

Levy Questions and Answers

Q: Why are you calling these levies replacements?

A: Because they replace the four-year levies approved by voters in 2006. The existing levies expire at the end of 2010. Without the replacement levies there would be no money to support educational services, supplies, technology and staffing levels that are now in place. Tahoma voters have approved operations levies without fail since 1978, when the state Basic Education Act changed school funding.

Q: I already pay state education taxes; why is there a need for local levies?

A: State funding falls short of what school districts consider to be sufficient for a full education program. The state's basic education funding does not include money for classroom technology, extracurricular activities, transportation for all students, full utilities and maintenance costs, teaching supplies and other programs, people, supplies and equipment that are what our school board and the community expect in a full educational program.

Additionally, state education funding has been reduced during the current biennium. Tahoma made budget reductions of \$3.6 million in the current budget year.

Q: Property values have decreased 14.4 percent in the Tahoma School District area. How does that change levy collections?

A: When the school board sets a total levy amount then those dollars are collected no matter what current home values are.

Q: If the school district still collects the same amount how will that affect individual property taxpayers?

A: The levy rate (which is the dollar amount levied per \$1,000 of assessed valuation) is set by the King

County Assessor. It is based on the assessed valuation of all taxable property in the school district. As property values decrease, such as during this year's property tax reassessment, the overall levy rate goes up in order to equal the levy amount set by the school district.

The reverse also is true: As property value increases in the school district, the overall levy rate decreases. Property values typically go up as the community grows. The economic recession reversed that trend.

The best way to find out how much you would pay is to calculate your property taxes based on your home's current assessed value (see next question).

Q: How can I calculate the levy amounts that would be part of my property taxes?

A: Divide your home or property's assessed value (not market value) by 1,000 and then multiply by the levy rate. For example, if your home is valued at \$275,000, divide that by 1,000, which equals 275. Multiply 275 by \$3.40 (see chart below) to find how much you would pay in 2011 for the Educational Programs and Operations levy. In this case, the answer is:

A home valued at \$275,000 would pay \$935 in local levy taxes (\$78 per month) for the Educational Programs and Operations levy in 2011. The same home would pay \$157 (\$13 per month) for the Technology Levy.

Q: What if I am not registered to vote?

A: Call the King County Elections Division at 206-296-8683.

This levy facts brochure is published by the Tahoma Public Information Office. For questions or more information, please call 425-413-3409 or visit the district's Web page: www.tahomasd.us.



Tahoma School Levies

February 9, 2010 election



Tahoma School District is proposing to continue local levy support for students through the Educational Programs and Operations Levy and the Technology Levy. Both measures would continue funding for staffing, programs, equipment and supplies that are provided through local levies that expire at the end of 2010. The Educational Programs and Operations Levy also would help replace some of the state education funding that is being reduced in the current biennium. Please consult this brochure for details about the levy requests or visit our Web page: www.tahomasd.us

Tahoma School District ballot measures

Proposition 1
Replacement Educational Programs & Operations Levy

Year	levy amount	rate*
2011	\$16,352,000	\$3.40
2012	\$17,386,000	\$3.48
2013	\$18,827,000	\$3.62
2014	\$20,403,000	\$3.77

*estimated rate per \$1,000 of assessed value

Proposition 2
Replacement School Technology Levy

Year	levy amount	rate*
2011	\$2,750,000	57 cents
2012	\$2,750,000	55 cents
2013	\$2,750,000	53 cents
2014	\$2,750,000	51 cents

*estimated rate per \$1,000 of assessed value

POSTAL CUSTOMER

ECRWSS

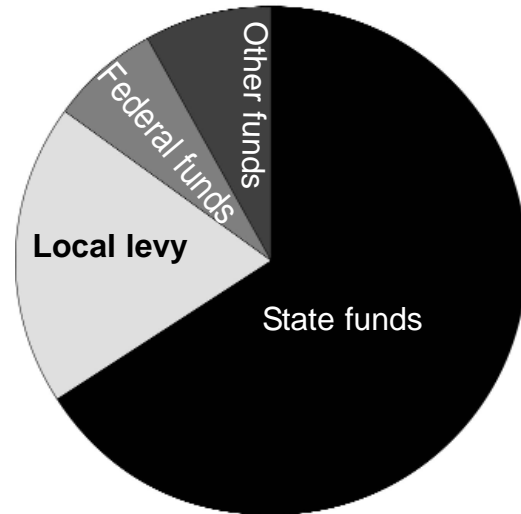
PERMITTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PREPAID
Maple Valley, WA 98038
Permit No. 34

Tahoma School District
25720 Maple Valley-Black Diamond Road SE
Maple Valley, WA 98038

Educational Programs and Operations Levy

This is a replacement levy, continuing what was approved in 2006. The Educational Programs and Operations levy is for four years and helps pay for education programs, materials and expenses that are not funded by the state of Washington. Money from local levies provides students with services and materials that make up one-fifth of the school district's education spending.

Tahoma funding sources



Why the levy is needed

The state of Washington's public schools funding formula provides about 66 percent of the money to operate existing school programs and activities. Federal funds account for about 7 percent of Tahoma's budget. Local levies provide 19 percent, or about \$1 of every \$5 spent to educate students.

As state education funding is reduced by the legislature, local levy funds play a larger role in the school district's budget by helping to maintain the district's educational programs and services. Tahoma voters have continuously approved this kind of supplemental funding levy since 1978.

