

ANNOUNCER: This program is made possible by a grant from the William and Flora Hewlitt Foundation with additional support from the Annenberg Foundation.

SOT: John Deasy: Good morning. Don't forget to vote, it's election day. Good morning just reminding not to forget to vote. Good morning. Don't forget to vote today, it's election day, thanks

VO: THIS MAN IS CAMPAIGNING HARD.

SOT: Good morning. Good morning. Good morning, don't forget to vote today , it's election day.

VO: HIS NAME IS JOHN DEASY (day-see). HE'S THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT IN THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DISTRICT OF SANTA MONICA-MALIBU.

SOT: John Deasy: Good morning, don't forget to vote today.

VO: DEASY IS NOT RUNNING FOR OFFICE. INSTEAD HE'S OUT HERE AT 7AM FOR A DIFFERENT CAUSE. ON THE BALLOT THIS ELECTION DAY in June 2003 IS A MEASURE ASKING LOCAL VOTERS TO APPROVE A TAX HIKE. IF THE MEASURE PASSES, MILLIONS OF DOLLARS WILL GO TO the public schools in SANTA Monica-Malibu. IF IT FAIL CUTS IN EDUCATION WILL LIKELY FOLLOW.

JOHN DEASY: This election is critical. [X] What's at stake? 207 employees' jobs, 91 faculty, programs, services, actually opportunities for kids to succeed, that's what's at stake.

SOT: JOHN DEASY: Good morning, don't forget to vote today.

VO: DEASY'S DISTRICT SERVES ONE OF THE WEALTHIEST COMMUNITIES IN THE COUNTRY. NONETHELESS, SANTA MONICA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE CHRONICALLY UNDERFUNDED.

JOHN DEASY: In California right now, the average cost to support a prisoner for one year is twenty seven thousand dollars. We have a little under six thousand to support a student for a year. That's a serious problem.

The Merrow Report
6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor
New York, NY 10016
P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433
www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

VO: IT'S ALSO AN OLD PROBLEM IN CALIFORNIA-ONE THAT JOHN DEASY WALKED INTO WHEN HE MOVED HERE FROM RHODE ISLAND, THREE YEARS AGO, WITH HIS WIFE AND SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN.

SOT: JOHN DEASY: Bye sweetie have a good day.

JOHN DEASY: I was surprised as a parent and shocked as a leader of a system. I walked into classrooms and I realized it was unbelievable what they do not have. PE, Arts, Music, Counselors, Psychologists, Social Workers, Speech Therapists, Guidance Counselors, Career Counselors. Electives are all minimum or non-existent.

VO: IT'S A PROBLEM ALMOST EVERYWHERE IN THE SO-CALLED GOLDEN STATE.

SOT:

NEWS REPORTS:

REPORTER: The countries second largest school system and thousands of teachers, are heading for a collision...

Crowd chanting.

NEWS REPORTS:

REPORTER: They're talking about losing teachers, They're talking about losing staff.

GIRL: How can a state so rich do so poorly.

Crowd chanting.

REPORTER: Compton residents are well aware of the deplorable conditions of their schools..

JOHN DEASY: It's a state that systematically underfunds its public schools The physicality of our public schools, their conditions are incredibly compromised. They have enormous challenges, enormous challenges.

VO: Though Santa Monica's schools face challenges, compared with the rest of the state, they're well off. That could change depending on the vote.

VO: THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME JOHN DEASY HAS ASKED LOCAL RESIDENTS TO PAY MORE. HE TRIED ONCE BEFORE AND NARROWLY LOST. IN CALIFORNIA, RAISING

The Merrow Report

6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor

New York, NY 10016

P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

TAXES TO SUPPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS NO SIMPLE MATTER. STANDING IN DEASY'S WAY IS A 1978 LAW REQUIRING ANY TAX HIKE TO BE APPROVED BY 2/3RDS OF VOTERS. THIS TIME AROUND, DEASY HAS MOBILIZED THE COMMUNITY.

SOT:

MAN: Do a poll check when you get out there and on the rest of the time you are on your own.

JOHN DEASY: We've had over 200 volunteers each day for the last five days

SOT: CAMPAIGNER: Well we wanted to remind you of your polling place, once again its Hemisphere, 1627 Montana Ave...

JOHN DEASY: and there have been over a thousand volunteers phone banking and walking precincts for the last five weeks.

JOHN DEASY: The community's well aware of what's needed to happen and so it's their decision.

VO: ON ELECTION DAY, THE POLLS OPENED AT 8AM.

JOHN MERROW: You mind telling me how you voted.

WOMAN: Yes, on measure S, of course.

JOHN MERROW: Why, of course?

WOMAN: Well, because I have three boys in the public schools and we need this to pass, we need this to pass.

MAN: I voted for Measure S.

JOHN MERROW: WHY?

MAN: Because I have two kids and I really want to maintain good quality schools and I want people to go to public schools, not private schools.

BERT BODNER: I'm going to vote against the Proposal S. That's the only thing that I have heard about. And I don't believe in the, taxing the people more.

WOMAN: I'm concerned that there was going to be cuts in the schools, and that's certainly a concern I think education is very

The Merrow Report

6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor

New York, NY 10016

P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

important. But, I don't know why I as a single person who doesn't have kids has to bear so much of it.

VO: THROUGHOUT THE DAY, AS VOTES WERE CAST, THE CAMPAIGNING CONTINUED.

JOHN MERROW: How are you feeling?

JOHN DEASY: Anxious. You know, there's so much at stake and so little control over it.

VO: DEASY WOULD HAVE TO WAIT HOURS FOR THE RESULTS. HE SAW THE ELECTION AS THE ONLY WAY TO PREVENT SANTA MONICA SCHOOLS FROM SLIPPING, AS SO MANY OTHERS IN CALIFORNIA ALREADY HAD.

JOHN MERROW: Do you think if Californians could just go see what is normal in Michigan or Iowa, Connecticut, they would revolt?

JOHN DEASY: They'd move. They would go to those places, because what you want for any child you'd want for your own child. And to see that, would be an incredible, awakening experience. Those who stayed would demand it.

VO: NO ONE KNEW HOW THE ELECTION WOULD TURN OUT FOR JOHN DEASY. BUT WHAT WAS CLEAR IS WHERE THE TROUBLE IN CALIFORNIA HAD ALL BEGUN— AND HOW FAR ITS PUBLIC SCHOOLS HAVE FALLEN.

FADE UP

VO: IN THE POST WORLD WAR GLOW OF THE 1950'S, CALIFORNIA WAS A VERY DIFFERENT STATE.

