



NEWS

Mercer Island School District Volume 7, Issue #2, January 2006

This issue of District NEWS provides information on two school levies to come before voters on February 7, 2006. Please check the district website for the most current information.
www.misd.k12.wa.us



State funding covers only part of school costs...

The Mercer Island School District will ask voters to renew two school levies on February 7, 2006. The first is a \$36.7 million maintenance and operations levy to be collected over four years. The second is a \$400,000 transportation levy to be collected over 1 year.

Your support means everything!

2006 Levy Quick Facts February Election

Levy 1 Renewing the General Fund Levy

Replaces current levy that expires this year 2006.

When: Election on February 7, 2006.

Length: 4 years, 2007-2010.

Amount: \$8.4 million in 2007 with added increments until 2010.

Annual Rate: Estimated \$120 per \$100,000 of assessed value in 2007.

Levy 2 Renewing the Transportation Fund Levy

Local funds are needed to replace a number of aging school buses. Replaces current levy that expires this year.

When: Election on February 7, 2006.

Length: One year.

Amount: \$400,000 in 2007. Annual.

Rate: Estimated at \$6 per \$100,000 of assessed value in 2007.



Levy 1 – February 7th General Fund Levy Renewal

State funding only covers part of the cost of running schools. Local communities can supplement state and federal funds with local support through special levies. The general fund levy is a special levy that supplements overall district operating costs. State law limits the amount that can be raised locally through such levies. Our community has traditionally provided the maximum local support provided by law which covers about **23.3%** of total district support.

Is this a new tax?

No. It will renew our current levy that will expire at the end of 2006. These funds are critical to operate Mercer Island Schools at their current level. To keep local support, 60% of voters must approve the request.

What does it fund?

State funding covers the majority of the school district's basic operating costs. The general fund levy helps cover the difference between the total expenses and state revenue. In 2004-05, the general fund levy covered 23.3% of district support and helped cover expenses in the following areas:

- Teachers and other support staff
- Additional instructional hours at MIHS
- Teacher and support staff salary enhancements
- Student transportation operating costs
- Supplies and materials
- Student activities and athletics
- Staff training
- School building maintenance
- Utilities

How much is requested?

To maintain current percentages of local support, the levy request needs to grow each year. A four-year levy request is based on an estimate of what that allowed amount will be in the future. If the voters approve a higher levy than is ultimately permitted, the difference won't be collected from taxpayers. For example, the 2002 Maintenance and Operations levy shows the following approved and certified amounts:

	Approved	Certified
2003	\$7.2	\$7.2
2004	\$7.6	\$7.5
2005	\$8.0	\$7.7
2006	\$8.8	\$8.3

The current request would authorize the following maximum collection amounts:

- 2007 - \$8.4 million
- 2008 - \$9 million
- 2009 - \$9.4 million
- 2010 - \$9.9 million

What will it cost you?

Most other property taxes are calculated on an approved collection rate, but special school levies are based on the total dollar amount approved by voters. As the total assessed property value within the district increases, the collection rate goes down. Based on current assessed values, the estimated collection rates for the proposed levy renewal are as follows:

- 2007 - \$120 per \$100,000 of property value
- 2008 - \$128 per \$100,000 of property value
- 2009 - \$134 per \$100,000 of property value
- 2010 - \$141 per \$100,000 of property value

The actual cost for each taxpayer will be similar to the current levy that expires at the end of 2006.

Rates per \$100,000

	Estimated	Actual
2003	\$127	\$116
2004	\$134	\$119
2005	\$141	\$120
2006	\$155	TBD

Levy 2 – February 7 Transportation Levy

The state pays part of the cost of bus purchases, spreading payments over a depreciation schedule of 8, 13, or 18 years, depending on the size of the bus. Local communities may approve special transportation levies to help cover the total purchase cost of new buses. The district's last transportation levy was approved in 2002 and helped fund bus purchases for 4 years. Since the state only provides funds for approximately 60% of the replacement cost for a bus, without the levy support, money would need to be directed from the General Fund, which would ultimately affect the classroom.

