

Questions?

Answers!

Vancouver Public Schools

Replacement Levy

February 9, 2010





Vancouver Public Schools

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Questions and Answers about the February 9 Maintenance and Operations Levy

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Summary

The Replacement Maintenance and Operations (M & O) Levy for Vancouver Public Schools

Vancouver Public Schools has had a maintenance and operations levy in place since 1964. The levy on the February 9, 2010, ballot would continue funding for basic programs and services for the next three years.

Election date: February 9, 2010

- All mail-in election
- Ballots mailed January 22, 2010
- Replacement levy to continue basic programs and services

Levy amounts:

2011 — \$39 million

2012 — \$41 million

2013 — \$43 million

Estimated levy rates per \$1,000 assessed value of property:

2011 — \$3.08

2012 — \$3.23

2013 — \$3.33

Part I — Basic Facts about the Levy

1. What is a maintenance and operations levy?

A maintenance and operations (M & O) levy provides local funding support for educational programs and services.

2. Why is Vancouver Public Schools submitting a levy proposal?

The state provides the majority (approximately 63 percent), but not all, of the total dollars necessary to maintain basic education. The federal government provides additional funding. Local levy dollars make up the shortfall (approximately 17 percent of the district's budget).

3. Is this a new levy?

No. This is a replacement levy. Vancouver Public Schools has had a maintenance and operations levy in place since 1964.

4. Why is the district asking for a replacement levy at this time?

Voters must reauthorize the levy for every year. The current levy expires in 2010. The replacement levy on the February 9, 2010, ballot would continue programs and services through the year 2013.

5. How will the levy funds be spent?

- Teacher and support positions
- Classroom supplies, textbooks and equipment
- Instructional technology and software
- School safety and security
- Maintenance of buildings and grounds
- Staff training and professional development
- Support for programs of choice
- Extended day/year learning
- Education for students with special needs
- Extracurricular activities and intramural sports
- Substitutes
- Portable classrooms
- Utilities, insurance and fuel
- Student transportation

6. Why is the district asking for a three-year levy?

Multiple-year levies help with planning and save election costs. However, due to the current economic situation and the uncertainty of state funding beyond 2013, the district is not asking for a four-year levy, the maximum allowed by law.

7. Why is the district postponing a request for a capital improvement and technology levy?

Capital improvements at several schools and technology upgrades for student learning are needed, but right now the district's maintenance and operations levy is most important. The district must be sensitive to the financial situations of our local community members and businesses during the current economic climate. A capital

improvement and technology levy will be brought before voters when the economic situation improves.

Part II — Levy Amounts

8. What are the dollar amounts of the district's February 9 proposal?

The district is requesting authorization of \$39 million for collection in 2011, \$41 million for 2012, and \$43 million for 2013.

9. How are those amounts set?

Washington State law limits the amounts local districts can request. A formula, based on a levy lid of 24 percent of the district's revenue from the previous year, is used to determine the amounts.

10. Will Vancouver Public Schools receive levy equalization funds from the state?

The district receives levy equalization funds from the state, but only if the local levy is approved by voters. For the 2009-2010 fiscal year, the district will receive approximately \$6 million in levy equalization funds from the state. With the passage of the replacement levy, Vancouver Public Schools can expect levy equalization funds to continue. Our school district qualifies for levy equalization funds, because our tax base is lower than that of wealthier districts.

11. What are the estimated tax rates?

Voters approve tax amounts for school levies, not tax rates. Taxes will be comparable with previous years, but tax rates (per \$1,000 of assessed property value) are more difficult to predict than in the past. Assessed values of many homes have gone down. As the assessed property value goes down, the rate per \$1,000 increases.

Estimated rates per \$1,000 assessed property value are: \$3.08 for 2011, \$3.23 for 2012, and \$3.33 for 2013. Tax rates could go down as property values go back up or as more people move to the area and share costs.

12. How do Vancouver’s rates compare with similar-size districts?

Vancouver’s tax rates are lower than those of most similar-size school districts. In 2009, tax rates for Vancouver Public Schools were lower than those of Evergreen, Federal Way, Kent, Northshore, Puyallup, Tacoma, Everett, Lake Stevens, and Spokane school districts.