KEVIN STARR (ID): There was a sense that California was the cutting edge of the American Dream, and that what was going to be put together here was going to justify all the struggle of the Second World War. It the brave New World, of suburbia, of families, of swimming pools.

SOT: Song: "I love you California, you're the state that welcomes all..."

KEVIN STARR: And there was a mood there that California had to educate the work force for this wonderful future that awaited it.

The Merrow Report

6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor

New York, NY 10016

P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

VO: IN THE 1950S, CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS WERE THOUGHT TO BE AMONG THE BEST IN THE NATION. BACK THEN, LOCAL COMMUNITIES CONTROLLED THEIR SCHOOLS AND PAID FOR THEM WITH LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES. NEW SUBURBS WERE SPRINGING UP EVERYWHERE AND IN SOME DISTRICTS THE MONEY POURED IN.

KEVIN STARR: Public schools were being built by the hour, and dedicated. And public school architecture was at its best. An entire generation of talented young men and women went into public school teaching and administration. There was a sense that a utopia was being formed in the classroom.

SOT: Girl in classroom: The extra charge estimated by the subcontractor...

MIKE KIRST: One of the main things I remember was we had free summer school. We had six weeks paid for by the school district where they had kids go everyday to a program nine to 12 in the morning that was like a fairly good summer camp that you would pay money for.

James Guthrie: My dad came out here after the War. He was attracted by many things in California- business climate, a sense of hope, but among those things was good schools.

SOT: Narrator: The education of its young has always been a vital concern to its people.

VO: CALIFORNIA INVESTED HEAVILY IN ITS SCHOOLS, FIVE AND A HALF CENTS OF EVERY DOLLAR WENT INTO EDUCATION.

MIKE KIRST (ID): The school district had so much money that they didn't even use the state textbooks. They sat on the wall and they bought textbooks off the market that they thought were better and more appropriate and more interesting.

VO: THE STATE'S COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION EXTENDED BEYOND PUBLIC SCHOOLS. IN 1959, CALIFORNIA CREATED A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, THE FIRST STATE TO DO SO.

PETER SCHRAG (ID): There was a commitment to anybody in the state that there would be a space for them somewhere in the

The Merrow Report

6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor

New York, NY 10016

P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

higher education system. There was a commitment of access to everybody.

SOT archival footage: “This is the center of great educational institutions - among them the world’s largest, the University of California with an enrollment of 25,092 students.”

PETER SCHRAG: This is the land of sunshine, it's the land of new opportunity. There's a great kind of wonderful historical tradition in that. There's still something in our air and our water that makes people reach for those all-purpose magical solutions.

SOT: Song “And I know when I die, I shall breathe...for my sunny California”

SOT: Sirens

VO: CALIFORNIA WAS AWAKEN SUDDENLY FROM ITS REVERIE IN 1965.

SOT: Crowds

VO: RIOTS BROKE OUT IN THE WATTS SECTION OF LOS ANGELES.

SOT: Gunfire

VO: AFTER 6 DAYS OF RIOTING, 34 PEOPLE WERE DEAD AND AN ENTIRE NEIGHBORHOODS LAY IN RUINS.

SOT: Crowd chanting

VO: THE WATTS RIOTS DREW ATTENTION TO RACISM AND POVERTY, AND TO THE PROBLEMS IN CALIFORNIA’S PUBLIC SCHOOLS. CALIFORNIA’S SYSTEM OF PAYING FOR SCHOOLS WITH LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES HAD CREATED VAST INEQUITIES IN EDUCATION. WITH SOME WELL-TO-DO DISTRICTS OUTSPENDING POOR DISTRICTS FOUR-TO-ONE.

KEVIN STARR: Public schools in the 1960s looking around, begun to pay attention to public education as the primary vehicle of equal access and upward mobility into the society. If you have a society that is struggling for equal rights for each of its citizens, than the public schools, if they were the cutting edge of the society, had to be the cutting edge of that reform.

The Merrow Report

6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor

New York, NY 10016

P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

VO: IN 1968, CALIFORNIA'S SYSTEM OF FUNDING PUBLIC SCHOOLS WOULD BE CHALLENGED IN THE COURTS, IN A LAWSUIT KNOWN AS SERANO VS. PRIEST.

CATHERINE LHAMON (ID): The theory of those cases was Beverly Hills spends X-amount of dollars for its students per pupil. And East LA students get X-minus a couple thousand for their students. And that's not okay. So, we should equalize funding and that will fix education for everybody.

((RW))

VO: THE COURT AGREED AND ORDERED EQUAL SCHOOL SPENDING ACROSS THE STATE. BUT THAT DID NOT MEAN THAT POOR DISTRICTS GOT MORE.

CATHERINE LHAMON: What happened then is we equalized down – so we gave everyone x-minus a couple thousand for all students, including Beverly Hills students, which was a plus for no one.

MIKE KIRST: We had all the districts spending in a very narrow range. \$100 adjusted for cost, and so we really wrote off adequacy, and we ended up with equalized mediocrity.

VO: CALIFORNIA IMPOSED A CEILING, LIMITING SPENDING TO A FEW THOUSAND DOLLARS PER STUDENT. DISTRICTS THAT HAD RAISED THE MOST MONEY IN THE PAST WERE HIT HARD.

JOHN MOCKLER (ID): And if their property tax revenue went up, then the state took away state funding. If their property taxes went down, the state backfilled. So, if you got more property tax revenue in your school district, you just lost state money.

The public just said, "Well, gee, our property taxes don't go to schools. It doesn't matter, if we raise more money for schools in property taxes, it doesn't go to schools, so what do we care?"

VO: MEANWHILE, PROPERTY TAXES EXPLODED.

The Merrow Report
6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor
New York, NY 10016
P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433
www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

JOHN MOCKLER: Relative property values in California were skyrocketing. It was a time of inflation. People would have a house that they bought for \$30,000. It would get reassessed at \$150,000. Their property tax would triple.

SOT:

HOWARD JARVIS: "I'm mad as hell, and the people are mad as hell, and I'm getting madder than hell every day."

VO: BEFORE LONG, CALIFORNIA HAD A PROPERTY TAX REVOLT ON ITS HANDS, LED BY BUSINESSMAN HOWARD JARVIS.

JOHN MOCKLER: Howard Jarvis, he had been a kind of property owner sort of guy, worked for apartment owners. Was kind of a bumbling sort of fellow-a gadfly kind of guy. But he grabbed onto an issue that struck the hearts of, people in California, that the property taxes were out of whack.

SOT:

HOWARD JARVIS: There is no limit today, none whatsoever, on the amount on how much you and I may be taxed.

