



Acalanes Union High School District

November 2026 School Parcel Tax Measure

Measure W FAQ's

Frequently Asked Questions – Fall 2026

Who is the Acalanes Union High School District?

Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) is public school district serving students in grades 9–12 and interested community members living in the Contra Costa County communities of Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda and Walnut Creek. The District operates four comprehensive high schools—Acalanes High School, Campolindo High School, Las Lomas High School, and Miramonte High School—as well as Acalanes Center for Independent Study and Acalanes Adult Education. **AUHSD high schools are among the best in California and rank in the top 4% of all high schools in the United States for the strength of their Advanced Placement programs**, while Acalanes Center for Independent Study provides an exceptional alternative education program.

What is Measure W?

Measure W is a parcel tax measure on the November 3rd 2026 ballot seeking voter authorization for locally-controlled funding to protect the quality of AUHSD's high performing local high schools. Measure W requires two-thirds, or 66.67%, voter approval to pass. A "YES vote" is a vote in favor of the District's funding proposal to levy a \$168 parcel tax for eight years to address its instructional needs; a "NO vote" is a vote to reject the proposal. All registered voters residing within AUHSD boundaries are eligible to vote on this measure.

What is the exact language of Measure W?

The Ballot Question Reads: *"Shall the measure supporting high-quality education in local high schools by: attracting/retaining highly qualified teachers; continuing advanced academic programs in science, technology, engineering, math, and arts that prepare students for success in college and careers; maintaining manageable class sizes with Acalanes Union High School District levying a \$168 parcel tax for eight years, with senior exemptions, citizens' oversight and independent audits, providing \$6,000,000 annually in local school funding that cannot be taken by the State, be adopted?"*

Why has Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) placed Measure W on the ballot?

Funding for our local public high schools is among the lowest in the state, requiring AUHSD to rely on local funding measures and education foundations to help fill the gap. **Meanwhile, local parcel tax funding has not increased in 16 years.** We have tightened our belts, **absorbing over \$4 million in budget cuts over the past two years** that have impacted student electives, library and counseling services, and enrichment programs. Without a new and sustainable source of additional funding, further reductions and budget cuts are likely. Measure W is on the ballot to address this reality.

How would Measure W funds be spent?

If approved by voters, Measure W funds would be used to support the following AUHSD critical instructional needs:

- Attract and retain highly qualified teachers.
- Prepare students for college and in-demand careers;
- Maintain manageable class sizes;
- Maintain advanced academic programs, including math, science, engineering and the arts;

- Provide library services, academic counseling, and career training;
- Provide career and technical education for in-demand fields including biotech, medical and health sciences, auto mechanics, fabrication, and other skilled trades;
- Keep technology up to date to provide for modern student learning;
- Provide instructional equipment, materials and supplies to support AUHSD's programs.

I live in Moraga/Walnut Creek/Lafayette. Didn't we just vote on a school parcel tax? Why am I being asked again?

In June 2026, voters in Lafayette, Moraga, and Walnut Creek, were asked to vote on parcel taxes for their elementary school districts serving children in grades TK-8: Measure H for Lafayette School District, Measure I for Moraga School District, and Measure L for Walnut Creek School District. The revenue from these measures was proposed for those TK-8 districts *only*. If approved by voters, funds from THIS measure, Measure W, would go to AUHSD **high schools only** (Acalanes High School, Miramonte High School, Campolindo High School, Las Lomas High School, and ACIS).

How would Measure W attract and retain high-quality teachers?

Competition for high-quality teachers has become a significant and growing challenge for public school districts across the Bay Area. If we want to attract and retain high-quality teachers for AUHSD students, we need to pay them competitive salaries. With inadequate state funding and recent budget cuts, the ability for AUHSD to continue attracting and retaining high-quality teachers is becoming an ever-increasing challenge as salaries in nearby districts continue to rise and AUHSD endures continuing budget cuts.

Will senior citizens have to pay?

