

School Programs & Operations Replacement Levy



Information about the proposed February 2020 school programs & operations replacement levy.

Overview

The Ferndale School Board is asking voters to consider a renewal levy in February 2020. The date of the election is February 11, 2020.

The renewal levy is for calendar years 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Why do we need a school programs & operations levy?

The State has always required local districts to seek local funding for a portion of district operating budgets. All seven school districts in Whatcom County currently have a levy and will be requesting a levy renewal in February 2020.

If we do not renew the levy, it goes away. Think of it like an electric bill — if you don't pay for your lights, they go out. The current levy was passed in 2016 and expires at the end of 2020.

The Local Levy Provides Funding For

Staff



In the Ferndale School District, approximately 20% of teacher salaries and approximately 50% of classified staff salaries are supported by levy dollars.

Athletics & Activities



Extracurricular opportunities for students such as athletics, clubs, music and band are supported by levy dollars.

Academic Supports



Lower class sizes, school supplies and the 8-period schedule, which provides elective classes for students at the high school level, are supported by levy dollars.

Technology



Our 1:1 student device program, providing grades 6-12 students with daily access to computers for learning, is paid for by local levy dollars.

Estimated Total Education Taxes*
based on a \$300K assessed property value

YEAR	LOCAL LEVY RATE	STATE LEVY RATE	2006 BOND RATE	PROJ. BOND RATE	TOTAL ED. TAXES
2017	3.61	2.23	0.91	-	\$2,025
2018	3.48	3.20	0.85	-	\$2,259
2019	1.45	2.76	0.77	-	\$1,494
2020	2.17	3.20	0.77	0.75	\$2,068
2021*	2.50	3.20	0.79	0.73	\$2,167
2022*	2.50	3.20	0.80	0.72	\$2,166
2023*	2.50	3.20	-	1.52	\$2,167
2024*	2.50	3.20	-	1.52	\$2,167

*Future taxes and tax rates are estimates

Levies are for Learning
Bonds are for Building

Levy FAQs

What does the levy mean for the district budget?

Four years ago, our levy paid for 25% of everything we do. Because of changes at the State level, it now pays for 13% of everything we do.

Do other school districts use levies to fund operating budgets?

Yes. Levies have provided part of the funding for schools in Washington State for nearly 50 years. All seven school districts in Whatcom County passed four-year levies in 2016 that run out at the end of 2020. Therefore, all seven districts will be asking voters to renew their levies in February 2020 — as will many other districts across Washington State.

What happens if the levy is not renewed?

If our levy is not renewed, we will lose 13% of our operating budget beginning on January 1, 2021. Since the levy pays for programs that serve students, and all programs require staffing, losing the levy funds will necessitate cutting both programs and staff.

What is the difference between a bond and a levy?

A levy provides money to help the district fund day-to-day school programs and operations. It bridges the gap between State funding and the cost of current programs, and pays for people and services such as teachers, classroom materials and extracurricular activities. Our most recent levy was a four-year levy passed in 2016.

By contrast, a bond pays for capital projects, mainly new construction and remodeling of existing buildings. Our most recent school bond was passed in 2019. The majority of the money from the 2019 bond will fund the construction of a new Ferndale High School.

How long will the levy last?

The 2020 levy impacts years 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Have more questions?

More information is available on our website at www.ferndalesd.org/levy or by contacting mark.deebach@ferndalesd.org or (360) 383-9203.

Election Day: February 11, 2020

Ballots must be postmarked by Election Day to count. Ballots will be sent January 24 by the Whatcom County Auditor's Office.

