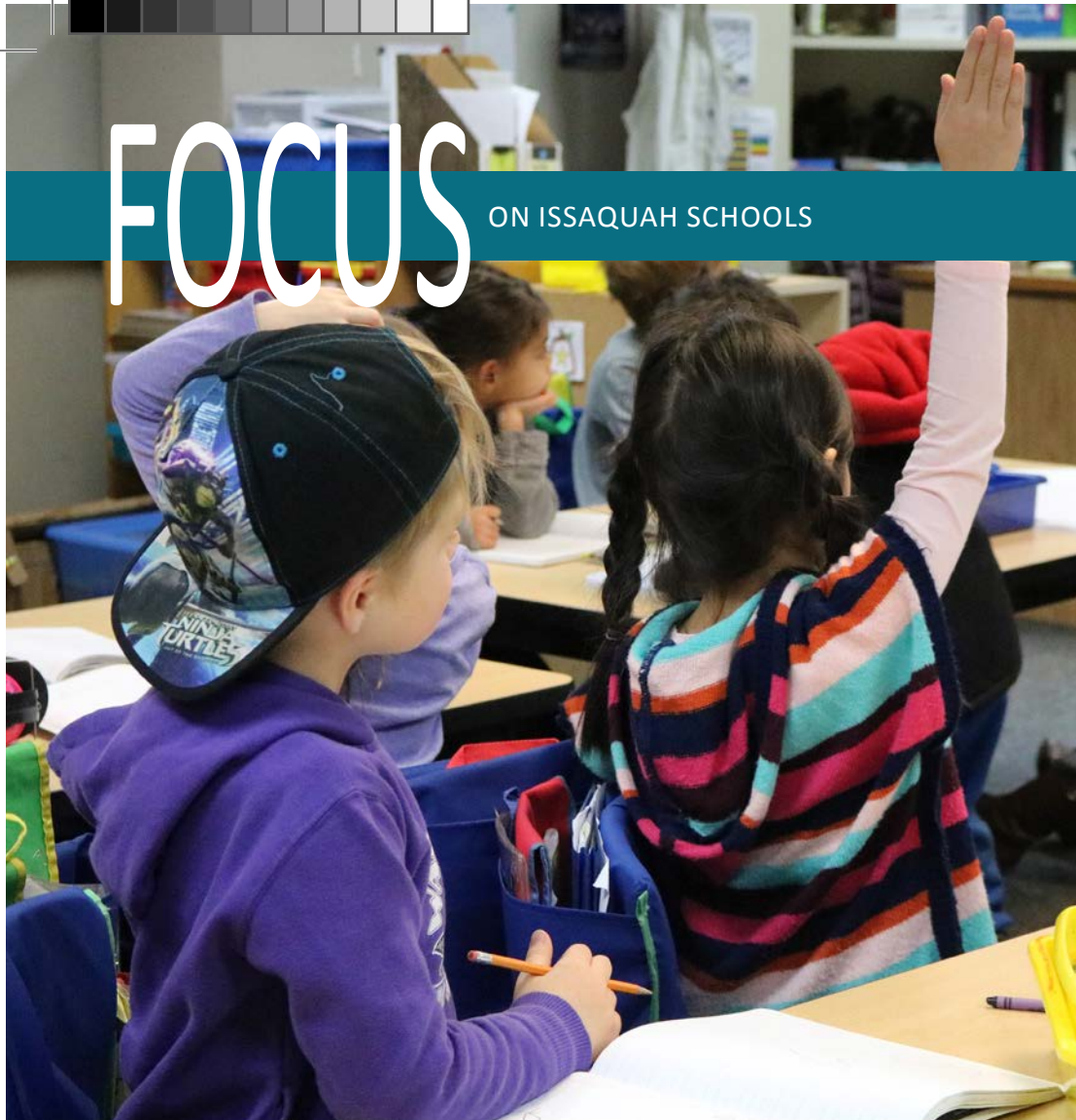


# FOCUS ON ISSAQUAH SCHOOLS



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### STAY CONNECTED



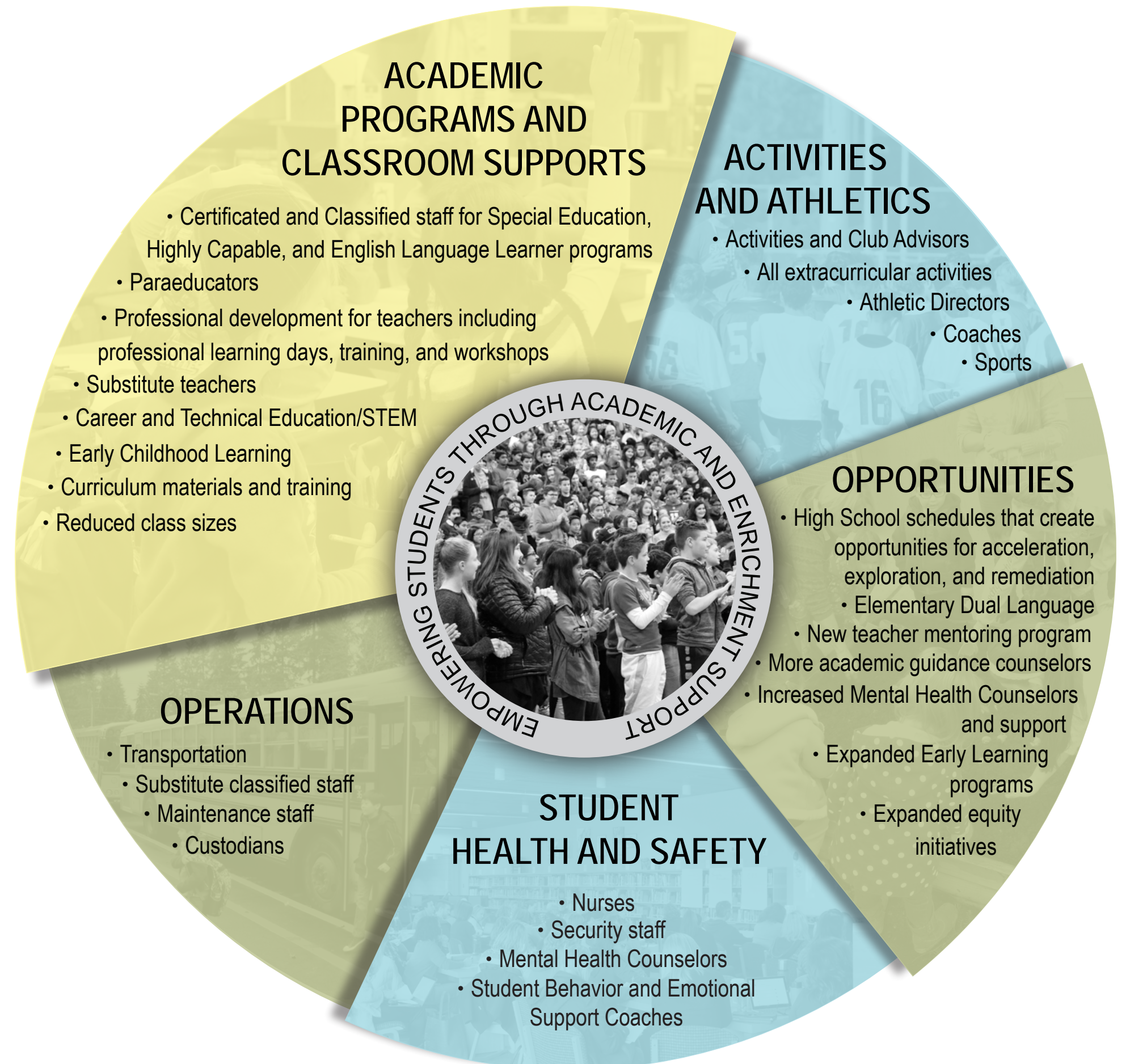
# FOCUS ON ISSAQUAH SCHOOLS

## 1: RENEWAL TWO-YEAR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS LEVY

The two-year Educational Programs and Operations (EP&O) Levy (formerly M&O Levy) is the only locally approved ballot measure that directly pays for basic general classroom and operational needs such as special education, curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and staff salaries that are not fully funded by the state.

