from transitional kindergarten (TK) through 8th grade. To continue this legacy for the next 100 years, we are meeting our current challenges head-on with responsible fiscal planning. Like many school districts in California, we are navigating the reality of declining enrollment and decreased funding. To ensure long-term financial stability and preserve high-quality educational programming, the Board of Trustees must consider structural solutions. These include school consolidation and revenue enhancement, such as evaluating a future parcel tax. Addressing these issues now helps protect programs, staffing, and student opportunities in the years ahead.

Why is funding from the State and Federal governments not enough? What is LCFF?

Government budgets are limited. The current way that California public schools are funded, known as the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), allocates more funding to school districts that have high concentrations of students who are English language learners, low income, and/or foster youth. Additionally, California falls far below adequate levels for per student spending, ranking 28th among all states in the nation. This, coupled with rising operating costs, simply does not provide the level of funding for instructional programs that our students, families, and community have come to expect and deserve.

Why does local funding matter?

The level of school funding provided by the State of California is one of the lowest in the nation. Because we are committed to student success, we must look toward sustainable, locally controlled funding to prevent further impacts on our classrooms. To protect our world-class programs and the local quality of education, CSD is also exploring a local parcel tax to fill the remaining funding gap.

These funds are critical to:

- **PREVENT** deeper cuts to academic and mental health services.
- **MAINTAIN** small class sizes and engaging learning experiences.
- **ATTRACT AND RETAIN** highly effective staff who make a profound difference every day.

What has the District done to tighten its belt?

We have implemented significant cost-saving measures and have been meeting for two years to study district finances. Most notably, we are moving forward with school consolidation and the closure of the Sartorette Elementary School site. This act of fiscal responsibility will save \$1 million annually in overhead costs, ensuring those dollars go directly to teachers and students rather than building maintenance. Despite these efforts, our Budget Advisory Committee has identified a total of \$2.6 million in reductions needed to maintain fiscal solvency.

What programs are at risk?

Without additional funding, we face deeper cuts that will impact our students' daily experience. The Budget Advisory Committee has already identified the following areas for potential reduction:

- **Music Instruction:** Reductions in the number of programs offered.
- **Library Services:** Reductions in library staff and operating hours.
- **Elementary Physical Education:** Elimination of elementary physical education para-educator positions.
- **Support Services:** Potential cuts to academic and mental health services.

What are the District's proposed solutions and next steps?

The Board of Trustees is considering structural solutions to ensure long-term stability. This includes the current school consolidation and evaluating a future parcel tax to fill the remaining funding gap. We are currently seeking community input from all stakeholders to identify exactly what is at stake. No decisions have been made. We are elevating the community conversation so Cambrian residents and community members can weigh in before key decisions are made.

My children are grown up. Why should I pay attention to this process?

Great schools are the foundation of any healthy, thriving community. Great schools protect home values and our local Cambrian quality of life.

What are CSD's most critical instructional program NEEDS?

- **Provide** high quality programs in math, science, engineering, and technology
- **Maintain** manageable class sizes
- **Provide** high quality programs in reading, writing, and language arts
- **Attract** and retain highly qualified teachers
- **Provide** counseling and academic intervention for students who need additional support
- **Provide** high quality programs in music, visual, and performing arts

How much will the parcel tax measure cost?

NO decisions have been made yet. Cambrian School District leaders are seeking YOUR INPUT first, before critical decisions are made. State funding alone is unable to provide CSD with sufficient funds to maintain the district's high-quality education. Pending voter approval, the cost to local property owners could be \$12.33 a month or \$148 a year.

How do I know the money will be spent properly?

Any potential parcel tax approved by voters will REQUIRE taxpayer protections. All funds raised would stay local to support Cambrian SD instructional programs/teachers and cannot be taken by the State or spent on administrators' salaries. An Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee and annual audits are required to ensure the CSD uses the funds as promised. Additionally, any parcel tax would be adjusted annually with inflation to ensure the purchasing power of these local funds keeps pace with rising costs over time.

I'm a senior citizen; do I have to pay the tax?

Senior citizen resident homeowners 65 years or older are eligible for an exemption through a simple application process. **Those with an existing exemption do not need to re-apply.** We do not want this measure to become a burden to those living on a fixed income. To find out more about how to apply, please contact Beverly Merrel, by phone (408) 377-2103 x0 or email merrelb@cambriansd.com.

My children are grown up. Why should I pay attention to this process?

Great schools are the foundation of any healthy, thriving community. Great schools protect home values and our local Cambrian quality of life.

How will this effort improve instruction and retain high quality teachers?

