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## Rally in Plaza Park

By Cathy Tyson



A small group of supporters donned in orange and white gathered at Plaza Park in Lafayette last Friday to vent frustration over education funding. Photo Gint Federas

a parent led non-profit organization.

"The Lafayette community is standing up to give children a voice. California schools have loaned billions to the state, interest free, since 2007 and, compared to every other state in the nation, we are at the bottom of the barrel in per student funding," said Follmer. According to Suzy Pak, Springhill Elementary School parent and board member of Educate Our State, Contra Costa County reports that 49 percent of property taxes go to fund schools, when the actual number is 37 percent; Pak calls this a complete violation of the public trust.

Organizer Jean Follmer is not kidding around, with eye-catching orange and white hats, loads of orange balloons and snacks, she and a group of supporters gathered at Plaza Park in Lafayette last Friday afternoon to express their frustration with the current funding of the educational system. Honking from passing motorists signaled support to kids and grown-ups waving signs around the park at the corner of Mt. Diablo and Moraga Road, but unfortunately not many others turned out for the low key rally.

The idea behind the statewide campaign is to show state leaders the level of anger among parents and students about "the increasing and unreported diversion of schools' share of property taxes to pay state debts that have nothing to do with education," said Follmer, and allow voting to stop the diversion of school allocated property taxes.

"We are asking our legislators and our Governor to work together to allow California voters to decide if using the poorest school districts in California as the interest-free lender of first resort to the state is the way we want to finance our schools," said Cushon Bell of Altadena, a former teacher and a board member of Educate Our State,

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[back](#)

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