Like a subscription, local school levies must be renewed with the approval of voters or the funding will be lost. Our current levy expires in 2018! If renewed, the EP&O Levy will allow the District to collect \$81.2M over two years, which represents 15% of our total operating budget or 15¢ of every classroom dollar.

### WHAT IS FUNDED BY THE EP&O LEVY?



## SCHOOL LEVY ELECTION VOTER INFORMATION INSIDE

Please open this mailer for important information from the Issaquah School District about what the levies pay for, tax rates, and more.

Three replacement levies on the ballot to replace levies that expire December 31, 2018.

- Educational Programs and Operations Levy (Two-Year)
- School Bus Levy (One-Year)
- Critical Repair and Technology Levy (Four-Year)

Ballots must be dropped off or postmarked and mailed by **February 13, 2018**.

Information is also available online at [www.issaquah.wednet.edu](http://www.issaquah.wednet.edu).

For email updates about Levy information and Issaquah School District schools, sign up for **E-news** on the District website at: [www.issaquah.wednet.edu/news/ENews](http://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/news/ENews)

### BALLOT DROP BOX LOCATIONS

**Issaquah - Issaquah City Hall**  
130 E Sunset Way, Issaquah

**Renton - Three locations**  
Renton Public Health Center - 3201 NE 7th St.  
Fairwood Library - 17009 140th Ave SE  
King County Elections - 919 SW Grady Way

**Sammamish - Sammamish City Hall**  
801 228th Ave SE, Sammamish

Please check the King County website at [www.kingcounty.gov/depts/elections/how-to-vote/ballots/returning-my-ballot/ballot-drop-boxes.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/elections/how-to-vote/ballots/returning-my-ballot/ballot-drop-boxes.aspx) for a complete list of locations.

## LEVY FACTS: TAXES, K-12 FUNDING, PROGRAMMING, AND MORE

### EMPOWERING STUDENTS THROUGH ACADEMIC AND ENRICHMENT SUPPORT

#### FEBRUARY 2018 ELECTION KEY DATES:

**January 15, 2018 - Register to Vote via Online or by Mail Deadline**

Monday, January 15 is the deadline to register to vote *online or by mail* for the coming February 2018 election. The deadline to register in person is February 5.

**January 24, 2018 - Ballots Mailed to Voters**

King County will mail out all ballots for the February 2018 election. Ballots should begin arriving in mailboxes as soon as the following day, Thursday, January 25. Ballots can be returned as soon as received.

**February 5, 2018 - Register to Vote via in person Deadline**

Monday, February 5 is the final day to register to vote *in person* for the upcoming election. Voters can visit the King County Election Offices in Renton or Seattle to register in person.

**February 13, 2018 - Election Day!**

Tuesday, February 13 is Election Day! If you haven't already, please fill out your ballot and return it to a Ballot Drop Box or by mail. If mailing, your ballot must be postmarked by 8:00pm on February 13.

Looking for your closest Ballot Drop Box? Check out the addresses above for locations in Issaquah, Renton, and Sammamish, or visit King County's website for additional drop off spots.

#### TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR SENIORS AND DISABLED PERSONS

**Did you know?** Washington State law provides two tax benefit programs for homeowners age 61 or over, or those permanently retired due to a disability. These individuals may qualify for a **complete exemption** from all local voter-approved property taxes, including school levy and bond taxes. In addition, the assessed value of your home is frozen at the time you qualify.

A simple call may reduce your taxes. Call the King County Assessor's Office at **206-296-3920** for details and an application form, or visit their website at [www.kingcounty.gov/depts/assessor/TaxpayerAssistance/TaxRelief.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/assessor/TaxpayerAssistance/TaxRelief.aspx)

### FAST FACTS - MORE AT WWW.ISSAQUAH.WEDNET.EDU

#### Local Tax Impact:

In the Issaquah School District, the local school tax rate is expected to decrease \$0.61 per \$1,000 over two years from 2019-2020.