Measure W includes a senior citizen exemption provision. This means that pending voter approval, senior citizen homeowners age 65 years or older would continue to be eligible for an exemption on their primary residence through a simple application process. Senior citizens who have already obtained an exemption on other AUHSD parcel taxes will not need to apply to receive the exemption. We do not want a measure to become a burden to those living on a fixed income. In addition, persons receiving Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance, regardless of age, would be eligible for an exemption.

How was the community involved in this decision?

Yes. To help inform the Board's decision, the District conducted scientific voter research among over 1,000 AUHSD registered voters as well as conducting a community LISTENING initiative engaging an additional 1,000+ stakeholders. Activities included conducting a series of stakeholder meetings and opinion leader conversations, a community survey mailed to AUHSD registered voter households and emailed to AUHSD parents, and town hall meetings at each of the District's four high school campuses in late July and early August 2026. These opportunities allowed voters and community members to learn about the District's financial challenges and share their feedback. All told, more than 2,000 voters and community members participated in conversations and providing input. The AUHSD Governing Board considered all of this input before unanimously voting to place Measure W on the ballot.

Why is school funding from State and Federal government not enough?

The State of California provides only enough funding to AUHSD for a *basic* education, falling short of what many in our community expect for local high schools. Our state and Federal governments do not provide adequate funding for the advanced, high quality academic programs in math, science, technology, and engineering that our schools are known to provide. As a result, districts like AUHSD increasingly rely on local funding sources like parcel taxes to maintain academic excellence, retain and attract qualified teachers and staff, and provide students with the support, programs and services they need to succeed in preparing for success in college and careers.

Why isn't the State doing more to provide adequate funding? What is LCFF?

In an effort to close the statewide achievement gap, the State provides all public school districts funding based on what's called the **Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)**. This formula allocates more funding to school districts that have high concentrations of students who are English language learners, low income, and/or foster youth. That said, school districts like ours are often left with less State funding than we have received in previous years, making more local funding from the community a necessity simply to maintain our quality teachers, staff and instructional programs. Acalanes Union High School District is actively engaged in the effort to "raise the base" and advocate for adequate and equitable base funding for all California students. To learn more, please visit www.raisethebase.org.

What programs are at risk?

AUHSD provides a broad range of academic, elective, enrichment, and student support programs that help make our schools among the highest-performing public high schools nationwide. Unfortunately, the District must continue implementing budget reductions to address ongoing structural deficits. In the 2025-26 school year, our local high schools, students and staff endured over \$2 million in budget cuts. This school year, an additional \$2.2 million in ongoing cuts are taking effect, including reductions in advanced elective and special program teaching staff, library services, including moving from one librarian per school site to just one librarian for the entire school district, plus additional reductions in counseling staff, administrative staff, maintenance & operations staff, student enrichment programs, technology, and professional development.

How has the District tightened its belt and lived within its means?

Over the past two years, District leaders and the Governing Board have carefully reviewed expenditures and absorbed \$4.2 million in ongoing reductions, impacting student electives, library and counseling services, and enrichment programs. These reductions include decreases in administrative staffing, counseling services, library services, technology, Maintenance & Operations staff, professional development, student enrichment programs, and advanced elective offerings. As our local high schools endure these painful budget cuts, AUHSD continues to face financial pressures driven by inadequate state funding, rising operational costs, and the loss of anticipated Measure T revenue.

Does AUHSD already have a parcel tax? Why are you proposing another one?

Yes. AUHSD currently benefits from local parcel tax funding Measures A and G, originally approved by voters in 2006 and 2010, which help support educational programs, attract and retain high-quality teachers and staff, and maintain the academic excellence for which the District is known. **However, these local parcel tax revenues have not increased in 16 years, and have not kept up with inflation and the rising costs of living.** Without a sustainable source of additional funding, the District will likely need to make further reductions to programs and services in the coming years.

What is a parcel tax?