VO: JARVIS AND HIS SUPPORTERS DEMANDED A FREEZE ON PROPERTY TAXES FOR HOMES AND BUSINESSES AND GOT IT ON THE 1978 BALLOT. IT WAS CALLED PROPOSITION 13.

SOT:

HOWARD JARVIS: Proposition 13 is designed to cut the taxes in California, and the way to cut taxes is to not give them that much money in the first place.

VO: PROPOSITION 13 SOUGHT NOT JUST TAX RELIEF, BUT ALSO PROTECTION AGAINST FUTURE TAXES. IF PASSED, IT WOULD REQUIRE NEW LOCAL TAXES TO BE APPROVED BY 2/3RDS OF THE VOTERS.

SOT: Newscast:

PROTESTORS: No on 13, yes on 8!

REPORTER: Much of the state's political and business establishment has lined up against 13.

The Merrow Report
6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor
New York, NY 10016
P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

VO: AS ELECTION DAY NEARED, CRITICS OF PROPOSITION 13 PREDICTED A DEVASTATING EFFECT ON SCHOOLS. JARVIS PUSHED AHEAD.

SOT: HOWARD JARVIS: Thank you youngster. We're not going to hurt your schools.

VO: VOTERS WENT TO THE POLLS ON JUNE 6, 1978.

SOT: News broadcast.

REPORTER: Proposition 13 caused what may be a record voter turnout.

VOTER: For 25 years we had increasing taxes on properties and now is the chance to say something about it.

VOTER: This excess in spending, I just feel it's getting out of hand.

VOTER: It's kind of like a Boston Tea Party, that we're saying we've had it.

VO: THE POLLS CLOSED AT 8 PM - CALIFORNIANS WAITED FOR THE RESULTS.

SOT:

MAN: The man of the hour, the man of the year in California, and the man of the century in this country, the greatest tax crusader in American history-Howard Jarvis!

VO: TO THE DISMAY OF CALIFORNIA'S POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT, PROPOSITION 13 WON IN A LANDSLIDE.

SOT:

HOWARD JARVIS: I am forming the American tax reduction movement for the United States.

JOHN MOCKLER: Howard Jarvis became a folk hero, because he won. I mean, think of it, he took on the establishment. All of us were against Prop 13. The governor was against Prop 13, bipartisan support. But it passed. So who was in contact with the people?

SOT:

GOVERNOR EDMUND BROWN: This executive order will freeze all job hirings and job replacements in the state of California.

The Merrow Report
6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor
New York, NY 10016
P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

VO: CALIFORNIA FELT THE EFFECTS OF PROPOSITION 13 IMMEDIATELY.

SOT:

Newscaster: The first firings were announced in San Diego across the board reductions in all county departments. And what will happen in the schools?

MIKE KIRST: Summer school went away for my second child, because that was one of the first things to be cut. And the textbooks became older, and the special services for health became less.

PETER SCHRAG: It affected a whole lot of other things. Arts programs, music programs, phys ed, language programs, counselors, nurses, librarians, libraries.

MIKE KIRST: They cut the classroom periods from seven periods to six periods, and then some school districts cut to five periods. So we actually cut the school day in high school dramatically.

PETER SCHRAG: People who came here all through the period of the 80s into the 90s were shocked at how bad things were in the schools.

SOT:

VO: WHAT BEGAN AS A GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN IN CALIFORNIA HAD BY THE MID-1980'S BECOME A NATIONAL MOVEMENT. ITS FOUNDER, HOWARD JARVIS, DIED IN 1986. THE AFTERSHOCKS OF HIS PROPOSITION 13 ARE STILL FELT TODAY.

VO: WHAT BEGAN AS A GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN IN CALIFORNIA HAD BY THE MID-1980'S BECOME A NATIONAL MOVEMENT. ITS FOUNDER, HOWARD JARVIS, DIED IN 1986. PROPOSTION 13 REMAINS IN FORCE, IT'S AFTERSHOCKS STILL FELT TODAY.

VO: WHAT BEGAN AS A GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN IN CALIFORNIA BECAME A NATIONAL MOVEMENT. ITS FOUNDER, HOWARD JARVIS, DIED IN 1986. HIS PROPOSTION 13 IS STILL IN EFFECT ALONG WITH A LEGACY OF CONSEQUENCES.

DIP AND UP...

The Merrow Report
6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor
New York, NY 10016
P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433
www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

VO: A HALF HOUR FROM SAN FRANCISCO IS SAN PABLO. A WORKING CLASS CITY OF MODEST HOMES WHERE THE SCHOOLS ARE STRUGGLING.

HARRIET MACLEAN: Right now we have a classroom in every closet. We have classes in the shop rooms, we have classes in the dance room, in the health rooms, in the music room.

VO: HARRIET MACLEAN IS PRINCIPAL OF HELMS MIDDLE SCHOOL.

HARRIET MACLEAN: We're always on a survival level, that's where we are: we're understaffed, we're over-crowded, our roof leaks.

SOT: Harriet Maclean walk and talk:

HARRIET MACLEAN: This is one of our non-functioning water fountains. Isn't it lovely? The water fountains have not been working at this school for at least 17 years.

HARRIET MACLEAN: This is the snack bar, and before I was Principal these lights were not working, they had painted the windows, the floor was black with filth. So for years, this was like a cave in here

HARRIET MACLEAN: I wanted to show you this area back here, because it used to be that in this district, when the district had money before Prop 13, up until about 20, 25 years ago, the gardeners kept all of their plants here. You can see they grew plants, they stored equipment, they had greenhouses. It's devastating, I mean look at this, this is what happens when you lose money over 25 years, year after year, this is what happens.

VO: BEFORE PROPOSITION 13 THIS INDUSTRIAL CITY SPENT HEAVILY ON ITS SCHOOLS BUT NOT ANYMORE.

SALVADOR: The ceilings in the hallways are falling apart. It's graffiti here, graffiti there.

GIRL: This room is so horrible look.

HERLINDA: They complain that they couldn't use the bathroom because some of the bathrooms didn't have doors.

The Merrow Report
6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor
New York, NY 10016
P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433
www.pbs.org/merrow

KATHLEEN: I took somebody on a tour of our school the other day that is going to be a speaker next week and they said that San Quentin floors, which they had visited a couple of weeks ago, were cleaner than the floors of our middle school.

VO: MOST RENOVATION AND REPAIR AT HELMS STOPPED YEARS AGO. TODAY THERE'S MORE WEAR-AND-TEAR THAN EVER, A RESULT OF GROWING ENROLLMENTS

SOT:

HARRIET MACLEAN: The facility was built for 800 and we have 1410 I think right now.

