



NEWS

Mercer Island School District

Volume 11 Issue #2, Winter 2010

This issue of District NEWS provides information on the three renewal levies to come before voters on February 9, 2010. Please check the district web site for the most current information at www.misd.k12.wa.us

On February 9th, our school district will have three levy renewal propositions on the ballot.

These include: the General Fund Levy, Capital Projects Levy and the Transportation Vehicle Levy. All school districts in the state of Washington, including ours, rely heavily upon local levies to fill the gap

Superintendent's Message



between state funding and what is necessary to operate schools and educate our students. If approved by voters, these three propositions will allow the Mercer Island School District to maintain the high quality programs our parents and community members expect in light of diminished

state funding. The community's response to these propositions will significantly affect our children and their future. I hope that you will take time to familiarize yourself with the specifics of all three levies so that you can make an informed decision on these important propositions.

Sincerely, Dr. Gary Plano

The Three Renewal Levies

1. General Fund Levy

The proposed four-year General Fund levy would renew the current General Fund levy that will expire in 2010. This local levy pays for 23.6% of all educational and support programs in the district and helps bridge the gap between state revenues and what is needed to fund a basic education for our students. If approved, this four-year replacement General Fund levy would authorize: \$12,438,000 in 2011; \$13,370,000 in 2012; \$14,373,000 in 2013 and \$15,451,000 in 2014.

2. Capital Projects Levy

The proposed Capital Projects Levy would enhance the amount approved by voters in 2008 by \$2,353,000 in 2011 and \$2,471,000 in 2012. The final four years of the six-year levy is a renewal of the 2008 Capital Levy and the 2011/2012 enhancements. This enhanced renewal levy is needed to maintain our buildings, attend to emergent needs in the next six years, and to improve the learning environment through technology. Since Washington State does not fund technology, local levy support is needed to offer students equipment, classroom training, and access to online resources, comparable to what other districts provide. If approved, this six-year enhanced Capital Projects levy would authorize: \$2,353,000 in 2011; \$2,471,000 in 2012; \$4,595,000 in 2013; \$4,844,000 in 2014; \$5,025,000 in 2015 and \$5,216,000 in 2016.

3. Transportation Vehicle Levy

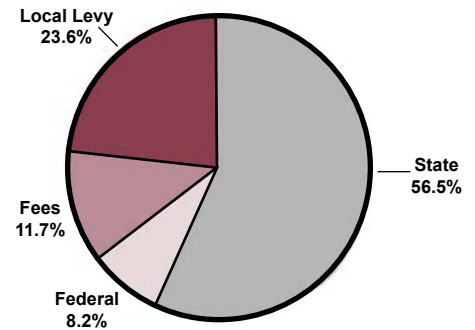
The Transportation Vehicle levy is a one-year, renewal levy in the amount of \$500,000. If approved, this levy allows the district to replace school buses at the end of their serviceable life and buy additional buses to transport students to and from school.

How is our School District funded?

In Washington State, funding for day-to-day operations of public schools comes from three main sources: state, federal, and local taxpayers. State and federal revenues do not fully fund educational programs and services. Consequently, districts must ask their local communities to support the basic needs of schools by approving local levies every four years. In Mercer Island

schools, the local levy supports 23.6% of the costs for education programs and daily operations. The General Fund levy amount is determined by a "levy lid" percentage that the state sets for each district. MISD's per pupil revenue from all sources **rank MISD 166th out of 295 districts. The MISD local levy is an important part of school funding.**

2009-2010 General Fund Revenue



1 General Fund Levy Renewal

What would the General Fund Levy pay for?

The General Fund Levy would help bridge the gap between what the state provides and what is needed to provide a basic education for the students in our schools. The General Fund Levy provides these critical services to students and more:

- 88 teachers and support staff across the district
- Lower student-to-teacher ratios K-12 beyond what the state funds
- The seven-period day at Mercer Island High School
- School counselors at the secondary level
- Enhanced special education programs
- Programs for English-language Learners
- Most of our athletic and sports programs
- Custodial services and building maintenance
- Nursing services
- Physical Education specialists
- Art, drama, debate, music programs
- Support for struggling students
- Materials/supplies
- Library resources
- Utilities

What is the cost of the renewal of the General Fund Levy?

In school levy elections, voters authorize a fixed collection amount. The estimated tax rate in 2011 would be approximately \$1.41 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Below is an example of a current and future estimated levy tax bill:

Home Value	You already pay:		Renewal amount:	
	2010 Estimated Tax Bill current General Fund		2011 Estimated Tax Bill proposed General Fund	
	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly
\$1,000,000	\$1,190	\$99.17	\$1,410	\$117.50



2 Capital Projects Fund Levy Renewal

What would the enhanced Capital Projects renewal levy pay for?

The district's general fund supports the cost of routine and preventive maintenance, but capital funds are needed for major projects such as classroom expansion, technology-based teaching and learning solutions, communication system upgrades, student safety and security, and boiler replacements. As part of our commitment to enhancing and maintaining assets provided by the community, we have identified emergent needs that require attention over the next six years. These are divided equally between the need to enhance our technology program to support educational programs in the classroom; and the need to renovate and maintain our buildings, playfields and other facilities.

