

Tahoma Community News

April 2018

Tahoma School District

Maple Valley, WA 98038

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- Security update
- Superintendent search begins

April 24 levy reduces taxes, keeps programs, staffing at current levels

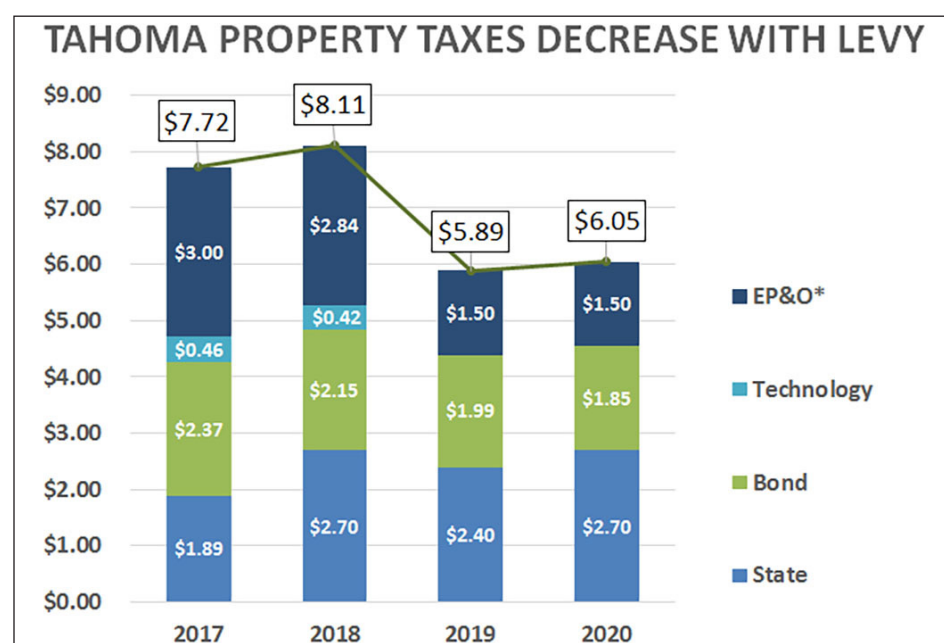
A two-year levy, which helps reduce school taxes while maintaining current programs, is on the April 24 ballot for Tahoma School District voters.

After three levy measures were defeated in the Feb. 13 election, the Tahoma School Board shelved two of the measures, for technology and to buy buses, and reduced the Educational Programs and Operations levy from four years to two.

The board decided to rerun the levy in April, rather than in the November election, because the current labor agreement requires the school district to notify teachers by May 15 whether their contracts will be renewed for next school year. With no assurance that a November levy would pass, the district would have had to send reduction in force (RIF) notices to teachers in May if their contracts would not be renewed because of potential budget cuts.

The current levy, which voters approved in 2014, expires at the end of 2018. The proposed levy would begin in 2019, but would reduce taxes because it is about half of the current levy rate. The levy that goes away at the end of 2018 is set at \$2.84 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The proposed levy is set at \$1.50 per \$1,000. It would collect a maximum of \$10.7 million in 2019 and \$11.8 million in 2020.

Levy funds are used to pay for staffing and programs that are not funded, or are underfunded, by state and federal dollars. The school district has listed programs and positions that would be affected by a levy



The chart shows how school taxes will go down in 2019 and 2020 for Tahoma School District taxpayers if the proposed EP&O levy is approved April 24. The decrease is due to a lower tax rate for the EP&O, compared to the one that expires in 2018, and not having a technology levy in 2019 and 2020. In addition, the new state school tax will be reduced by 30 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value in 2019 only. The state legislature reduced the tax as compensation for the large tax increase in 2018, when the new education tax began.

failure. (See related story, Page 2.)

The School Board has begun identifying where to reduce spending in the event of a second levy failure. The school district would face a \$3.5 million deficit in the 2018-2019 school year and a \$12 million

deficit in 2019-2020 without levy funding. The larger deficit in 2019-2020 is because there would be no levy funds that year, compared to the previous year when the current levy has its final tax collection in October of 2018.

Among the programs that would be cut or reduced are athletics and activities, math and reading assistance for elementary school students, janitorial staff, teacher support staff, supplies, playground supervisors and other support positions. An estimated 40 teaching positions also would be cut in the 2019-2020 year without levy support.