VO: NOT HAVING THE RESOURCES TO BUILD NEW SCHOOLS IS A PROBLEM ALL ACROSS CALIFORNIA.

MOCKLER: You couldn't build new schools because you couldn't use local property taxes to build schools, it was prohibited under Proposition 13. So when more kids came there was no place to put them and we got these huge schools. You go to places like Los Angeles or Santa Anna, and you have schools, you know, elementary schools with three, four thousand students, multi-track year-round. You know. It's just; it's like you're in Calcutta.

VO: HELMS IS SO OVERCROWDED THAT SOME TEACHERS DON'T HAVE CLASSROOMS.

SOT:

HARRIET MACLEAN: They have to carry everything with them and they have just those five minutes just like their students to get to the next class.

SOT: Teacher in classroom: Come on in guys, be really quiet, we have a test to do...

BLACKBURN: Every time it's settling down. I've gotta unpack, noise level goes up. You know it's a good, five, maybe 10 minutes into the period before you get started with whatever you need to do.

SOT:

MUSIC TEACHER: Brenda you're gonna get one?

The Merrow Report
6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor
New York, NY 10016
P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433
www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

VO: EVERYWHERE IN THE DISTRICT, SPACE IS TIGHT. THIS MUSIC CLASS IS TAUGHT IN A CAFETERIA.

SOT:

MUSIC TEACHER: When you unlock it you want to unlock it up to go up like that ok?.

SOT:

Teacher in classroom: Now earlier in the year we had the prefix “in-“ which means the opposite...

HARRIET MACLEAN: Our district is a training ground for teachers. It's a revolving door.

VO: PRINCIPAL MCACLEAN SAYS THAT WORKING CONDITIONS IN SAN PABLO'S SCHOOLS DRIVE MANY TEACHERS AWAY.

So we're frequently starting over with under-prepared teachers, or they've just gotten out of college so they have no credential at all.

VO: THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT, SCHOOLS ARE ALSO INADEQUATELY STAFFED.

TEACHER AT FORD: We had a librarian, last year who came in one day a week, and she would just shelve books. And now that she's not here we'd like to start using the library, but we're told we're not supposed to.

Parent: I have a task to do with my child. I have to make sure she's prepared and ready to go on to college.

VO: PARENTS AT HELMS ARE ANGRY ABOUT THE CONDITIONS AND WORRY ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION.

PARENT: And that's one of my concerns that he's not getting the basic fundamentals in order for her to be able to keep up, not even in high school.

PARENT: You know I come from a family that, they came here when they were younger that already read in Mexico, and they all went to university and my children they were born here, they are not reading and writing in English

The Merrow Report
6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor
New York, NY 10016
P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433
www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

PARENT: My daughter used to be a A-straight student, and she has been coming down because I guess its not enough motivation, there's something missing in the system, but I don't know what, but something is definitely missing.

VO: EVER SINCE CALIFORNIANS REVOLTED AGAINST HIGHER TAXES, PUBLIC SCHOOLS ACROSS THE STATE HAVE BEEN IN DECLINE. BUT CRUMBLING BUILDINGS ARE ONLY PART OF THE LEGACY OF PROPOSITION 13.

JIM GUTHRIE: The detrimental consequence of Proposition 13 isn't so much money, as it is how it changed the governance structure of California's education system. Proposition 13 centralized decision-making. It changed California from a system of local schools, to a state system.

VO: POWER SHIFTED TO THE STATE CAPITAL AFTER PROPOSITION 13, AS PAYING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS BECAME A STATE RESPONSIBILITY. BY THE LATE 1980'S, THEIR GROWING FISCAL POWER BROUGHT UNPRECEDENTED CONTROL OVER CLASSROOM TEACHING.

MARION JOSEPH: The teacher showed us what they used to teach reading, and it was a beautiful anthology of stories, but in no way did it have anything to do with teaching a child to read.

VO: IN 1991, MARRION JOSPEH SAW FIRSHTHAND THE AFFECTS OF STATE INTERVENTION IN THE CLASSROOM. ON A VISIT TO HER GRANDSON'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WAS USING THE STATE-BACKED READING PROGRAM. JOSEPH EXAMINED THE TEXTBOOKS.

MARION JOSEPH: And my daughter said, "Well, my son can't read those words. Can all the children read those words?" And the teacher said, "Well, some can and some can't." And my daughter said, "Well, I'd like the books that you use to teach the children to read the words, then I can help my son at home." And the teacher said, shrugged, and I realized then that this was all she had.

SOT: READING

The Merrow Report
6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor
New York, NY 10016
P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433
www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

VO: CALIFORNIA'S NEW APPROACH TO READING WAS CALLED "WHOLE LANGUAGE". IT EMPHASISED STORY TELLING OVER THAN SOUNDING OUT LETTERS AND WORDS. BACKED BY STATE MONEY "WHOLE LANGUAGE" MOVED QUICKLY INTO SCHOOLS.

NANCY ICHINAGA: There are fads in education where people just get on the bandwagon and do what others are doing without thinking through whether it meets what their objectives are, or their goals are. And they do that because they have no idea what they're supposed to be doing.

VO: NANCY ICHINIAGA WAS ONE OF THE FEW PRINCIPALS WHO TURNED DOWN STAT FUNDS AND REJECTED WHOLE LANGUAGE.

NANCY ICHINAGA: Whole language should not be a reading program. Their methodology is wrong. Because they thought kids could learn to read like they could learn to speak. You know reading is a skill that has to be taught.

SOT: Kids reading out loud on class.

VO: TEST SCORES IN ICHINAGA 'S SCHOOL WENT UP BUT STATEWIDE THEY WERE HEADING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

JOSEPH: By '92 we had the first NAEP results, and it showed California going down. We were now fifth from the bottom. And I thought, "Oh, now they'll pay attention." It was a problem. They didn't. But by 1994, the great California was now at the bottom of the United States of America, matched only by Guam.

VO: SHOCKED BY THE DISASTEROUS RESULTS, THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION BACK-PEDELLED ON WHOLE LANGUAGE, RETURNING TO A MORE TRADITIONAL APPROACH. BUT THE LARGER LESSON WAS OVERLOOKED. POWER OVER DAY TO DAY INSTRUCTION REMAINED CENTRALIZED AND THE STATE CONTINUED TO TRY OUT NEW IDEAS.

MIKE KIRST: California's political culture is newness, change, innovation, the whole technology movement here is that sort of focus. So when we see new things, we tend to rush in and try them. And we sometimes say, "Well, let's try them statewide rather than just pilot them in a few places and see if they work."

