

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Puyallup School Board agrees to place two levies on February 11, 2014 ballot

Voters will be asked in February to consider two school levies to fund day-to-day programs and operations, aging facility improvements, and technology upgrades to support teaching and learning in neighborhood schools.

The Puyallup School Board unanimously agreed last month to place the two school levy measures on the February 11, 2014 Special Election ballot.

“It is critical that our district submits these levies to voters to maintain district operations and the programs our students, parents, and community have come to expect in Puyallup,” said School Board President Chris Ihrig. “We remain committed to being great stewards of the money our community has entrusted us with.”

Educational Programs and Operations Replacement Levy (Proposition 1)

One of the proposed ballot measures is a four-year Educational Programs and Operations Replacement Levy.

This is not a new tax. Rather, it would renew an existing four-year levy approved by voters in 2010 and which expires in 2014.

The replacement levy pays for about one quarter (24 percent) of the district’s day-to-day programs and operations, including maintaining:

- Educational programs and reasonable class sizes.
- Teachers and support staff such as nurses and instructional assistants. About one in every four employees hired by the district — or a total of about 500 full- or part-time staff — is supported with local levy dollars.
- Textbooks and other classroom materials.
- Music, visual arts, drama, athletic, and other extracurricular programs.
- School safety and security.

The state Legislature’s funding formula for basic education falls short of providing all that is required to educate students. To make up the difference, this district, like many others statewide,

submits levies to voters to support essential educational programs and acceptable levels of staffing.

The Educational Programs and Operations Replacement Levy would provide \$49.5 million in 2015. Factoring in 3 percent inflation over the remaining three years, the levy would provide about \$51 million in 2016, \$52.5 million in 2017, and \$54 million in 2018.

School Facility Improvements and Technology Upgrades Levy (Proposition 2)

Another measure on the Special Election ballot is a School Facility Improvements and Technology Upgrades Levy.

The six-year levy would support improving aging neighborhood school buildings and updating classroom technology to support teaching and learning.

Specifically, the levy would provide funds to:

- Fix or replace aging and deteriorating roofs and structures.
- Replace or upgrade outdated student computers.
- Install interactive classroom white boards and mounted projectors. Less than half (37 percent) of the district's classrooms have this current technology.
- Expand student access to technology by increasing wireless capacity and modernizing the computer network.
- Make energy-efficient improvements to heating, cooling, plumbing, lighting, and electrical systems.
- Make earthquake safety building improvements.
- Modify elementary school buildings to support full-day kindergarten classes.

The School Facility Improvements and Technology Upgrades Levy would provide \$46 million over the six-year collection period.

Cost

If both the Educational Programs and Operations Replacement Levy (Proposition 1) and the School Facility Improvements and Technology Upgrades Levy (Proposition 2) are approved by voters, the total increase in tax rate would be an average of 43 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The owner of a home valued at \$227,000 would pay an estimated \$8.13 more per month between 2015 and 2018.

Low-income senior citizens and people with disabilities may qualify for a tax exemption.

More information

Additional information about the 2014 Educational Programs and Operations Replacement Levy and the School Facility Improvements and Technology Upgrades Levy is on the Puyallup School

District website at www.puyallup.k12.wa.us. Levy information is featured in a box on the district Home page.

Questions about the replacement levy may be emailed to election@puyallup.k12.wa.us or directed to the district Communications and Information department at (253) 841-8703.