What the levy pays for

Money from this levy is spent on people, programs and supplies. Levy funds are spread throughout the district's budget to supplement state funding or provide money where no state funding is allocated. Uses for the money include, but aren't limited to the following:

- Teachers and support staff positions beyond what state funds provide;
- Para-educators for Special Education classes and regular classes;
- Busing students to and from school because the state pays only for students who live more than a mile from school;
- Athletic programs.

- Extracurricular programs.
- Training for teachers and staff to keep them current in helping students meet district, state and federal education standards;
- School supplies;
- Emergency preparedness;
- A portion of utility costs, including electricity, water, sewer and waste disposal;
- Library books and instructional materials;
- Comprehensive class offerings;
- Building upkeep.

How is the levy amount set?

Operations levies are set according to a state formula. Most school districts, including Tahoma, are permitted to collect an amount equal to 24.7 percent of the general fund budget (also called the levy base) in each year of an operations levy.

What happens if the levy is not approved?

Because the levy provides about \$1 of every \$5 that Tahoma School District spends, there would be significant reductions in programs, staffing and services to students if it fails. There is no predetermined plan for reducing spending in the event of a levy failure but the school board and administration would look at the following areas to find places to reduce spending:

■ **Staffing:** Classroom and district support staff would be reduced. The scope of course

offerings would be reduced at the secondary school level due to staff reductions. Levy money currently used to recruit and retain high quality teachers would be lost.

■ **Transportation:** State funds pay only for students who live more than one mile from school. Potential cuts would come from eliminating routes, field trips and activity runs; reducing the number of stops; and requiring more students to walk to school.

■ **Athletics and activities:** There is no state money for athlet-

ics or before- and after-school activities. The scope of offerings would be reduced and additional user fees would be considered to maintain some level of program offerings.

■ **Supplies:** Usage of classroom supplies, such as copy paper, printing supplies, workbooks and other items would be severely reduced.

■ **Utilities:** Lights, heat and water would stay on but levy money that is used to help pay those costs would not be available and would have to be replaced by shifting money from other programs.

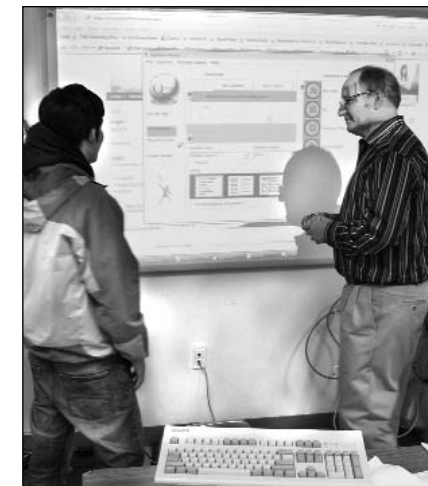
School Technology Levy

This is a replacement levy. The current Technology Levy was approved in 2006 and was set at \$10 million. It expires at the end of 2010. The new levy would collect \$10.9 million over four years (\$2.75 million per year).

Why the levy is needed

Under the state funding formula there is no money specifically designated for classroom technology. Local levies can be used to raise money to pay for computers, software, training and support. Tahoma has created a technology plan that identifies specific goals, strategies and procedures for using technology in the classroom. The plan is designed to incorporate technology into the school district curriculum while providing flexibility to adjust to changes in technology and education. Both the technology and the curriculum are focused on providing students with 21st Century skills and abilities through Tahoma's Classroom 10 initiative, which emphasizes that students be capable of adapting to change throughout their lives. Electronic tools provided through the Technology Levy are a key component of 21st Century learning.

Why isn't the 2006 levy enough?



Activboards, such as this one, give teachers and students access to the Internet and a wide array of electronic tools that can be used daily in the classroom.

The 2006 levy helped Tahoma catch up by replacing old equipment and providing a variety of electronic learning tools to students that previously were not accessible. As technology changes and new uses for it are found in the classroom, there will be an ongoing need for funding to purchase new and replace outdated tools while providing ongoing support.

How Technology decisions are made

Tahoma's approach to classroom technology is that it must support classroom learning or else it will not be purchased; technology by itself will not help students acquire the skills and abilities they will need to be successful. All electronic learning tools must pass a rigorous review to determine whether they fit the school district's teaching and learning standards. The school district takes



Aspiring film producers and directors get hands-on editing experience by using the powerful computers in the Tahoma High School video editing classroom.

a deliberate, data-driven approach to using technology in the classroom.

One example of that approach is how the district has explored using laptop computers in classrooms. Pilot programs tested the effectiveness of having students use laptops in class. The data shows that laptops are much more efficient learning tools than having students work in computer labs.

The next step will be to equip senior high and junior high students with smaller laptops, called netbooks, for their daily use. The cost of the netbooks is about one third of the expense associated with desktop computers. This puts more computers in schools and is an efficient use of tax dollars.

The district has created a technology plan that serves as the guiding document for blending electronic learning tools into student learning. The plan sets clear goals but also is designed to be flexible enough to adjust to changes in technology that can enhance student learning. Two committees -- one of district teachers and administrators and another of community members and district staff -- oversee development and implementation of the Technology Plan.

What the levy pays for

- Equipment, including computers, document cameras, projectors, and Activboards;
- software;
- network infrastructure;
- staff training;
- technology specialists to support teachers and students.