

Measure R WCCUSD Bond – COCOTAX Opposes

WCCUSD officials have repeatedly shown they **CANNOT BE TRUSTED** to spend your money wisely. There is no question that the district is in fiscal chaos. Its scandalous bond program is under investigation by two federal agencies, and the county grand jury issued a scathing report of excessive bond project construction costs (over three times the state average). A full forensic audit of internal whistleblower allegations of bond program abuse is underway. \$1.6 billion in bonds is almost gone, but half of the district's schools remain untouched.

The District's extreme wastefulness is well-documented. Among other flagrant abuses, the County Grand Jury found that the District's per square foot construction costs are **THREE** times the **state average**. Conflicts of interest and blatant stonewalling were also exposed in their report. Recent District staff actions are placing transparency and oversight at risk.

WCCUSD chose to ignore its construction manager's flat refusal to comply with an audit as required in their contract. The construction manager was the District's single largest vendor. We must ask what is being hidden? This is public funding and the Board has consistently declined to pursue legal or other action to hold the construction management firm accountable and transparent as they are required to do.

Prior spending decisions have also been highly questionable. More than **\$200 million** was spent building a single high school, along with **\$23 million** on a high school football stadium, all while ignoring other badly needed school repairs across the District.

Bond measures typically include certain safeguards to prevent questionable spending decisions. However, such provisions are vague and effectively non-existent in this measure.

Taxpayers are currently paying off six previous school bond measures. As of June 30, 2018, we owe **\$2.3 billion in principal and interest**, with maturity dates extending to 2054.

The District's runaway spending means that the average homeowner now pays at least \$1,000 in property tax assessments for previous bonds annually. This bond will add another \$250 annually to property taxes. Renters effectively have those added costs are passed on to them.

The East Bay Times has called the cost of these construction bonds "exceptionally high" and characterized the District as "badly managed for so many years."

Members of the Contra Costa Taxpayers Association have worked diligently for years on the school bond oversight and parcel tax advisory committees, pushing for full public transparency and fiscal prudence. These efforts have been vigorously resisted. Inasmuch as the bond program is under scrutiny, we must then ask, "what about the handling of other district funds?"

CoCoTax fully supports the new district leadership, and their stated top goal of significantly improving educational outcomes. This hard-working community deserves no less. However, their hard-earned tax dollars must be managed by the district in a way that demonstrates the same ability to live within its means as those families and businesses practice every day.

Recently, the Board was made aware of a \$48 million shortfall of which they were not previously aware. We must ask why. Who is running the show that somehow is unaware of \$48 million?

Vote NO until the District demonstrates a commitment to ending its shameful track record of recklessness and mismanagement of taxpayer funds.

It will take time to implement corrective procedures, and there will probably be some painful cuts required. However challenging, this process is necessary to restore community trust in district leadership and management.