Despite improvements in how schools are funded by the state, levies are still permitted as a way for local communities to provide additional programs and staffing beyond basic education. In Tahoma's case, levy funds also pay for student services that aren't fully funded, including special education, math and reading assistance, school security, school nurses, facilities maintenance, and student transportation.

Online levy facts posted

Tahoma's new mobile-friendly levy facts website includes details about the levy, answers to questions taxpayers and community members have been asking, and provides a way to ask additional questions.

The levy facts website is linked from the main district page (www.tahomasd.us) in the tab called "Levy Facts," at the top of the web page.

Here's a direct link: <https://sites.google.com/view/tahomalevyinformation/home>

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Levy pays for wide range of programs, staffing

Enrichment levies provide for everything beyond basic education. The following programs and staff positions are not fully funded by state and federal dollars, and are among options that the School Board will consider cutting in order to balance the budget if the April 24 levy fails.

(This information has been adjusted from estimates the district released in February, in order to reflect changes to education funding that the Legislature voted to approve on March 8 at the end of the recent session. More details at www.tahomasd.us).

**Note: The School Board and administrators examined these cuts according to whether they will have a direct impact on students in the classroom (D), an indirect impact on students in the classroom (I), or no direct impact on students in the classroom (N). These impacts are denoted below in parentheses. Potential cuts are listed alphabetically within type of impact.*

Childcare (N): Known as the Extended Enrichment Program, offers before- and after-school childcare for grades K-5 at six locations. Estimated revenue shortfall for items such as energy, custodial and building supplies. Not inclusive of all soft costs: \$21,000.

District administrators not represented by unions would have their salaries frozen (N). Estimated revenue shortfall: \$104,000.

Custodial work (N): Custodians paid with levy funds would have hours reduced or positions eliminated. Estimated revenue shortfall: \$470,000.

Sports and extracurricular activities (N): Sports would be cut or curtailed. Student clubs and activities supported by levies would be cut. Activities partly supported by levy funds would lose levy

funding. Estimated revenue shortfall: \$1.36 million.

Facility use (N): The position that coordinates facility use, such as scheduling field use and room rental, would be eliminated. Estimated revenue shortfall: \$37,000.

Field trips (N): Would be eliminated, except those supported by outside organizations, such as PTA/PTO or booster groups. Affected trips would include visits to the salmon hatchery and Landsburg Dam, Shadow Lake Bog, Summit and Outdoor Academy, law class visits to King County Court, music and choir trips and festivals, and more. Estimated revenue shortfall: \$66,000.

Food Service (N): Supplements federal and state funding. Estimated revenue shortfall: \$200,000.

Materials, supplies and other costs at each building (N): 15 percent reduction. Estimated revenue shortfall: \$155,000.

Principals' in-service training eliminated (N): Estimated revenue shortfall: \$34,000.

School Board out-of-district travel, training and meetings canceled (N): Estimated revenue shortfall: \$40,000.

Summer School (N): Serves students in grades 6-11, and provides assistance in math, language arts and credit retrieval, would be eliminated. Estimated revenue shortfall: \$22,000.

Transportation costs (N): Including fuel, supplies and office support. Estimated revenue shortfall: \$300,000.

School-based instructional coaches, 15 positions (I): Teachers who serve as academic coaches to support curriculum and learning programs to assist classroom teachers would return to classroom teach-

ing, displacing less experienced teachers, or would not have contracts renewed. Support staff would not be retained. Estimated revenue shortfall: \$920,000.

CSC administrator (I): Eliminate district-level administrator position that oversees principals, CTE, Future Ready, staff development and teacher support. Estimated revenue shortfall, \$200,000. **Highly Capable Program (I):** Increase class sizes for highly capable students in the Discovery Program (elementary school) and for advanced high school courses (pre-AP, AP and College in the High School). Discovery shuttle buses would be eliminated. Amount depends on enrollment.

Substitutes (I): Teachers who substitute for classroom teachers for activities such as reading assessments, teacher training and support, new curriculum and more. Estimated revenue shortfall: \$150,000.

Title 2, (I): Supplements federal funds to provide professional development to help teachers assist students with different learning styles and behavior challenges. It also helps focus the use of data to improve classroom practice and student learning. Estimated revenue shortfall: \$14,000.

Secondary theme readers, 4 positions (I): Estimated revenue shortfall: \$130,000.

Elementary STEM, art and music classes, (D): 100 percent levy-funded. Estimated revenue shortfall: \$264,000.

Math Assistance Program, (D): 100 percent levy funded, and provides small-group math instruction for students who are working below grade level. Estimated revenue shortfall: \$424,000.