The Merrow Report

6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor

New York, NY 10016

P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

WILSON: I ask that you join me in making class size reduction the spark of an even great education future.

VO: IN 1996 UNDER GOVERNOR PETE WILSON, CALIFORNIA PASSED ANOTHER STATEWIDE EDUCATION MANDATE: THIS TIME REQUIRING CLASSES TO BE LOWERED TO NO MORE 20 CHILDREN IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH THIRD GRADE.

VO: LOWERING CLASS SIZE FORCED SCHOOLS TO SCRAMBLE TO FIND TEACHERS.

PETER SCHRAG: We had a very large increase in the number of under-credentialed under-qualified teachers, because all these new classes then required the hiring of a lot more teachers. Not only did we get more unqualified teachers, but the better teachers left the urban districts, and went to better suburban districts. So that the greatest concentration of underqualified teachers appeared in the most needy schools, especially the urban schools.

VO: IT WAS NOT UNCOMMON TO FIND SCHOOLS LIKE THIS ONE IN LOS ANGELES WHERE HALF THE TEACHING STAFF WAS UNCERTIFIED.

JOHN MERROW: Now, what's your background as a teacher?

TEACHER: Well, I just started teaching, I'm new at teaching. And basically, I'm getting my credentials right now. So it's like a learning process for me too.

JOHN MERROW: So, Mr. Garcia seems like a nice man.

GIRL: Yeah, he's a nice man.

JOHN MERROW: He's new though.

GIRL: Yes.

JOHN MERROW: Who was your teacher at the beginning?

GIRL: The first one started teaching, but he was police so he sleep.

JOHN MERROW: Policeman?

GIRL: Yeah, so he work in the night. So in the morning he came to sleep. Sleep.

JOHN MERROW: Just sleep during class?

GIRL: Yeah, he said do math on page 31, then we started and when he saw that everyone was doing math he started to sleep.

The Merrow Report

6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor

New York, NY 10016

P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

VO: REDUCING CLASS SIZE CREATED ANOTHER PROBLEM, A SHORTAGE OF CLASSROOMS.

PETER SCHRAG: I mean obviously it led to a lot more portable classrooms. People in Florida were shocked when they had 10 percent of their kids, or close to 10 percent in portable classrooms, we got like a quarter in portable classrooms. And you know there are some schools where there's no playground space left, because they're covered with these portables.

JOHN MERROW: So this reform may have hurt...

PETER SCHRAG: It's had a lot of unintended consequences.

VO: NOT ALL THE STATE'S PROBLEMS WERE THE RESULT OF CENTRALIZED POWER IN SACRAMENTO. IN THE 1980'S AND 90'S, OTHER FORCES WERE AT WORK.

MIKE KIRST: The state of California grew six million people between 1980 and 1990. Several years our school enrollments went up by over 200,000 a year. We grew four million people between 1990 and 2000. So we're always having 100,000 or more students to accommodate.

VO. THE MILLIONS OF NEW STUDENTS WHO ARRIVED IN CALIFORNIA'S SCHOOLS WERE MOSTLY IMMIGRANTS OR THE CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS.

SOT: LETI GUTIERREZ TEACHING

VO: THEY ATTENDED SCHOOLS LIKE OCALA MIDDLE IN SAN JOSE.

SOT:

TEACHER: Look at the counselors office located on the map. Is it on the map?

JOHN MERROW: it looked to me as if some of the kids didn't have a clue as to what was going on. Didn't understand enough English to know what you were talking about.

LETI GUTIERREZ: And they don't. Some of them have only been here two weeks. Some of them have been two months. And some of them come from rural areas where it's totally different than what they're encountering here in an inner city school.

The Merrow Report

6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor

New York, NY 10016

P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

SOT:

TEACHER: A Teacher: A workbook. A textbook.

STUDENTS: A Teacher: A workbook. A textbook

LETI GUTIERREZ: Not only is it a challenge but sometimes it's frustrating because you have kids that are at all different levels. And to address each one is very difficult to do.

SOT: Kids talking in class.

KEVIN STARR: I don't think any governmental entity, in the history of this nation was ever faced with as complex a social challenge as the public schools of California, saying, absorb the peoples of the world, bring them into your classroom, deal with the 60 to 70 languages and somehow meld that together into a workable classroom, that is an extraordinary challenge, which the public schools of California accepted.

SOT: Kids in classroom.

SCIENCE TEACHER: I rely on my students who are bilingual, truly bilingual, to translate the information from English into Spanish. I really encourage the Spanish-only speakers to do all their work in Spanish.

STUDENT: She came from Mexico so I was translating in Spanish to her helping her how to do her work. I want to help her get good grades because if I was from Mexico and I didn't know English I would want her to help me do the same for me.

JOHN MERROW: Do they learn science?

SCIENCE TEACHER: Do they learn science? I think they learn science concepts, yes. At the level that they should? No, they don't follow along at the same level as other students.

SOT: Kids in classroom

VO: LANGUAGE IS NOT THE ONLY OBSTACLE. MANY STUDENTS AT OCALA FACE CHALLENGES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL.

The Merrow Report

6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor

New York, NY 10016

P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

LETI GUTIERREZ: I was appalled one day I went on a home visit, this family invited me for dinner and they were living in a studio apartment. Seven people in one studio apartment. So to think that they're going to have their homework done - sometimes you have to be a little flexible.

PETER SCHRAG: The strains on the schools are much greater than they were 40 years ago: kids coming with weaker home support, less command of English, particularly, more poverty, more single parent families. None of which is always individually disability, but collectively it has obviously made an impact.

VO: AFTER THE CHALLENGES AND FAILURES OF THE 1980'S AND 90'S CALIFORNIA IS CHANGING. TODAY, ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO KNOW MORE AND THERE IS MORE ACCOUNTABILITY. CALIFORNIA HIT BOTTOM IN 1994. TODAY IT RANKS FOURTH FROM THE BOTTOM.

MIKE KIRST: There's a long way to go. But is the trend line still going down, was it stuck at the bottom or is it beginning to tilt up? And what I see is we're tending up and there's sort of a slow growth that will take place. It will take many years to put back, if we ever do, what we had, say, in the middle '60s. So, I think this is like some of the high flying technology stocks in this state. We may never get back to the historic high, but at least we're probably off the bottom and moving up.

