

PLEASE REMEMBER TO VOTE BY MAY 5

Great Falls Public Schools

LEVY FACTS



Photo by Rion Sanders, GF Tribune

STRONG PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF A VIBRANT ECONOMY

Over the Past Ten Years :

- More than \$10 million was cut from the budget.
- More than 100 teaching positions were eliminated.
- Great Falls Public Schools has passed an operational levy twice since 2008.
- Today's budget has not grown to match inflation.
- Passing the levy will preserve programs, supplies and supports so students will have the same opportunities as the GFPS students who have come before them, while staying competitive with other Montana students.
- Passing the levy will allow investments in teacher training and updating outdated books for students.
- As part of local control, the state mandates that 20%

of school funding come from local citizens. Passing the levy means taxpayers fulfill that 20% commitment and Great Falls schools would match the average per pupil funding compared to other AA Montana school districts.



- As the investment of the 12.05 Mill Levy is spread across all property in our community, the levy increase is estimated to cost \$1.36 per month for \$100,000 of assessed market value, or \$16.27 per year.
- By law, money raised from the bond vote in 2016 must be spent on buildings. It cannot pay for teaching staff & educational programs.
- If voters pass the elementary levy, future general fund levies for the Elementary District will be limited unless enrollment increases.

• Ballots are mailed out to registered voters between April 15-20. Ballots are due back on May 5, 2020.

YOUR VOTE WILL INVEST \$1,750,000 IN LOCAL EDUCATION

THE LEVY WILL COST:

Assessed Market Value of your property:	\$100,000	\$200,000
Per Year (approx.)	\$16.27	\$32.54
Per Month	\$1.36	\$2.71

To find your individual tax information:
<https://itax.tylertech.com/cascademt/>

To calculate the estimated cost for your property:
<https://gfps.k12.mt.us/school-elections-2020/>

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Great Falls Public Schools

LEVY



Q: What is an operational levy?

A local property tax collected to cover educational programming and day-to-day costs not covered by the state or federal funding.

Q: How will the school district use the revenue from this levy?

The money would preserve current programs, staffing and activities as well as cover the rising costs of education.

- Address the annual roll over costs of the operational budget.
- Improve the salaries for support staff to attract and retain high quality staff.
- Provide curriculum, technology and teaching materials to support student learning.
- Reinstate professional development and staff training to support teachers and support personnel.
- Address strategic staffing priorities to directly support improved student achievement.
- Continued Safety Improvements.

Q: What happened when past levies didn't get voter support?

Between 2008 and today, the District has cut more than \$10.5 million and eliminated more than 100 teaching positions and/or used reserve funds to balance the operational budget.

Q: How does Great Falls Public Schools spending compare to Montana's other large school districts?

GFPS graduates compete for jobs, college entrance and scholarships with graduates from the other large school districts. These communities tax and spend more per student than Great Falls. As a result, they have maintained and enhanced programming to ensure their students are college and career ready. Without the levy, we will be

forced to continue to reduce opportunities and support for all of our students.

Q: How is a BOND different than a LEVY ?

In 2016, our community supported the investment of a \$98.8 million **BOND** to construct, renovate and modernize our public schools. By law, this money cannot be used for the annual operational costs like educational programs, materials or to pay staff salaries. That is why an operational **Levy** is needed.

To see how the bond money has been invested go to: <https://gfps.k12.mt.us/facility-budget-bond-info/>

Q: How much does the state pay?

The state guarantees 80% of the annual General Fund Budget revenues. That amount is based on the school district's enrollment. The remaining 20% of the formula comes from local levies passed by local voters.

Q: Did our taxes go up last year?

Some citizens in Great Falls actually saw a decrease in their school related taxes as the total mills levied decreased. While other citizens may have had an increase because the county raised the assessed value of their property.

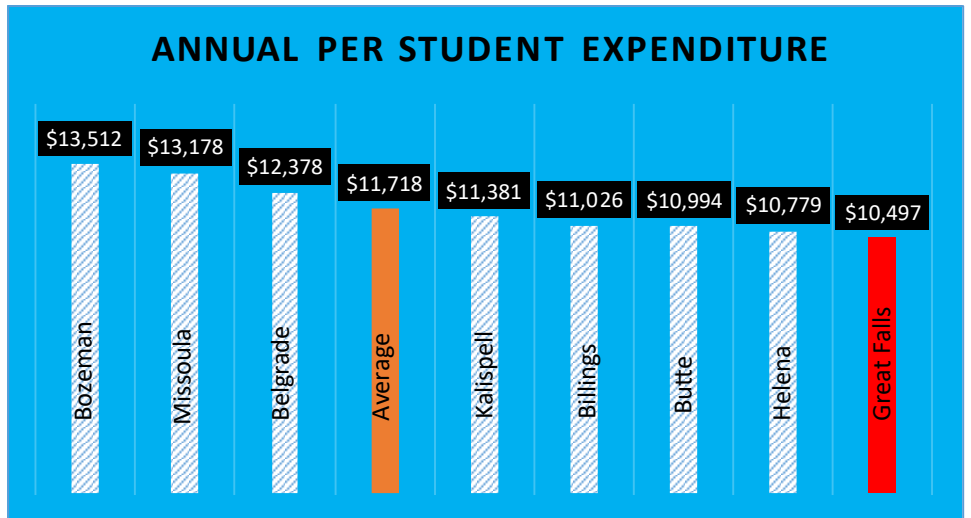
Q: When was the last Operational levy passed?

- In 2011, voters approved a \$895,150 levy
- In 2015, voters approved a \$1,222,209 levy

Q: I am on a fixed income, but I know schools are important. How can I afford new taxes?

The District understands this dilemma that many community members face. There is help for low-income and elderly citizens. Information on Property Tax Relief Application and the Elderly Homeowner/Renter Credit Application can be found here: <https://gfps.k12.mt.us/property-tax-relief-info/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
<https://gfps.k12.mt.us/budget/>



Source: Office of Public Instruction GEMS

Combined K-8 & High School Average of All Budgeted Funds