Title 1 (D): Supplements the Reading Assistance Program, which offers targeted

small group reading instruction for students who are reading below grade level. Estimated revenue shortfall: \$43,000.

Subtotal of above items: \$4.95 million.

Without the passage of the proposed levy, the district's financial situation worsens in the 2019-2020 school year, with a projected deficit of about \$12 million. If that occurs, the board would look at cutting additional programs/positions. The board would create an ad-hoc citizen and staff committee to examine potential budget cuts. Among those would be:

40 certificated positions (D): (classroom teachers, librarians, psychologists). Estimated revenue shortfall: \$2.8 million.

Special education supplementary funding, (D) Estimated revenue shortfall: \$2.5 million.

Additional 20-25 classified positions (D). Estimated revenue shortfall: \$1 million.

8-period schedule at the high school (D). Estimated revenue shortfall: \$660,000.

Two assistant principals and four deans (I). Estimated revenue shortfall: \$600,000.

Seven positions at district office (N). Estimated revenue shortfall: \$560,000.

Building secretaries (N). Estimated revenue shortfall: \$473,000.

Playground paraeducators (N). Estimated revenue shortfall: \$470,000.

Maintenance (N). Estimated revenue shortfall: \$460,000

Nurses (I). Estimated revenue shortfall: \$420,000.

Safety/security (N). Estimated revenue shortfall: \$217,000.

Reading Assistance Program (D). Estimated revenue shortfall: \$182,000.

English Language Learners (D). Estimated revenue shortfall: \$156,000.

Superintendent thankful for community school support

This month, Tahoma voters have a second opportunity to maintain our school programs and staffing by casting their ballot on the two-year Educational Programs and Operations Levy.

As you may know, I will close out my 37-year career at the end of this school year and this will be my last levy election as a Tahoma employee. I can't help but reflect on the wonderful support that the community has provided to the school system all these years. This is a much better school district than when I was hired as a substitute teacher in 1981. I have a unique perspective to share, having seen the district through the eyes of a substitute teacher, teacher, assistant principal, principal, superintendent, parent (two daughters, and recent graduates, who attended Tahoma K-12), and taxpayer.

I first saw the change start in the early '90s when Mike Maryanski became superintendent. He brought a commit-

Rob Morrow



Future Ready Report

ment to quality instruction in the classroom that is now part of the permanent fabric of the school system. I was fortunate to have started my administrative career at about the same time. Over the past 25 years Tahoma has grown into one of the most respected school districts in the education community. Over the past four years, we have built and remodeled schools all around the district that are great learning environments for our kids. More importantly, we have remodeled our K-12 programs while maintaining the commitment to quality instruction and also creating structures, opportunities, and experiences for our students that are supportive of our Future Ready vision that prepares students for success after high school.

What makes Tahoma a fantastic place for students? Our staff. We are the largest employer in the area and have

created a learning environment that draws people to our system. We hire individuals who are talented, caring, and passionate about helping our kids. Tahoma School District is made up of nearly 1,000 teachers and support staff dedicated to the growth and development of your children. We are certainly not perfect and make mistakes every day (still wish I had canceled school on December 9, 2016 when the forecasts said it would stop snowing, but didn't). I am proud of our team in that we don't offer excuses but instead foster a sense of positive mental attitude and a re-dedication to better results. This is a great place for your children to attend school!

As you make your decision on whether to support the April 24 levy, please take advantage of the levy information on our website: www.tahomasd.us. We are happy to answer questions, so please contact our communications office at 425-413-3409.

Rob Morrow is superintendent of Tahoma School District.

Reading program boosted by local businesses

Students in RAP (Reading Assistance Program) at Glacier Park Elementary and Rock Creek Elementary soon will have the opportunity to earn some fun prizes, thanks to local businesses that stepped up to support the young readers.

Students who participate in RAP at all six elementary schools receive reading intervention time, on top of the reading instruction they receive in the classroom.

The Rock Creek program serves 64 students; Glacier Park, 83; Lake Wilderness, 138; Shadow Lake, 64; Tahoma Elementary, 88; and Cedar River, 50. The program is supported with local levy and state funding.

Reading Specialist Natalie Stumpges, who works at Rock Creek and Glacier Park, said she reached out to a few local businesses to ask whether they would provide coupons for RAP students who meet their goal of 300 minutes of reading at home. Because local businesses are frequently making such donations, Stumpges said she wasn't sure whether they would

be able to offer something right away, but was "floored" by their quick, positive response.