We strive for teaching and learning excellence in every educational setting. Exceptional teachers and instructional support staff, small class sizes, high-quality instructional programs, dedicated parent volunteers, and outstanding technology, and engineering programs are essential to student achievement and have prepared generations of local Cambrian SD children to succeed in high school, college, and careers. A parcel tax will allow us to bridge the gap of our low state funding and maintain the high quality of education at all Cambrian neighborhood schools.

How does this potential funding attract and retain high quality teachers?

We need this funding to ensure we're able to attract and retain highly qualified teachers and keep them from leaving for higher-paying districts.

Will businesses share in the cost of the tax?

Yes, both commercial and residential property owners will be subject to the same flat rate per parcel.

If the Cambrian School District does pursue a local parcel tax, when will it make that decision?

NO decisions have been made yet. Cambrian School District leaders are seeking YOUR INPUT first, before critical decisions are made. To qualify for the November 2026 ballot, the District would have to file its resolution calling for an election by no later than August 7, 2026.

Who makes the final decision on a local school parcel tax measure?

The locally elected Cambrian School District Board of Trustees is the legal entity that must take action to call for an election. Taking such an action would then put the question to local voters to decide. Ultimately, Cambrian School District REGISTERED VOTERS would have the final say when they vote for or against the measure.

Who would be eligible to vote on a local school parcel tax measure?

All registered voters within the Cambrian School District would be eligible to vote on such a measure.

What is the difference between a school bond measure and a parcel tax?

A parcel tax is a flat assessment on each parcel of land. Unlike school bond measures, which can only be used to fund school facility improvements, parcel tax revenues can be used to fund programs and services. School districts use parcel tax revenues to preserve, restore or enhance instructional programs. A parcel tax measure requires approval by two-thirds (66.7%) of registered voters who vote on the parcel tax measure. A Proposition 39 school bond only required 55% to pass. No revenue generated by a local parcel tax can be taken away by the State. All parcel tax revenue stays local to benefit local Cambrian schools and students.

Can the State take this funding?

No. All money raised by the measure will stay in the District to support our schools and students. It cannot be taken away by the State or be used for other purposes.

Why Are We Here?

Declining Enrollment. Like many districts across California, the Cambrian School District (CSD) is experiencing declining student enrollment due to lower birth rates, rising housing costs, and families relocating out of the area. Because school funding is tied directly to student attendance, fewer students mean less revenue. CSD has the capacity to serve 4,204 students. With an enrollment of 3,111, the district is currently operating at 74% utilization. Demographic projections indicate continued enrollment decline, with utilization expected to fall to approximately 71% within 6 years.

Budget Challenges.

The District's Budget Advisory Committee, which includes parents, teachers, classified staff, administrators, and community members, has been meeting for two years to study district finances. The committee has been charged with identifying \$2.6 million in reductions needed to maintain fiscal solvency and avoid state intervention. In recent years, CSD has implemented significant cost-saving measures and relied on temporary COVID-19 relief funds. Those funds have expired, and rising operational costs continue to outpace revenue.

The Need to Act.

To ensure long-term financial stability and preserve high-quality educational programming, the Board of Trustees must consider structural solutions. These include school consolidation and revenue enhancement, such as evaluating a future parcel tax. Addressing these issues now helps protect programs, staffing, and student opportunities in the years ahead.

How much is saved with the closure and school consolidation of Sartorette Elementary School site?

Closing a school is an act of fiscal responsibility. By consolidating from six sites to five, we save \$1 million annually in overhead, ensuring those dollars go directly to teachers and students rather than building maintenance. However, this saving alone cannot offset the ongoing decline in state funding. By closing Sartorette now, we prevent deeper, more damaging cuts to our students' daily experience.

Are other Santa Clara County Districts experiencing School Closures?

Yes, over the past seven years, six districts have closed multiple schools. Currently, the Cambrian school district is closing a school, and the San José Unified School District is evaluating potential school closures or consolidation.

NUMBER OF SCHOOL CLOSURES PER DISTRICT IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY	
Alum Rock Unified	6 closures prior to 2025-26
Berryessa Union	3 closures prior to 2025-26
Cupertino Union	3 closures prior to 2022-23
Evergreen	2 closures prior to 2020-21
Franklin-McKinley	3 closures prior to 2026-27
Oak Grove	2 closures prior to 2018-19

What about the Lottery? Wasn't the Lottery supposed to fix our schools?

The funding our school District receives from the Lottery each year comprises less than 2% of our annual General Fund Budget. Thus, Lottery funds alone are simply not enough to fund the programs that our schools and students need.

Where can I find more information?

Contact Superintendent Ms. Kristi Schwiebert at: info@cambriansd.com or (408) 377-2103; or visit: www.cambriansd.org/departments/business-services/state-of-our-schools