#### State School Taxes/HB2242:

The state portion of school taxes will increase an estimated \$0.96 per \$1,000 and may be further increased by the State Department of Revenue.

#### Financial Management:

The Issaquah School District has the highest bond rating Moody's (Aaa) & Standard & Poors AA+ of any public school district in Washington State. In fact, less than 0.40% of school districts in the entire nation hold a Aaa rating from Moody's. The District has received fifteen consecutive "clean" Financial and Accountability Audits.

### AVERAGE ANNUAL LEVY AMOUNT PER YEAR: \$40.6 MILLION (\$81.2M TOTAL OVER TWO YEARS)





## 2: RENEWAL SCHOOL BUS LEVY: HEALTH, SAFETY, AND EFFICIENCY

If renewed, the School Bus Levy will provide \$2 million in 2019 to purchase 76 buses to enable the District's fleet to run as safely, cleanly, and efficiently as possible. The levy will allow the District to collect state funding to offset the cost of bus purchases, ensure alignment with state safety standards, and provide the most efficient buses, allowing the District to preserve more operational dollars for the classroom.

The 2019 School Bus Replacement Levy would allow the ISD to stay current with its bus depreciation schedule, stay aligned with state safety standards, and maximize bus efficiency to preserve operational dollars for the classroom.

Voters are being asked to approve a one-year School Bus Levy in the amount of \$2 million to purchase 76 buses from the 2019 to 2022 school years.

By combining the \$2 million School Bus Levy with the estimated \$7.9 million in state reimbursement monies and use of transportation fund reserves, the District will be able to execute the purchasing plan detailed below.

**Tax Impact: One-year School Bus Replacement Levy in 2019 for \$2 million equates to \$0.07 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.**

| Year  | Large Buses | Small Buses | Estimated Annual Cost |
|-------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 2019  | 19          | 6           | \$3,534,615           |
| 2020  | 11          | 4           | \$2,192,542           |
| 2021  | 11          | 7           | \$2,564,718           |
| 2022  | 14          | 4           | \$2,976,289           |
| TOTAL | 55          | 21          | \$11,268,164          |

## 3: RENEWAL CAPITAL LEVY: EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND CRITICAL REPAIRS

The four-year Capital Levy includes two components: educational technology and critical repairs for each school District-wide. If renewed, the District will collect nearly \$54 million for technology and \$14.5 million for critical repairs over the life of the levy. For technology, these dollars will fund replacement of aging computers, printers, servers, and document cameras, staff training, development of online classes/educational opportunities, school tech specialists, upgrades of wireless Internet, safety and efficiency software for school bus operations, and continued upgrades to District websites, emergency alert systems, and other e-communications. For critical repairs, the Capital Levy includes maintenance of heating and cooling systems, additional portable classroom space, safety, and security upgrades.

**Tax Impact: Four-year Critical Repairs and Tech Levy equates to an average \$0.52 per \$1,000 property value over four years.**

## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Ron Thiele

Dear Residents of the Issaquah School District,

Thank you for taking time to read this mailing and become informed about the Issaquah School District's upcoming renewal levies on the February 2018 ballot. Residents who have lived in the District for some time may notice that this election year, our Educational Programs and Operations Levy, referred to in the past as a "M&O Levy" is a two-year levy. Traditionally, the District has run its Educational Programs and Operations or EP&O Levies as four-year issues. I would like to take a moment to provide some background and our rationale for the change this year.

The most significant change to the way basic education is funded in the history of our state was signed into law by the legislature on June 30, 2017. You may hear this law referred to in the media or by others as House Bill 2242 or "The McCleary fix." While we believe our District will see definite benefits from this new funding model, as with any change of this magnitude, there is uncertainty about some parts of the law. Specifically, the law in its current form still does not fully fund Special Education and there are questions to be answered regarding inequities in districts across the state, salary allocations, and the amount of authority districts have with their local levies. These may be addressed in the upcoming legislative session, but without clarity on these

issues now, we are unable to accurately forecast how much we will need to ask local voters to pay for in order to maintain and grow our programs and operations over a four-year period.

