



Los Gatos-Saratoga High School District
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GOVERNING BOARD

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August 23, 2017

(ENDORSED)
FILED
AUG 31 2017

Members of the 2016-2017 Civil Grand Jury
Santa Clara County Superior Court
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Clerk of the Court
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY Janice Lopez DEPUTY

Dear Members of the Grand Jury:

Please find the district responses to the Grand Jury's Final Report, **Show Me the Money: School Parcel Tax Exemptions for Seniors and Homeowners with Disabilities**. These responses are filed with the Office of the Honorable Patricia M. Lucas, Presiding Judge, Santa Clara County Superior Court on behalf of the Governing Board for the Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District.

**Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District
Responses to Findings and Recommendations of the
Grand Jury's Final Report**

Response to Finding 1: The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District **disagrees** with Finding 1, that it can be difficult for taxpayers to find information about exemptions to parcel assessments for which they may be eligible and about the required processes to apply for and renew exemptions. Information about exemptions is on the home page of the district website www.lgsuhd.org and reminder letters are mailed via USPS to those currently holding an exemption, when it is time to renew.

Recommendation 1a: That the district should include formation about parcel tax exemptions and application procedures via public outreach to communicate with those who do not have access to or are uncomfortable using the Internet.

Response to Recommendation 1a: The district currently mails letters directly to those already holding an exemption, allowing them to renew the exemption by mail. In addition, the district plans to institute one or more of the recommended public outreach strategies included in the recommendation by March of 2018 and will continue this practice moving forward.

Recommendation 1b: That the district should have a link on their home page.

Response to Recommendation 1b: The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District has, since the passage of their parcel tax, maintained such a link. It can currently be found at <http://www.lgsuhd.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=87289&pageId=87297>

Response to Finding 2: The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District **disagrees** with the finding that the district does not make it clear whether SSI and/or SSDI recipients are offered exemptions.

Recommendation 2: That the district should review and revise as necessary all forms required to apply for or renew parcel tax exemptions for clarity and accuracy.

Response to Recommendation 2: The district provides access to forms specific to SSI exemptions from its website at <http://www.lgsuhd.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=87289&pageId=336899>. The district will add the term SSDI to all forms for the 2018-2019 exemption cycle.

Response to Finding 3: The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District **disagrees** with Finding 3, that requiring seniors and individuals with disabilities to apply in person makes it difficult for seniors and individuals to apply for parcel tax exemptions. The district provides a variety of options for seniors and individuals with disabilities to apply without having to visit the district office in person.

Recommendation 3a: That the district should develop an online process for the submittal of parcel tax exemptions and renewal applications.

Response to Recommendation 3a: Since the district currently allows application and renewal via USPS, fax and email, the district does not believe it needs to incur the cost of developing an online process.

Response to Finding 5: The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District **agrees** with Finding 5, that due dates for applications or renewals vary from school district to school district.

Recommendation 5: That Santa Clara County School districts should agree on a standard date when applications for exemptions and renewals are due.

Response to Recommendation 5: The district is willing to adjust its schedule to adhere to standardized due dates assuming the due date providing said due dates provide time to meet district deadlines to submit our special assessment roles to the appropriate County Assessor.

Response to Finding 9: The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District **neither agrees nor disagrees** regarding the variance among district procedures and due dates, having not conducted its own study about procedures.

Recommendation 9b: That the district should request assistance from the Santa Clara County Office of Education to standardize processes for informing taxpayers about exemptions, application and renewal procedures and due dates.

Response to Recommendation 9b: The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District received notification of training provided by the SCCOE on August 24, 2017 and is reviewing said training materials as part of our commitment to standardizing processes across the county.

In conclusion, we wish to state our appreciation to our community for their support for our parcel tax. We have always been and remain committed to showing our appreciation for that support by ensuring we follow all legal and ethical guidelines, including those specific to ensuring eligible residents may easily apply for and receive any exemptions to which they are entitled.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rosemary Rossi".

Ms. Rosemary Rossi
President - Board of Trustees
Los Gatos – Saratoga Joint Union High School District