13. What are the tax amounts on a median-price home?

The following numbers reflect an increase in home value until 2008, then an anticipated reduction in residential home values by 15 percent between 2009 and 2010. Home values are expected to begin increasing again by 2013.

Tax amounts for a median-price home			
Year	Valuation	Tax Rate	Amount
2007	\$197,260	\$2.50	\$493.15
2008	\$221,824	\$2.30	\$510.19
2009	\$200,000	\$2.41	\$482.00
2010	\$170,000	\$2.78	\$472.60
2011	\$161,500	\$3.08	\$497.42
2012	\$161,500	\$3.23	\$521.65
2013	\$164,730	\$3.33	\$548.55

Part III — The Election

14. What percentage of “yes” votes is required for approval of the levy?

A 50 percent majority of “yes” votes is required to approve the school district levy measure.

15. How will this election be conducted?

This is an all mail-in election. Ballots will be mailed out to registered voters on January 22. Persons who reside in Clark County but who will be out of town between January 22 and February 9 may call the Clark County Elections Department to have a ballot mailed to an alternate address.

16. How can I cast my ballot?

Ballots may be returned by mail to the Clark County Elections Department. They must be postmarked by February 9. Postage of 44 cents is required. Remember to sign your ballot.

Ballots also may be dropped off at the Clark County Elections Department (1408 Franklin Street) or at the Elections Drop Box (center of 14th Street, between Franklin and Esther streets) between January 22 and February 9.

The following drop-off sites will be open on election day only.

Sarah J. Anderson Elementary School
2215 NE 104th Street, 98686

Chinook Elementary School
1900 NW Bliss Road, 98685

Felida Elementary School
2700 NW 119th Street, 98685

Hazel Dell Elementary School
511 NE Anderson Road, 98665

King Elementary School
4801 Idaho Street, 98661

Lincoln Elementary School
4200 Daniels Street, 98660

Minnehaha Elementary School
2800 NE 54th Street, 98663

Eleanor Roosevelt Elementary School
2921 Falk Road, 98661

Salmon Creek Elementary School
1601 NE 129th Street, 98685

Vancouver Early Childhood Center
301 S. Lieser Road, 98664

Vancouver School of Arts and Academics
3101 Main Street, 98663

Walnut Grove Elementary School
6103 NE 72nd Ave., 98661

Part IV — Voters

17. Who is eligible to vote on this school levy?

Registered voters residing within the boundaries of Vancouver Public Schools may vote on the district's February 9 maintenance and operations (M & O) levy.

To become a registered voter for this election you must:

1. Be a United States citizen,
2. Be a resident of Clark County,
3. Be 18 years of age by the day of the election, and
4. Have full civil rights.

18. How do I register to vote?

Register on line at www.co.clark.wa.us/elections/voting/register.html. To register on line, you must have a valid Washington State driver's license or a state identification card. Voter registration forms also are available at the Clark County Elections Department (1408 Franklin) and at school offices.

You may register to vote in Clark County up to 29 days prior to the election date if you are a voter currently registered in the state of Washington. Registration forms may be submitted by mail, on line or in person. If you are not registered to vote

anywhere in the state of Washington, you may submit your registration form in person at the Elections Department up to eight days before the election date. For more information, contact the Elections Department at 360-397-2345.

Part V — Sources of Levy Information

19. What does the school district provide?

A school district can, and must, provide information about the proposed levy to the citizens of the community. The school district puts levy information on the district website and in a special issue of *Report to the Community*. The district also mails a fact sheet to all residents of the community.

20. Who promotes the levy?

The Citizens' Committee for Good Schools is a community group that stays informed about Vancouver Public Schools, endorses the levy, and promotes the levy.

21. Where can I get more information about the levy?

Go to the Vancouver Public Schools website at www.vansd.org. Community members also are welcome to contact the district's Communications Office at 360-313-1230, the Superintendent's Office at 360-313-1200, a school board member, or their local school principal.



Vancouver Public Schools
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www.vansd.org

Communications Office
360-313-1230