That said, we are confident about the amount we need to collect locally in the next two years, or through 2020. For this reason, we are running our EP&O levy for only two years on this ballot issue. This means that, if the two-year EP&O levy on the February 2018 ballot is approved, taxpayers will be asked to vote to replace it again in February of 2020. Please note that we are also running a one-year School Bus Levy to replace and maintain buses and a four-year Critical Repairs and Technology Levy. You may not realize this, but even with the new state funding model, we receive only a portion of the funding we need from the State to adequately provide transportation and technology.

However, we do expect an increase in State funding of about \$30 Million beginning in 2018. This is great news for our District! For nearly 30 years, the Issaquah School District has been one of the least state-funded districts in Washington. We are grateful that we have always had the support of our voters in approving local levies so that we could offer the high quality education our community expects and deserves. The increase in State funding gives us an opportunity now to plan for and implement new programs that our parent community has been demanding. These include a Dual Language Program, increased mental health and guidance counselors, an expanded Early Learning Program, and a high school schedule that provides more opportunities for our students. The increase in state funding is due to an expected increase in state school taxes of approximately \$0.96 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Because we are receiving more money from the State, we are able to ask for less local money and decrease local school taxes by \$0.69 per thousand of assessed property value in 2019 and \$0.49 per thousand \$1,000 in 2020.

Chart 1

Chart #1 Shows the Total Combined Levy including all three local replacement levies, local construction bonds, and the state school levy. The higher tax rate in 2018 is the result of the new state tax and the final collection of the local levy that expires in 2018. Combined tax rates would then begin to level off from 2019-2022.

The total combined tax rate for state and local school levies and construction bonds in 2017 was \$6.09 per \$1,000 of assessed property value (APV). The total combined rate for state and local school levies and construction bonds will be an estimated \$6.92 per \$1,000 APV in 2018, then drop back down to an estimated \$6.24 per \$1,000 APV in 2019, and increase slightly to \$6.49 per \$1,000 APV in 2020.

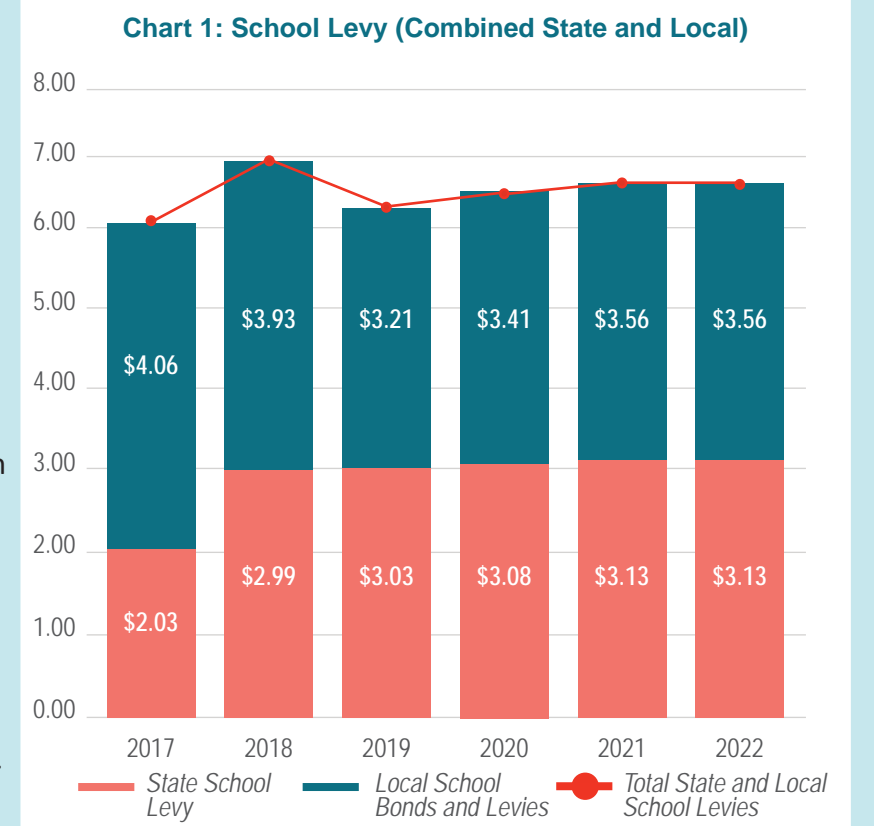


Chart 2: State Common Schools vs. Local EP&O Levy (Rate per \$1000)