What does it fund?

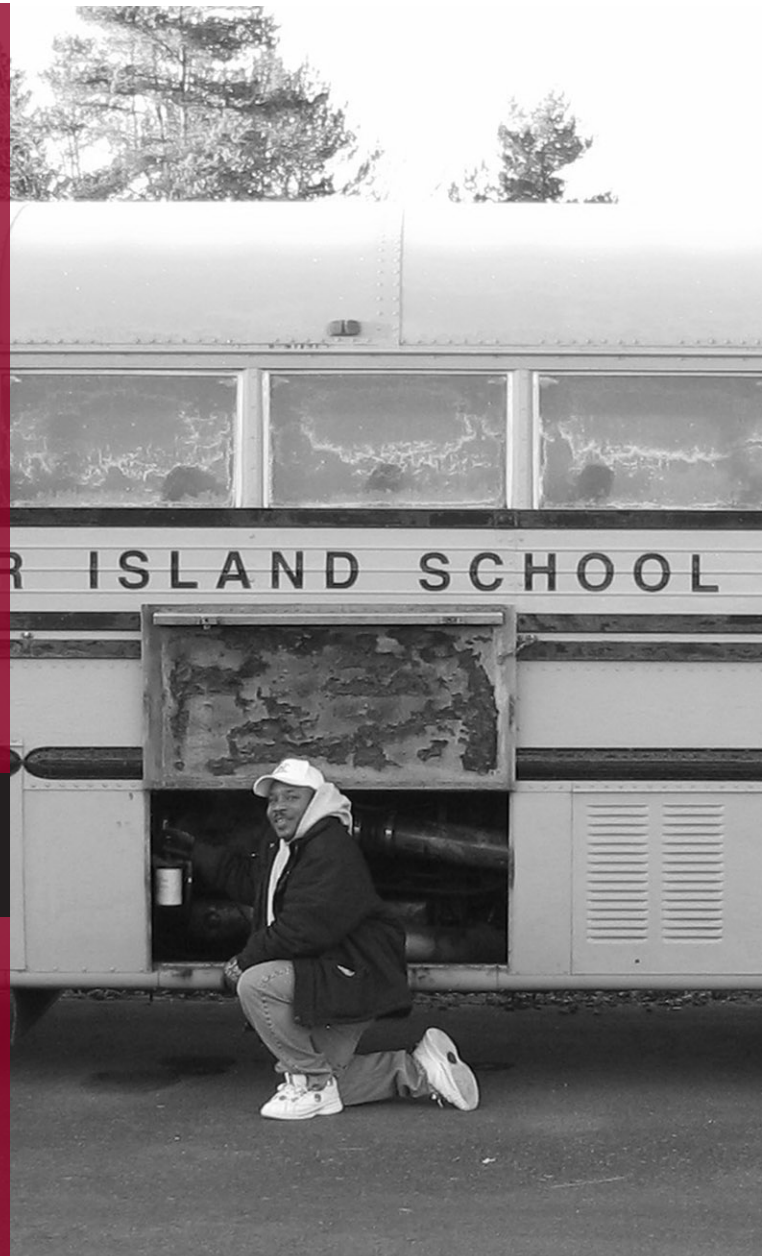
Safe student transportation is the top priority for the district's fleet of 36 buses. Seven buses are over fifteen years old. Maintenance is expensive for these old buses and parts have become difficult to find. The transportation levy would collect funds in 2007 to support a four-year replacement plan. By 2010, the plan calls for 11 buses to be replaced.

How much is requested?

The one year levy request is for \$400,000 in tax year 2007

How much will it cost you?

- \$6 for every \$100,000 of property value



The Mercer Island community believes in the potential of its children. Your support affirms this belief.



**Local support is critical
in maintaining the current level of
excellence in Mercer Island schools.**

District News

Mercer Island Schools

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