

Silicon Valley Leaders Join Palo Alto Measure A School Facilities Bond Campaign as Honorary Co-Chairs

Improving School Infrastructure and Accommodating Enrollment Growth Deemed “Critical for Excellence”

Palo Alto, CA – April 8, 2008 – Four Silicon Valley business and government leaders have recently joined the Palo Alto School District’s Measure A facilities bond campaign as honorary co-chairs to highlight the school district’s critical need for funding to repair its aging infrastructure across its 17 current campuses and accommodate growing enrollment in Palo Alto schools.

Former Republican State Sen. Becky Morgan, two-time Palo Alto Mayor Gary Fazzino, Palo Alto Green Ribbon Task Force Chairman Walt Hays and businesswoman Barbara Gross have signed-on as honorary co-chairs of Strong Schools for a Strong Community, an independent campaign organization supporting Measure A, a facilities bond that appears on the June 3, 2008 ballot. Measure A would raise \$378 million without increasing tax rates by extending the current tax rate from a 1995 facilities bond for approximately 20 additional years.

“My support is premised on the fact that facilities and equipment have gotten old and the student population is increasing again,” Morgan said. “It’s pretty simple. Our campuses were built 40 to 90 years ago and, with proper maintenance and renovation, their useful lives can be extended. We’re also experiencing a surge in enrollment—last year’s kindergarten class was the largest in 30 years—and we must have suitable facilities for these students.”

Morgan served on the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) Board from 1973 to 1978. She subsequently was elected to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors and later, from 1984 to 1993, served in the California State Senate. She went on to become president and CEO of Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network and to serve on corporate boards. This spring she is the recipient of the Lifetimes of Achievement Award from Avenidas in Palo Alto.

Fazzino, Vice-President of Government Affairs for Hewlett Packard Co., is a graduate of Palo Alto High School. “The outstanding education I received in the Palo Alto Unified School District made me who I am today in so many ways—it’s provided the foundation for my career, my political life and everything else I’ve accomplished. As the father of nine-month-old twins, I cherish the idea that my children will have the same opportunities in this school district that I had—that the excellent teachers, students and facilities will be there for them as they were for me and so many others.”

Gross, general manager of the Garden Court Hotel for the past nine years, said as a businesswoman she feels strongly that the schools deserve backing. “Community support is needed to be able to take care of some of the harder issues like the upgrading of our buildings and facilities so that the money from other sources can be spent on educational programs,” she said. Gross, a Palo Alto resident who sent three children through the PAUSD, said “public education is a core value in our community. Brick and mortar, infrastructure and equipment

require a high monetary investment to maintain and you can't save fast enough to keep up with this." Gross, a former banker, is past president of the board of directors of the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce and winner of the 2005 Athena Award honoring outstanding professional and businesswomen in Palo Alto.

"One of the great things about the city of Palo Alto is its fine school system," said environmental leader and community activist Walt Hays. "It can't stay that way unless it continues to adapt, make repairs and grow as needed, and that's what this bond does. It's the kind of thing we all benefit from—schools, property values and a strong community—so we should all pitch in and do all we can to keep our schools up to date."

For Hays, a retired attorney, chair of the Sustainable Schools Committee and the City Green Ribbon Task Force, supporting Palo Alto schools is a proud family tradition: his grandfather Walter Hays, a Presbyterian minister, was chairman of the school board in the early 1900s.

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