VO: BACK IN SAN PABLO, CRUMBLING FACILITIES ARE STILL A MAJOR PROBLEM FOR HARRIET MACLEAN. HER DISTRICT RECENTLY PASSED A SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION BOND, BUT-ONLY AFTER 2/3RDS OF VOTERS HAD APPROVED IT, AS REQUIRED BY PROPOSITION 13. THAT LAW CONTINUES TO MAKE MONEY THE CENTRAL ISSUE IN THE STATE. UNTIL FUNDS ARRIVE AT HELMS NEXT YEAR, REPAIRS WILL HAVE TO WAIT.

SOT:

HARRIET MACLEAN: Over one of the breaks, we got tagged so badly, graffiti everywhere, and I was talking to a girl and I said "look at this, look how badly it looks, it looks like a ghetto here." And she said, "Well it is a ghetto."

The Merrow Report

6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor

New York, NY 10016

P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

VO: CALIFORNIA HAS 1000 SCHOOL DISTRICTS— NOT ALL OF THEM ARE STRUGGLING. JUST 15 MILES DOWN THE ROAD FROM SAN PABLO IS THE TOWN OF ORINDA, WHERE THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS LOOK DIFFERENT.

SOT:

ORINDA PRINCIPAL: This we call our multimedia center. And the design of this was to include our computer lab, our library and our learning lab.

SOT: Librarian with kid:

ORINDA PRINCIPAL: We have a credentialed librarian, she's here four days a week. All classes have a library period in which they are read stories and taught library skills and research skill for the older students.

SOT: This is a fifth grade math class.

TEACHER: Can you tell me what you and your partner came up with and we can brainstorm on the board...

VO: ALL TEACHERS IN ORINDA ARE FULLY QUALIFIED, AND ALL OF THEM HAVE THEIR OWN CLASSROOMS.

ORINDA PRINCIPAL: All that you see is in this area is an actual preserve that is owned by the district.

VO: THIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN ORINDA EVEN HAS A NATURE CENTER, COMPLETE WITH A FULL TIME BOTANIST WITH A MASTERS DEGREE.

SOT:

TEACHER: Native means that you could go back a hundred years and they would still be here. ..

VO: THE SAME SCHOOL FUNDING RULES THAT HAVE CAUSED HAVOC ELSEWHERE APPLY EQUALLY IN ORINDA AND YET THE RANGE OF RESOURCES HERE IS STRIKING... AND GOES ON-AND-ON.

The Merrow Report
6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor
New York, NY 10016
P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433
www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

SOT: singing.

VO: EVERY SCHOOL IN ORINDA HAS AN EXTENSIVE MUSIC PROGRAM - FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL.

SOT: Sports classes.

VO: SCHOOLS IN ORINDA HAVE SPORTS TEAMS WITH COACHES AND UNIFORMS— INCLUDING A WATER POLO TEAM.

SOT: Crowd clapping and cheering.

SOT: Classroom

VO: ORINDA'S SCHOOLS MAY LOOK WEALTHY, BUT BY LAW THEY GET SAME STATE FUNDING AS EVERYONE ELSE: JUST OVER \$6000 PER STUDENT. SO WHY DOES THIS DISTRICT HAVE SO MUCH MORE?

SOT: Paula Goodwin: What time do you have to be at the concert tonight? 7 o' clock.

VO: IT'S PARENTS LIKE PAULA GOODWIN WHO MAKE THE DIFFERENCE IN ORINDA SCHOOLS.

VO: SHE WORKS FULL TIME AS A LAWYER. BUT MANY HOURS A DAY SHE HAS A SECOND JOB:

SOT

VO: RAISING PRIVATE MONEY FOR ORINDA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

PAULA GOODWIN: Essentially what does the state give us? The state gives us a box, with a teacher in it, and what? Like 34, 35 students. And if we want anything else in that box, we have to work to get it.

SOT:

PAULA GOODWIN: I'm Paula Goodwin and I'm the president of EFO and I want to welcome you tonight to our third night of phoning.

The Merrow Report
6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor
New York, NY 10016
P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

PAULA GOODWIN: The parents club tends to do more indirect funding, more event-based funding the educational foundation of Orinda does more of the direct solicitation.

SOT:

PAULA GOODWIN: Our goals are this year is \$985,000, and we are asking tonight for a suggested donation from each family per student for \$400 but whatever they can give is appreciated.

SOT: PHONE OPERATOR: Hi Mr Fair, My name is Nancy and I'm a Del Ray parent...May I ask how much would you like me to write down?.1200? That's great. Thank you so much.

VO: PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS LIKE ORINDA'S BEGAN SPRINGING UP IN THE EARLY 1980'S. LIKE SO MUCH ELSE IN THE STORY OF CALIFORNIA'S SCHOOL CRISIS, THEY TRACE BACK TO A FAMILIAR SOURCE: PROPOSITION 13.

MIKE KIRST: The districts had really no ability to tax anymore, because the Proposition 13 put a ceiling on them, so they began to look around for their options, and the districts that got cut the most were the high spending districts with wealthy parents who could make private contributions. So first we had 15 foundations, and then we had local school foundations, and then we had a 100 local school foundations, and within three to five years we're over 300. And so now we have the largest number of school foundations of anywhere in the country.

VO: TODAY, THERE ARE MORE THAN 400 FOUNDATIONS, SPREAD OUT AMONG CALIFORNIA'S 1000 SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

MUSIC:

VO: HERE IN ORNIDA, PRIVATE FUNDRAISING TAKES MANY FORMS.

SOT:

VO: EVERYTHING SOLD AT THIS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS MARKET WAS MADE BY PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

The Merrow Report
6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor
New York, NY 10016
P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433
www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

SOT: Paula Goodwin in auditorium.

PAULA GOODWIN: I want to announce that we have made, for the first time through your contributions we have passed the million-dollar mark.

SOT: Parents clapping.

PAULA GOODWIN: Through your dollars we are able to fund really the entire music program k-8.

SOT:

PAULA GOODWIN: It's not the PTA of our mother's generation, where it was just raising, you know, bake sales, this is a whole new era where we are having to be more professional about how we are raising our funds, we're having to have business plans, we're having to incorporate ourselves, and it's just a whole new era.

VO: ORINDA PARENTS RAISE MORE THAN \$2 MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR FOR THE DISTRICT'S SIX SCHOOLS. THAT'S AN ADDITIONAL \$2000 PER STUDENT.

SOT:

VO: PRIVATE FUNDRAISING PAYS FOR STAFF POSITIONS THAT OTHER DISTRICTS CUT LONG AGO.

SOT: Kids performing on stage.

VO: PRIVATE FUNDRAISING ALSO BUILT THIS NEW 500-SEAT THEATER.

SOT: Kids performing on stage.

SOT: Man taking parents on the tour of the new building.

VO: AND FOUNDATION MONEY PAID FOR A NEW DAY CARE CENTER.