"Parcel Tax" is the common term for a school district "qualified special tax." It is usually applied as a flat tax to each parcel of land within a school district's boundaries, and is payable by the owner of each parcel. Parcel taxes generate revenue for a district's operating budget. These funds are a locally controlled source of funding that cannot be taken away by the State. In California, passage of a local parcel tax requires two-thirds (66.7%) voter approval among voters casting ballots on the measure.

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

Parcel taxes can be used to support any school district cost; however, they are almost always used to support classroom expenditures such as teacher salaries, instructional programs and other educational enhancements. School bond funds, on the other hand, can only be used to fund capital costs – e.g. facilities repair, renovation and

upgrades, new construction, portables replacement, school safety/security upgrades, technology and/or technology infrastructure, and in the case of CA Prop 39 bonds, equipment and furniture. Most school bonds require 55% voter approval to pass, while parcel tax measures require two-thirds (66.67%) voter approval to pass.

How much will Measure W cost?

If approved by voters, Measure W is an annual \$168 tax, set to expire in eight years, generating \$6 million annually. This is funding that can't be taken by the State or used for purposes other than what voters approved in passing Measure W. Pending voter approval, the assessment would appear on local property tax bills next November (2027). Measure W does not include an escalator – it proposes a simple flat per-parcel annual assessment of \$168, with an 8-year duration and no cost of living adjustment. Measure W includes exemption provisions for senior citizen homeowners age 65+. Persons receiving Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance, regardless of age, would also be eligible for an exemption.

How can taxpayers be assured that Measure W funds will be spent properly?

Measure W would require accountability provisions, including: all funds raised would stay local to support AUHSD students, teaching, and classroom instruction. By law, Measure W funds cannot be taken by the State. A citizens' oversight committee is required to ensure funds are spent properly, and independent audits will be performed annually.

Who is eligible to vote on this parcel tax proposal?

All registered voters living within the boundaries of the Acalanes Union High School District — registered by October 19 — would be eligible to vote on Measure W on the November 2026 ballot. Same Day (conditional) registration is available October 20 through November 3, 2026 (Election Day) in-person at the Contra Costa County Elections Office or an eligible voting location. To learn more about your voter registration, please visit www.contracostavote.gov.

Would businesses share in a parcel tax cost?

Yes, both commercial and residential property owners will be subject to the proposed assessment.

Do other school districts receive similar funding for their schools?

Because of inadequate and inconsistent State funding, there are many districts, especially in communities across the Bay Area, that consistently and repeatedly support parcel taxes. Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda, and Walnut Creek are just a few of the communities in our immediate area where voters have approved one or more local school parcel tax measures.

What is the difference between Lafayette/Moraga/Orinda/Walnut Creek school districts and AUHSD?

Our communities, like a number of California communities, have two separate public school districts—**one serving children attending school in grades TK-8, and a separate district serving students attending high school**

- **Lafayette School District** serves students in TK-8 and operates four elementary schools (Burton Valley, Happy Valley, Lafayette, and Springhill Elementary Schools) and one middle school (Stanley Middle School).
- **Moraga School District** serves students in TK-8 and operates three elementary schools (Camino Pablo, Los Perales, and Donald Rheem Elementary Schools) and one middle school (Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School).
- **Orinda School District** serves students in TK-8 and operates four elementary schools (Del Rey, Glorietta, Sleepy Hollow, and Wagner Ranch Elementary Schools) and one middle school (Orinda Intermediate School).
- **Walnut Creek School District** serves students in TK-8 and operates five elementary schools (Buena Vista, Indian Valley, Murwood, Parkmead, and Walnut Heights Elementary Schools), one K-8 magnet school (Tice Creek), and one middle school (Walnut Creek Intermediate).
- **Acalanes Union High School District** serves students in grades 9-12 attending Acalanes High School in Lafayette,

Miramonte High School in Orinda, Campolindo High School in Moraga, and Las Lomas High School in Walnut Creek, as well as Acalanes Center for Independent Study and the District's Acalanes Adult Education Center and programs.

Where can I get more information?

For more information please contact: Superintendent John Nickerson by phone: (925) 280-3902 or email: superintendent@auhsdschools.org, or visit our website at www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/.