

San Francisco Quality Teacher and Education Act of 2008

Updated February 25, 2008

FAQ prepared by SFUSD

Why do San Francisco's public schools need this act?

Education studies have shown that one of the most important factors determining student achievement is a fully supported, well-trained and consistent teacher in the classroom.

San Francisco has the 2nd highest cost of living of any city in the country but there are 13 cities in California alone that pay teachers more than San Francisco.

The San Francisco school system invests time in training new teachers but then finds that too many of them leave for other school districts that pay them more. One out of every five new teachers leaves the district within his/her first three years of teaching. Every year some classrooms begin the year without a fully credentialed teacher as there are shortage areas for some subjects and surrounding districts are able to offer higher compensation.

Since Proposition 13 passed in 1978, California's per-pupil spending has slid to one of the lowest in the nation. In January 2008, an *Education Week* report ranked California 46th in education spending nationwide.

How will the proposed state budget cuts affect schools? Will this act address that?

The District started working on a parcel tax to address teacher retention, support, and accountability long before the governor announced plans to slash funds for education. The funds will provide predictable income to attract the best teachers to our schools and promote teacher retention.

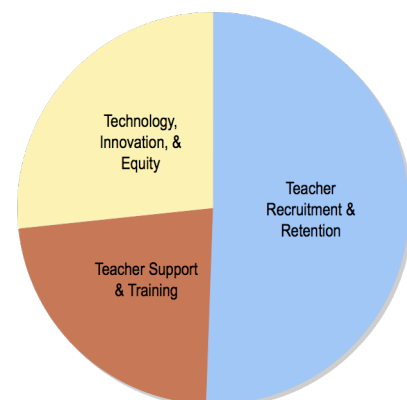
How will our public schools benefit from this act?

This act will expand our ability to:

- ✓ Attract and compete for quality teachers.
- ✓ Support and retain quality teachers.
- ✓ Increase evaluation and accountability to assure a quality teacher in every classroom.
- ✓ Provide better technology and programs for the efficient operation of schools.
- ✓ Provide predictable revenue for these specified needs.

How will the funds raised through this act be used?

- ✓ Make salaries competitive with surrounding school districts and raise the salary of all teachers.
- ✓ Provide financial incentives for teachers who work at schools with high teacher turnover and in hard-to-fill subject areas.
- ✓ Increase staff training and development opportunities for Child Development Program and K-12 teachers and paraprofessionals.
- ✓ Increase teacher support and accountability.
- ✓ Incentivize performance by providing block grants to the 20 schools showing the most growth in student achievement.
- ✓ Improve academic innovation and technology.
- ✓ Allocate a portion of funds to independently managed public charter schools.



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How do I know that the funds will be used for the purposes described?

- ✓ The District must provide an annual report indicating the amount collected and spent, as well as a status of projects supported by the tax.
- ✓ An independent oversight committee will hold the District accountable for ensuring the proceeds from the parcel tax are only spent in the manner approved by the voters.
- ✓ SFUSD has a strong and stable financial track record; it maintains credit ratings in the "Double-A" category from both Moody's and Standard & Poor's. These ratings are higher than those of most California school districts. SFUSD's annual budget can be viewed on the website, and audited financial reports are shared at public Board of Education meetings and available by request.

How does the act relate to other measures voters have supported in the past?

This act is one important part of realizing our vision for our schools. It is part of an overall plan supported by voters to improve San Francisco's public schools.

- ☑ Prop A Facilities Bonds to improve school buildings
- ☑ Prop H Public Education Enrichment Fund to restore arts, music, sports and libraries
- ☑ New! The Quality Teacher and Education Act to recruit, retain and support quality teachers in every classroom.

What is a parcel tax?

A parcel tax is a tax on real estate. The tax is not based on property value or size - it is applied uniformly per parcel. A parcel of taxable real property is any unit of real property in the City and County of San Francisco that receives a separate tax bill for property taxes from the Tax Collector's Office. Commercial and residential property is taxed. Each parcel will be charged a flat rate of \$198 adjusted annually for inflation. Senior citizens are eligible for an exemption from the tax.

How will it affect renters?

Renters will not have to pay the tax.

How much funding will this act generate?

It will generate about \$28.8 million dollars annually.

Have other local cities passed parcel taxes to benefit their school district?

Yes, for the past 25 years school districts have been passing parcel taxes, and other voter approved funding measures, to generate crucial resources to support public schools. Examples include:

- ☑ Albany 2005 - \$250 per parcel
- ☑ Kentfield 2002 - \$550 per parcel
- ☑ Lafayette 2007 - \$313 per parcel

On February 5, 2008, voters approved 3 more parcel taxes in Bay Area school districts:

- ☑ Oakland - \$195 per parcel
- ☑ Ravenswood - \$98 per parcel
- ☑ Kentfield - \$774 per parcel