

Measure H: the Complete Picture

October 30, 2024



Property owners recently received a slick new political advertisement urging a YES vote for Measure H, a \$59 million School Bond item.

Proponents of Measure H tout the necessity to pass the School Bond which supporters claim will fix long overdue repairs on the 11 Del Norte Unified Schools (DNUSD).

Opponents of Measure H claim the beleaguered property owner can ill-afford another letter on an already-crowded alphabet soup of still-unpaid bonds totaling \$25 million.

For clarity, the assessments on your property tax bill, Measures D, E, F have been placed under the Measure A umbrella.

- Measure A Bond will remain on your tax bill until 2045.

The new proposed bond will total \$59 million or adding \$59 for every \$100,000 of assessed valuation on your property.

- If passed, Measure H will be introduced and remain on your tax bill until 2060, an overlap of 15 years.

Indeed, like anything that ages, repairs are needed to keep up. The community wants to provide the most ideal environment in which our children learn and are educated.

Are our children's future at stake if the beleaguered property owner can ill-afford these new assessments?

It's a hard question to answer.

Confusion still abounds on the condition of the schools. The Measure H Committee states an independent evaluator, following State criteria for inspection declared none of the District's schools were rated "good" or exemplary. That evaluation would not be unexpected considering the 11 schools average 60 plus year old. Three were evaluated as "poor" and the remaining eight as fair.

This conflicts with a Facilities Report delivered at a July DNUSD meeting identifying only two schools were labeled as "poor" and the other nine schools as "fair" or above.

Are we splitting hairs, here? The independent evaluator's report did not indicate to the public when the Report was conducted, either before or after the July DNUSD meeting.

Without entering the opaque world of word definition, perhaps the DNUSD may wish to clarify what is the definition of "poor" or "fair."

In report card parlance, poor is barely passing; fair or above is passing. Good or excellent condition was not noted.

The Measure H Committee believes, the physical condition of its schools is dire.

Tragically, DNUSD Reading and Math scores languish in mediocrity. Of the 9,000 plus schools among the 977 school districts in California, the Del Norte Unified School District is mired near the bottom, in the lower 25 percent of surveyed schools. The Average Daily Attendance (ADA) continues to plummet. In 2019, the ADA was reported at 3,421. About 3,085 students are projected to matriculate in the 11 different DNUSD schools by 2025/26.

Supporters implore the community must do everything it can to improve conditions and improve the poor scores.

The argument is a solid one but the question lingers... When will Crescent City see respectable reading and math scores?

Without conflating the two issues of improved reading/ math scores and the sharp increase in property tax assessments, doesn't the public have the right to know if schools are delivering a quality education? Are kids learning?

Investors who own homes and apartments may raise rents to cover the cost of another property tax assessment. Hospitals, churches, government buildings and many non-profits are property-tax exempt.

The only group which cannot pass on these costs is the beleaguered property owner who simply lives in his home, pays his mortgage, utilities, the insurance, (auto and home), shops at the market, and of course pays his/ her taxes... The oppressive inflation factor makes matters worse. Everything costs lots more today.

Measure H requires a 55 percent voting affirmative for passage.

The “Support Our Kids-YES on H Ballot Measure Committee is comprised of the following individuals: Patty Vernelson, Chairperson; Colleen Parker, Treasurer; Donald McArthur, Assistant Treasurer; Abbie Crist, member. The latter two are DNUSD trustees.

The election is Tuesday. November 5.