MORE SOT: Man taking parents on the tour of the new building.

JOHN MERROW: Is there some unfairness here if, one district, one school has its own little foundation and they raise money and therefore their school has a library and an art teacher, and a music teacher?

The Merrow Report

6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor

New York, NY 10016

P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

JOHN MOCKLER: Yeah, I suppose it's yeah, it's essentially a quasi-privatization of the public system. In a sense that it's very hard to ever have a system that's equal.

VO: ORINDA PARENTS SAY THAT PRIVATE FUNDRAISING HAS BEEN FORCED UPON THEM BY THE STATE. WITH LAWS STILL IN PLACE TO EQUALIZE SPENDING AND PROPERTY TAXES HELD DOWN, THEY SAY CALIFORNIA BARELY PROVIDES A BASIC EDUCATION.

PARENT: Well you have no choice, these are our children.

PAULA GOODWIN: The people in this community, education is a priority to them. And they put their money, their time, their effort into making sure it's taken care of.

JOHN MERROW: But it's not really a public school. This sounds like a private school

Woman: We can refer to them as a semi-private public school system certainly. I would differ with the characterization of it being a private school. Because the fact of the matter is, regardless of whether or not my family contributed the same as Allison's family, our children benefit the same.

JOHN MERROW: Semi-private? Semi-public?

WOMAN: Semi-private public school. Let's leave it at that.

JOHN MERROW: Private school in a public setting. Is that illegal? Unethical? Immoral?

JIM GUTHRIE: Well it's certainly not illegal. My values tell me, it's not even unethical, or immoral. I think it's moral for a parent to want the very best they can get for their children. And I don't want to live in a society that thinks otherwise.

SOT: Music class.

JOHN MERROW: If you could imagine for me, what would this look like without all the money?

PAULA GOODWIN: If we had no contributions we would have no music teachers, we would have no librarians, we wouldn't have art teachers, we would not have PE teachers, orchestra, drama, video production, art classes. We have to do this for our kids; we have to fill that gap because the state isn't doing it.

The Merrow Report

6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor

New York, NY 10016

P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

SOT: Parent meeting. "Orinda school district has increasing and urgent needs financial..."

VO: CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES BROUGHT PARENTS IN ORINDA TOGETHER. BECAUSE OF THEIR FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION, PUBLIC SCHOOLS HERE ARE STILL AMONG THE BEST EQUIPPED IN THE STATE.

KATHERINE LHAMON: There are schools that are pinnacles of education. That anybody would want their children to go to. But they're not the schools that my kids attend. You know? They're not the schools that black, Latino, Asian-Pacific American students and poor students are attending in California. Instead, those schools are slums. There's no better word for it.

VO: PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS ARE OF LITTLE HELP TO ATTORNEY KATHERINE LHAMON'S CLIENTS: CHILDREN TRAPPED IN DECREPIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS. SO TWO YEARS AGO, LHAMON SOUGHT ANOTHER KIND OF RELIEF. IT MADE NATIONAL NEWS.

SOT: NEWSCAST:

PETER JENNINGS: The American Civil Liberties Union is suing the state of California for failure in the school system.

VO: THE PLAINTIFF'S IN THE CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT, MOSTLY CHILDREN IN LOW INCOME DISTRICTS, ATTEND SOME OF THE WORST PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN CALIFORNIA.

SOT: News conference. "If these schools were housing they'd be condemned as slums, bathrooms are filthy, where there are insufficient stocks of textbooks..."

KATHERINE LHAMON: I want a book for every kid. I want a book. I want a seat in the class. I want a teacher in the front of the room. We're not asking for money. We're not asking for anything more basic than just the provisions of what should be the floor of education. California holds its students accountable by saying, "You can't be promoted to eighth grade. You can't graduate from high school unless you can pass certain tests." We want to hold the state accountable.

JOHN MOCKLER: They make a very good point, kids should have qualified teachers, kids should have clean, safe facilities and kids should have instruction materials and paper and pencils and stuff. I mean of course they should. The question becomes,

The Merrow Report
6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor
New York, NY 10016
P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

should the state, should we have a totally state system. That's the, they believe we should. Having seen what the state does in my years in policy and politics, I think that would be a cure that's worse than the disease.

JOHN MERROW: Are you willing to have a judge looking over the shoulder of school districts all across California?

KATHERINE LHAMON: Let me be very clear, we believe in local control. But we want to make sure that where local communities can't provide or don't provide for any reason, then there's a stop gap that the state is doing its job. We didn't make up that theory, the state Supreme Court did. The state supreme court said, "In California, education is the ultimate responsibility of the state." That means that the state has to be where the buck stops.

VO: A DECISION MAY NOT COME FOR MONTHS, EVEN YEARS, BUT ONE THING THE LAWSUIT DOES NOT ADDRESS, AS IT MOVES THROUGH THE COURTS, IS PROPOSITION 13. THE OLD TAX RELIEF LAW, HARD ON RICH AND POOR SCHOOLS ALIKE, STILL SEEMS TO ENJOY WIDESPREAD SUPPORT.

JOHN MOCKLER: We've chosen mediocre public service, and more private money. We've decided not to tax ourselves as much. We've basically turned our back on schools. It's a choice we made within our state.

SOT: John Deasy campaigning.

JOHN DEASY: Good morning, don't forget to vote today.

MAN: Good luck today.

JOHN DEASY: Thanks.

VO: WHEN WE FIRST MET JOHN DEASY HE WAS CAMPAIGNING HARD

JOHN DEASY : Don't forget to vote today."

VO: TRYING TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN SANTA MONICA.

SOT:

JOHN DEASY: Good morning, don't forget to vote today.

VO: WHILE HE WENT FROM CAR TO CAR, HIS VOLUNTEERS WENT DOOR-TO DOOR.

The Merrow Report

6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor

New York, NY 10016

P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

SOT: Knockin on doors...

VO: BESIDES FOUNDATIONS, THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY LEFT FOR SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS LIKE JOHN DEASY TO RAISE BADLY NEEDED MONEY.

SOT:.

WOMAN: Don't forget to vote today, a special school funding measure is on the ballot.

VO: PROPOSITION 13 ALLOWS NEW TAXES, BUT ONLY IF TWO-THIRDS OF THE VOTER SAY YES, AND THE ODDS OF WINNING ARE SLIM. IN MOST COMMUNITIES, ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS HAVE CHILDREN IN SCHOOL. SANTA MONICA IS NO DIFFERENT.

JOHN DEASY: Our demographics are a city that has a combination of, you know, 99,000 residents and 11 percent have children. An overwhelming majority of the community does not have any involvement in the public schools, has continually supported them, but are either single or do not have children.