Highlights include:

- Replacement of boilers that are beyond serviceable life with energy-efficient boilers
- Music room addition at Mercer Island High School for improved instruction for a growing population of music students
- Video surveillance systems at all schools for student safety and security
- Play area and field improvements for student health and safety
- Track resurfacing and gym upgrades
- Elementary classroom spaces to house a growing student population
- A broadcast media studio/editing room at Islander Middle School to enhance student learning
- Technology equipment upgrades
- Telephone system (present system is 17 years old)
- Special education classroom expansion to accommodate a growing population of special education students
- Additional Teachers on Special Assignment to help teachers use technology as a tool for learning
- District network upgrade to allow more capacity for technology-based teaching and learning such as global video conferencing and sharing innovative strategies for reaching 21st century goals
- Energy-efficient lighting
- Emergency power distribution



Why are we including technology in a renewed Capital Projects Levy?

Our state defined "basic education" in 1977, and still does not include technology in its definition. However, state law allows technology to be considered a capital expense. Consequently, we are including the costs of technology equipment, service support, and training in our renewed Capital Projects levy. ALL of this funding must come from local funding approved by district voters.

What is the cost of the proposed renewal of the Capital Projects Levy?

The estimated tax rate in 2011 would be approximately \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Below is an example of a current and future estimated levy tax bill:

	<i>You already pay:</i>		<i>Renewal amount:</i>	
Home Value	2010 Estimated Tax Bill current Capital Levy		2011 Estimated Tax Bill proposed Capital Levy	
	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly
\$1,000,000	\$320	\$26.67	\$500	\$41.67

3 Transportation Vehicle Levy Renewal

Renewed Transportation Vehicle Levy

The Transportation Vehicle Levy is a one-year levy that is run every four years. The district's last transportation levy was in 2007. Since the state only funds 60% of the replacement costs for a bus, without the levy support, money would need to be redirected from the General Fund, which would ultimately affect the classroom.

What is the cost of the proposed renewal of the Transportation Vehicle Levy?

The estimated tax rate in 2011 would be approximately \$0.06 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The estimated tax levy bill in 2011 is a one-time collection of \$60 for the owner of a million dollar home.

	<i>You already pay:</i>		<i>Renewal amount:</i>	
Home Value	2007 Tax Bill prior Transportation Vehicle Levy		2011 Estimated Tax Bill proposed one-year Transportation Vehicle Levy	
	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly
\$1,000,000	\$50	\$4.17	\$60	\$5

Voter Registration Information

Are you Registered to Vote?

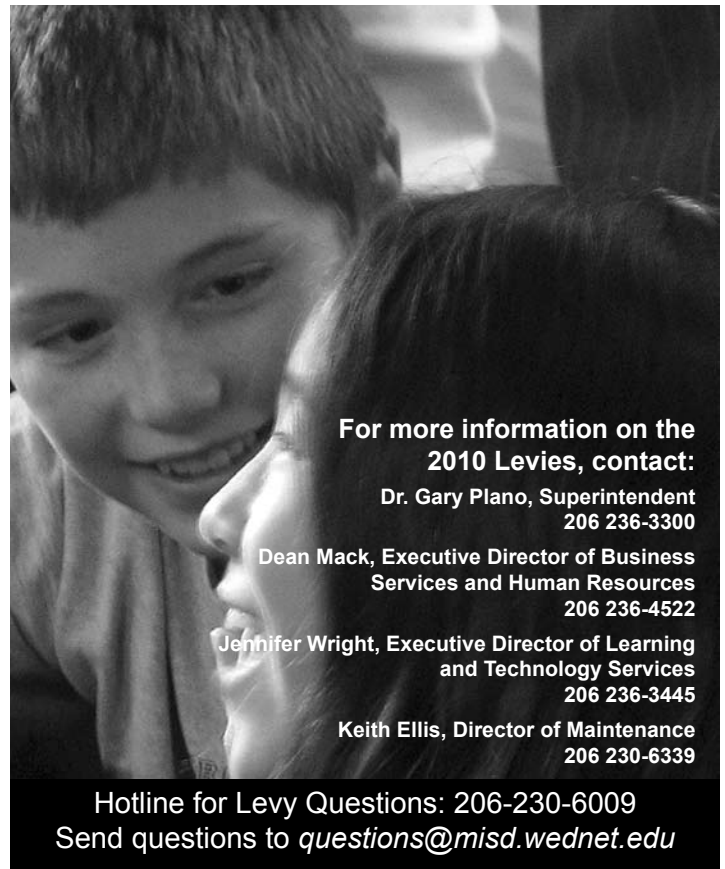
If you are new to King County, you can register online at www.vote.wa.gov. If you need to make an address change to your current King County registration, call the King County Elections Office 206-296-VOTE (206-296-8683) and tell them your new address. For other changes, you must fill out a form (available online) and mail it in. Registration forms must be postmarked 30 days prior to an election. You can also register in person up to 15 days before an election at the King County Elections Office. The deadline to register is January 11.

Levy Election Requirement

Our state constitution requires a 50 percent plus one “yes” vote – a so-called “simple majority” to pass elections.

Tax Exemptions for Seniors and Disabled

Homeowners age 61 or older, and those permanently retired due to disability, may qualify for a complete exemption from all local voter-approved property taxes, including all school bond and levy taxes. In addition, the assessed value of your home is frozen at the time you qualify. Call the King County Assessor’s Office for details and application forms at 206-296-3920, or visit their website at www.kingcounty.gov/assessor and click on Exemptions.



**For more information on the
2010 Levies, contact:**

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Services and Human Resources**
206 236-4522

**Jennifer Wright, Executive Director of Learning
and Technology Services**
206 236-3445

Keith Ellis, Director of Maintenance
206 230-6339

Hotline for Levy Questions: 206-230-6009
Send questions to questions@misd.wednet.edu

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