

2026 Transportation Levy

Levy Advisory Committee: Final Recommendation

September 30, 2025

Background

The Issaquah School District operates a fleet of more than 170 buses, transporting over 9,500 students daily across 110 square miles. While the state provides partial depreciation funding for diesel buses, it does not cover the higher up-front costs of electric buses or the installation of charging infrastructure.

In July 2025, ISD launched its first electric bus pilot, which confirmed benefits in sustainability and lower long-term maintenance costs, but also underscored the significant up-front investment required. A dedicated Transportation Levy allows the district to modernize its fleet, expand electrification, and maintain reliable service for students.

Committee Process and Feedback

- Meeting discussions reflected broad support for including a Transportation Levy, with strong interest in electric bus expansion and charging infrastructure.
- Feedback emphasized the importance of piloting buses across the district rather than in a single region, to evaluate performance in different terrains and conditions.
- Members supported balancing diesel and electric purchases to maintain reliability while preparing for a long-term majority-electric fleet.

Rationale

This approach maintains student transportation reliability while advancing the district's sustainability goals and aligning with OE-17: Sustainability. The levy funds critical infrastructure to expand the electric bus program while remaining within the total combined tax rate parameter of ~\$3.17 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

Committee Recommendation

The Levy Advisory Committee recommends including a **Transportation Levy** in the February 2026 ballot package, structured as:

- One-year levy (2027 collection) totaling \$2M (~\$0.03 per \$1,000 AV).
- Funds a balanced bus replacement plan and expanded electrification efforts.
- Supports the purchase of 61 buses (44 diesel, 17 electric) over the 2025–2030 cycle.
- Expands charging capacity at the Plateau Transportation Facility and installs infrastructure at the Main facility.
- Pilots electric bus routes across the district to evaluate performance.

Levy Amounts and Estimated Tax Rates

**Recommended Funding
Amounts (in \$1,000's)**

Year	Transportation Levy
2027	2,000
2028	-
2029	-
2030	-

Estimated Resulting Tax Rates

Year	Transportation Levy
2027	\$ 0.03
2028	\$ -
2029	\$ -
2030	\$ -

Closing Statement

The Levy Advisory Committee concludes that the Transportation Levy is an essential component of the February 2026 ballot package. This measure provides a fiscally responsible plan to replace aging buses, expand electric bus adoption, and build the infrastructure necessary for a sustainable fleet transition.

By maintaining the combined tax rate at approximately \$3.17 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, the recommendation balances reliability, innovation, and fiscal stewardship. The Committee strongly recommends forwarding this Transportation Levy to the Superintendent and Board of Directors for inclusion on the February 2026 ballot, ensuring safe, reliable, and environmentally responsible student transportation for years to come.

Appendix A

2025-26 Plus Four Year Bus Purchase Plan - 2026 Levy Planning

Beginning Balance (8/31/25)				\$ 9,000,000
2025-2026				
Large Buses	\$ 220,000	3	\$ 660,000	
Small Buses	\$ 165,000	7	\$ 1,155,000	
Electric - Small	\$ 400,000	0	\$ -	
Electric - Big	\$ 540,000	4	\$ 2,160,000	
<i>Electric Charging Infrastructure</i>				
Satellite Facility	\$ 75,000	3	\$ 225,000	
Bus/Infrastructure Purchases				\$ (4,200,000)
Annual Depreciation				\$ 2,200,000
Ending Balance				\$ 7,000,000
2026-27				
Large Buses	\$ 233,200	0	\$ -	
Small Buses	\$ 174,900	8	\$ 1,399,200	
Electric - Small	\$ 424,000	0	\$ -	
Electric - Big	\$ 572,400	3	\$ 1,717,200	
<i>Electric Charging Infrastructure</i>				
Satellite Facility	\$ 79,500	3	\$ 238,500	
Main Facility	\$ 900,000	1	\$ 900,000	
Bus/Infrastructure Purchases				\$ (4,254,900)
Annual Depreciation				\$ 2,400,000
Levy 2026 Funds				\$ 1,050,000
Ending Balance				\$ 6,195,100
2027-28				
Large Buses	\$ 247,192	0	\$ -	
Small Buses	\$ 185,394	4	\$ 741,576	
Electric - Small	\$ 449,440	0	\$ -	
Electric - Big	\$ 606,744	3	\$ 1,820,232	
Bus/Infrastructure Purchases				\$ (2,561,808)
Annual Depreciation				\$ 2,500,000
Levy 2026 Funds				\$ 950,000
Ending Balance				\$ 7,083,292
2028-29				
Large Buses	\$ 262,024	4	\$ 1,048,094	
Small Buses	\$ 196,518	7	\$ 1,375,623	
Electric - Small	\$ 476,406	0	\$ -	
Electric - Big	\$ 643,149	3	\$ 1,929,446	
Bus/Infrastructure Purchases				\$ (4,353,163)
Annual Depreciation				\$ 2,500,000
Ending Balance				\$ 5,230,129
2029-30				
Large Buses	\$ 277,745	6	\$ 1,666,470	
Small Buses	\$ 208,309	5	\$ 1,041,543	
Electric - Small	\$ 504,991	0	\$ -	
Electric - Big	\$ 681,738	4	\$ 2,726,950	
Bus/Infrastructure Purchases				\$ (5,434,963)
Annual Depreciation				\$ 2,200,000
Ending Balance (8/31/2030)				\$ 1,995,165