VO: AT 8 PM THE LONG DAY OF CAMPAIGNING WAS FINALLY OVER. DEASY AND OTHER SUPPORTERS OF THE NEW TAX GATHERED TO AWAIT THE RESULTS.

SOT: JOHN DEASY: How you doing? .

VO: VICTORY WOULD MEAN 6.5 MILLION DOLLARS FOR SANTA MONICA PUBLIC SCHOOLS. A LOSS WOULD MEAN LAYOFFS FOR NEARLY 100 TEACHERS

JOHN MERROW: When will you know whether you won or lost?

JOHN DEASY: In about an hour from now we will know the first chunk that they count and then by 10 o'clock I would think they'd have them all counted.

JOHN MERROW: So how are you feeling?

JOHN DEASY: I not an optimist by nature so, yeah really concerned.

SOT: JOHN DEASY: Hi John Deasy calling again, just wondering if you had any thing in Santa Monica-Malibu. How do I refresh my... WE don't know yet its 23 out of 45 precincts...

The Merrow Report

6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor

New York, NY 10016

P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

JOHN MERROW: It's 10 after 11. You've got two thirds of the percents in.

JOHN DEASY: And it could not be any closer.

VO: AT 1 AM THE RESULTS FINALLY ARRIVED.

SOT: John Deasy with supporters.

JOHN DEASY: Everything of what we know to this point, we won.

SOT: Cheering and clapping.

VO: SANTA MONICA PASSED ITS TAX BY A MERE 50 VOTES. ON THIS SAME NIGHT, 19 OTHER DISTRICTS PUT TAX MEASURES BEFORE THE VOTERS. ONLY 9 PASSED. THE REST OF CALIFORNIA'S 1000 SCHOOL DISTRICTS NEVER EVEN TRIED.

DEASY: It's an enormous relief. It's an enormous relief that we can go home and know that we can talk with faculty tomorrow and say you got a job. Kids are lucky, kids are very lucky.

DIP

VO: IN SEPTEMBER SANTA MONICA SCHOOLS OPENED WITHOUT DRASTIC CUTS. THE REST OF CALIFORNIA FACES A FUTURE FULL OF TOUGH QUESTIONS. FOREMOST AMONG THEM, WHAT TO DO ABOUT PROPOSITION 13. GOV. SCHWARZENEGGER HAS MADE HIS POSITION CLEAR.

ARNOLD S: Additional taxes are the last burden that we need to put on the backs of the citizens and the businesses of California.

VO: BEHIND HIM ARE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF HOME OWNERS AND BUSINESS OWNERS WHOS PROPERTY TAXES ARE AMONG THE LOWEST IN THE NATION. THEY OPPOSE ANY POLITICIAN WHO COMES OUT AGAINST PROPISITION 13.

GUTHRIE: It's almost a third rail of California politics because it is perceived as protecting property owners so much, but proposition 13's governance system has to be changed in order to

The Merrow Report

6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor

New York, NY 10016

P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

give local school districts an opportunity to gain purchase on their children's education.

VO: TODAY A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO PROPOSITION 13 MAY BE FARTHER OFF THAN EVER. BUT INSIDE CLASSROOMS THE STATE HAS MADE UP SOME LOST GROUND. GONE ARE YESTERDAYS EDUCATION FADS, REPLACED IN THE LATE 1990S BY HIGHER STANDARDS AND TESTS.

KIRST: I do think California is in a good direction now. We are able to teach more kids to read I more depth. We're focusing the schools on results, so the last four years have been very heartening.

VO: TO IMPROVE SCHOOL BUILDINGS, CALIFORNIANS ALSO VOTED IN RECENT YEARS TO MAKE IT EASIER TO PASS LOCAL CONSTRUCTION BONDS.

MOCKLER: And we are now building tons of schools in the last three years this state and the people of California have voted for schools bonds totaling \$26 billion dollars-last three years.

VO: AND IN THE BOOM YEARS OF THE LATE 1990S, PER PUPIL SPENDING INCREASED. THE RICHEST STATE IN THE NATION NOW RANKS 35TH. BUT ALL THE PROGRESS IS NOW THREATENED BY A SEVERE BUDGET CRISIS. MUCH IS AT STAKE FOR CALIFORNIA AND THE NATION. SIX MILLION CHILDREN, ONE IN EVERY EIGHT IN AMERICA ATTENDS A CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOL.

JOHN MERROW: Is this a civil rights issue?

KATHERINE LHAMON: It absolutely is a civil rights issue. For me, it's *the* civil rights issue of our generation. We're slipping backwards. I am not going to be able to go to a doctor with any trust. I am not going to be able to expect my car tires to be changed with any trust in ten or fifteen years because the kinds of education that we are not providing our students right now is going to effect me and is going to effect all of us in this state.

JOHN MERROW: Why should anyone outside of California care what happens to public schools in California?

GUTHRIE: If I thought that California somehow had a wall at the border and these relatively uneducated students never got to Tennessee, never got to New Jersey, never got to Illinois maybe I wouldn't worry about it, but of course that's silly. This nation, like this world, is just far too interdependent to wall off any states and

The Merrow Report

6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor

New York, NY 10016

P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.

its residents and say it doesn't matter to the rest of the nation, it clearly matters to all of us.

VO: IT IS OFTEN SAID, AS CALIFORNIA GOES, SO GOES THE NATION.

STARR: If I look at the public schools today I would say here's the cutting edge of our culture. They don't get blue ribbons, there is many things that has to be worked on, but in all those challenges is the fact and the symbol of this new American civilization which is struggling to be born. In California and everywhere else as well.

VO: THIS REPORT CONTINUES ONLINE.

KATHERINE LHAMON: it's *the* civil rights issue of our generation.

ANNOUNCER : WITH EXTENDED INTERVIEWS, A PROUDUCERS NOTEBOOK AND MORE. VISIT US A PBS.ORG TO ORDER A COPY OF "FIRST TO WORST" ON VIDEO CASSETTE PLEASE CALL LEARNING MATTERS AT 212-725-7000. A PRODUCTION OF LEARNING MATTERS, INC WHICH IS SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS CONTENT.

ANNOUNCER: This program is made possible by a grant from the William and Flora Hewlitt Foundation with additional support from the Annenberg Foundation.

ANNOUNCER: WE ARE PBS.

The Merrow Report
6 E. 32nd St. 8th floor
New York, NY 10016
P 212-725-7000/ F 212-725-2433

www.pbs.org/merrow

Copyright © 2004 Learning Matters Inc.