



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Phone: (619) 234-6423

Email: press@sdcta.org

**Taxpayers Association Grades the Graders:
Watchdog Org Releases School Bond Transparency Report Card**
Billions Are Being Spent — Did Your School District Ace The Test Or Flunk Out?

San Diego, CA (September 14, 2022) – Local students just got back to class, but the San Diego County Taxpayers Association is already issuing report cards – on the schools themselves.

Today the SDCTA issued grades for 29 local school districts in its 10th annual School Bond Transparency Report Card.

“As the region’s taxpayer watchdog, we shine a light on whether school districts are keeping parents in the dark,” said Haney Hong, president and CEO of SDCTA. “Billions of dollars in bonds have been issued by local school districts, and taxpayers have a right to know how this public money is being spent — and whether their school district is acing the transparency test or flunking out.”

Over the past decade, this annual report card has encouraged school districts with billions of dollars in public bonds to disclose their performance. Without government transparency, taxpayers have few options to evaluate whether a district is spending funds wisely or potentially hiding waste. The report card has also put a renewed focus on the work of the independent citizens’ oversight committees by factoring their activity into the transparency grades.

“The Taxpayers Association just endorsed the Measure U school bond on the November ballot in part because San Diego Unified School District has achieved high transparency grades on this report card,” said Terry McKearney, chair of SDCTA’s Excellence in Education committee. “When a school district asks voters to approve yet another new bond, which happens regularly these days, this report card helps taxpayers decide if their district is ready to take on the new debt underwriting the bond.”

Of the 27 school districts that have active bond programs, the average score was 81 percent — a “B-” — which represents an increase from an average score of 76 percent in 2021. However, excluding the lowest two scores, the average was 86 percent. “A” grades were achieved by nine districts, while failing grades were handed to only two districts.

Key findings from the new report card include:

- The two highest scoring districts were Grossmont Union High School District and Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District with an A+ grade and a score of 100 percent.
- The most improved district was Oceanside Unified School District with an increase from 15 percent to 88 percent.
- The second most improved district was South Bay Union School District with an increase from 59 percent to 88 percent.



- The largest score drop was Santee School District with a fall from 85 percent to 67 percent.
- The second largest score drop was Palomar Community College District with a fall from 89 percent to 74 percent.

The full 2022 SDCTA School Bond Transparency Report Card can be viewed [here](#).

The report card does not judge the merits of what school districts are spending bond funds on, but rather how transparent they are about their spending. Each school district was graded in 27 categories such as timeliness and ease of access to key reports; the number of vacancies on its independent citizens' oversight committee; accessibility of meetings and minutes; whether annual financial audits are available and performed by an independent auditor; if performance audits meet SDCTA standards; and detailed lists, descriptions, progress updates, and itemized expenditures for bond-funded projects.

After grading, SDCTA sent school districts their report cards, offering each the chance to respond or send corrections. Grades were finalized one week later.

Beyond the annual report card, SDCTA's commitment to taxpayers continues through its participation in each school district's independent citizens' oversight committee.

SDCTA President and CEO Haney Hong is available to speak with the media. Please email press@sdcta.org to arrange an interview.

###

San Diego County Taxpayers Association (SDCTA) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization, dedicated to promoting accountable, cost-effective, and efficient government and opposing unnecessary new taxes and fees. Since 1945, SDCTA has served as "San Diego's Taxpayer Watchdog Group" by educating the public and helping save the region's citizens millions of dollars. Public opinion polls consistently rate SDCTA as the most "influential" and "trusted" public policy institution in San Diego. For more information, please visit www.sdcta.org, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, call 619-234-6423, or email info@sdcta.org