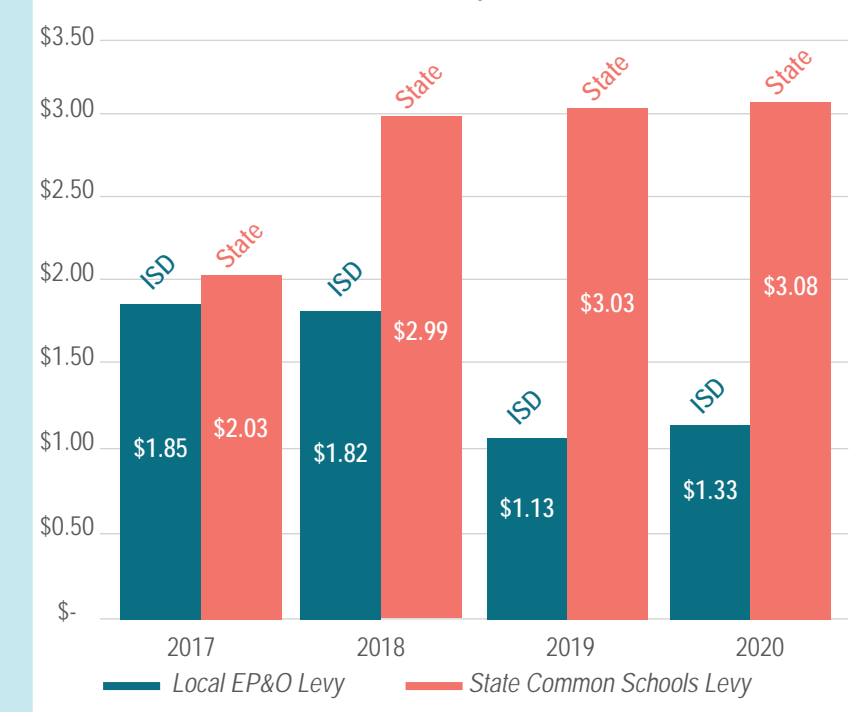


Chart 2

Chart #2 Focuses on the two-year Educational Programs and Operations Levy and reflects the shift in property taxes between state and local school levies due to the new school funding legislation enacted by Washington State in June, 2017. Beginning in 2018, the rate of the state portion of school taxes will increase by an estimated \$0.96 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The Issaquah School District's local EP&O levy rate is being reduced from 2018 levels an estimated \$0.69 per \$1,000 in 2019 and \$0.49 in 2020.

Remember that about 15% of our total operating budget still needs to be paid for with local levy dollars! The State does not pay for athletics or extracurricular activities and provides only a portion of our operating budget for bus drivers, substitute teachers, professional development for teachers, paraeducators, school nurses, counselors, and many more supports vital to our mission. Ballots are arriving in mailboxes at the end of January and the last day to mail in or

drop off your ballot is February 13. Please remember that each of the issues on the ballot are meant to replace levies expiring December 31, 2018 that allow us to continue serving the ISD community with our high-performing, safe, and efficient schools. I encourage you to read the enclosed materials and, for more details, to visit the District website at [www.issaquah.wednet.edu](http://www.issaquah.wednet.edu).



## CURRENT GROWTH SITUATION:

The Issaquah School District is rapidly growing, adding more than 4,000 students in the last 10 years. About half of that growth has occurred in the last 4 years. With more students comes a greater need for resources that are partially covered or not covered by state funding, such as nursing, counseling, transportation, special education, and more.

