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Letters to the editor

Ways to consume less

Remember your 3 R's Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. But there are actually more R's! Rethink before you purchase or consume something to see if you really need said item, or see if you can do without (Refuse!) If you need it, see if you can borrow from a friend or neighbor (try out our local Buy Nothing Lafayette groups!) or even rent from a local business. If you cannot, then maybe Reduce your consumption of the item. Reuse, Refill, Repair/Repurpose as much as you can to prolong the uses of the item. Ultimately, at the end of its life, find a way to responsibly Recycle or Rot (i.e. compost). From grocery bags, coffee cups, water bottles, utensils to even bigger items like smart phones, TV's, and furniture. swap to reusable, high-quality alternatives or make do with what you already have!

Thanks to California laws like AB619, customers are allowed to bring their own containers and cups to businesses to be filled with food/beverage items. So the next time you stop by a business to order coffee or boba, bring your own (BYO) cup or jar! You might even score a small discount for doing a good deed (thank you Starbucks)! The Contra Costa County Health department is supportive of customers bringing their own containers, and you can even hear it directly from them in this webinar hosted by the Lafayette Chamber given May 2022: <https://lafayettechamber.org/reusables/> (scroll to 19:53). To learn more about how customers and businesses can work together to make BYO mainstream, you can look to these really cool graphics at this website: <https://www.canadareduces.ca/health>.

Shout out to Liliroi Boba in downtown Lafayette who is totally cool with me bringing my own KleanKanteen cup for filling up with boba milk tea. They serve beverages in 16oz and 20oz cups, so know your cup or jar's dimensions beforehand to help out the employee serving you! Many of us have conditioned to BYO reusable bags when grocery shopping. Let's expand that to BYO cups, containers, and utensils!

Nancy Hu DDS
Lafayette

In support of Measure Z

Orinda has great schools because we have great teachers. My 7th grade and 10th grade children have had veteran teachers that have taught in Orinda for many years and also young professionals that bring energy and new ideas to the classroom. Keeping great teachers in Orinda classrooms is the single most important thing we can do to keep our schools among the best.

My parents moved to Orinda for the great schools in 1975 and my sister and I attended Sleepy Hollow, Orinda Intermediate and then Miramonte. The number one reason I returned to Orinda to raise my children is the great Orinda public schools.

Orinda students move on to high school, college and careers prepared for success. However, Orinda teachers are among the lowest paid in our area and Orinda increasingly loses qualified and experienced teachers to other school districts that offer more competitive compensation.

Voting YES on Z provides locally controlled funding directly to Orinda's elementary schools and intermediate school to make Orinda schools less dependent on Sacramento for funding.

Whether you are like me and have kids in Orinda schools now or you had kids in the schools in the past, we all benefit from maintaining quality education in our community.

By Tuesday, March 7th, join me in finding your ballot and voting YES on Measure Z to keep great teachers in Orinda.

Dana Wentworth
Orinda Union Alum
Sleepy Hollow & Orinda Intermediate Parent

Measure Z is fiscally sound

As a former Certified Public Accountant (CPA), I always do my homework on any funding measure before casting my vote. I know a fiscally sound plan when I see one, and Measure Z is just that.

Voting YES on Z provides locally controlled funding directly to Orinda's elementary schools and intermediate school to make Orinda schools less dependent on Sacramento for funding, while annual audits and independent citizens' oversight will ensure that funds are spent responsibly and as promised.

As a 36-year Orinda resident and former OUSD parent, I know what an impact local teachers and schools have on our students' lives and our local quality of life. I've already cast my Yes on Z vote and hope you will join me in doing the same before next Tuesday, March 7.

Bob Burt
36-Year Orinda Resident

Keep great teachers in Orinda with Measure Z

Having recently completed my term on the Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees, I have watched

with concern as a growing number of teachers leave Orinda for other neighboring school districts with more competitive pay. For example, last year 18 teachers left OUSD; there are around 20 teachers at each elementary school, so losing 18 is equivalent to losing an entire Del Rey, Glorietta, Sleepy Hollow or Wagner Ranch teaching staff. Furthermore, over the past four years the district has lost 55 teachers, or almost 40% of the teaching force. While teachers leave for a variety of reasons and it is impossible to know exactly how many leave over salary concerns, clearly OUSD is grappling with a retention problem. In addition, our district is also faced with a recruitment problem because qualified applicants can go to other school districts that offer more money to new teachers. Many other nearby districts give higher starting salaries as well as signing bonuses for new hires. Currently, we can't compete with these districts financially so we continue to lose potential excellent new teachers to other places.

While I was on the Board I voted to place Measure Z on the ballot because it is the only realistic mechanism we have to recruit and keep the best teachers here in Orinda. We rank near the bottom of all school districts in California with regard to state funding and this funding situation is not going to change anytime soon. Locally controlled funding from Measure Z can only be used to attract and retain teachers, support quality academic programs, and keep class sizes small. By law, funds cannot be taken away by the state or used for administrator salaries.

One of the most important predictors of student success is the teacher in the classroom, and Orinda's teachers are what sets our district apart. The bottom line is that quality teachers are essential for maintaining quality education in Orinda schools. This election is extremely important and Measure Z needs support from two-thirds of voters to pass. Please take the time to find your ballot, mark Yes on Z and mail it back by March 7th. Our kids are counting on us!

Liz Daoust

Former Orinda Union School District Board Member and OUSD Parent

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