Farelli's, Nutty Squirrel and S'Wiched each donated coupons for students without hesitation, for kids' meals, gelato and cheesy melts, respectively.

Students in the program have also created reading graphs as a visual demonstration of the time they spend reading.

"With all the support from our PTO at Rock Creek and PTA at Glacier Park -- as well as the community businesses -- we can increase the goal each time they reach it. We will keep celebrating these kiddos every 100 minutes," she added. "We are always encouraging students to read every day. We know that this is the single-most important indicator of reading growth and achievement, but we also know that we are competing with after-school activities."

"Our goal is to give students an extra boost in reading to get them to standard," Stumpges said.



Local businesses are teaming with Tahoma elementary schools to encourage students in the Reading Assistance Program to reach reading goals.

School safety review part of ongoing improvement

Keeping students and staff members safe during the school day is the Tahoma School District's highest concern, one that school leaders know is shared by every parent and community member.

Superintendent Rob Morrow sent a letter home to families following the school shootings in Parkland, Fla., in February, sharing the district's commitment to protecting students and staff and preparing for emergencies.

"I want to assure you that our schools are safe. Still, we know that there is always more to do," Morrow wrote. "As the school district looks for ways to maintain and improve school safety, we ask for the help of our parent and community partners. We must all work together to achieve thoughtful, effective solutions. We have heard from many parents who have voiced concerns about school safety and have volunteered to help. We are grateful and thankful that we are part of a community that is willing to work collaboratively on behalf of our children."

He will create an ad hoc safety advisory committee this spring to review the district's safety measures and look for ways to improve. Parents and other community members will be asked to serve on the committee, which will be advertised.

Morrow and Tahoma High School Principal Terry Duty, along with other administrators, have emphasized that one vital act that students and parents can take is to always report anything suspicious or concerning. They shared the national call to action: "If you see something, say something." In addition to calling the principal or police, parents, students and community members may use the Safe Schools Alert system, which offers the availability to report anonymously via text, email, website or phone. That information is available on each website in the "Quick Links" section on the side. Contacts include:

• Phone: 855-997-8625



School Resource Officer Carl Bonnell, center, and safety officer Karin Weihe, left, work with Tahoma High School students each day to promote safety.

- Text: 855-997-8625
- Email: 1347@alert1.us

The School Board asked staff to review safety and security and received an update from Assistant Superintendent Lori Cloud, who shared a prior presentation that outlined steps and measures that the district and buildings have taken in recent years to improve and bolster systems and procedures. Among those are:

- The district has a Safety and Emergency Preparedness Committee, which includes parents, board members, the superintendent and assistant superintendent, chief of police, fire chief, school resource officer, safety and security team members, administrators and a representative from each school and department.
- In spring of 2014, a Security and Safety Ad Hoc Committee convened to examine the construction timeline and

budgeting for use of bond dollars. Scott Rose, who worked at the time for DLR Group architects and is considered an expert in the safety and security aspects of design, walked each Tahoma site, revealed weaknesses and gave suggestions for improvements.

- Improvements planned after further assessments, including two by Rose, have been completed, including changing landscaping to improve visibility, additional school fencing, upgraded lighting, upgrades to radio systems, classroom window coverings and instructions related to keeping students safe during an emergency.

- Since then, bond dollars have paid to remodel the vestibules at buildings that needed improvements, with the exception of one building, which is in process. Additional improvements included security cameras, access control systems with keycard access, security monitoring at all schools and portables, school lockdown systems, rekeying of the district, added fencing, and playground safety. Nearly all of those projects are complete.

Yearly and ongoing efforts are numerous and include:

- Required lockdown, fire and earthquake drills as well as the annual active shooter drill.

- School Resource Officer, whose salary is covered equally by district and city funds. Off-duty officers who are frequently at our sites, either in the parking lots in their vehicles in plain view while working on reports and paperwork, or checking in with staff and students. The district also employs safety officers.

- Staff are required to wear badges at all times when in district buildings. Visitors are required to wear stickers at all times when in district buildings.

- Backpacks in each classroom contain trauma/first aid supplies, a class list and other items that could help minimize injuries, save lives and keep track of students and staff in an emergency.



National search begins to find next Tahoma superintendent

The search for a new superintendent of schools is underway, as the School Board seeks a successor to Superintendent Rob Morrow, who retires at the end of June.

The School Board has hired an executive search firm to conduct a national search. Representatives of McPherson and Jacobson, the firm hired to conduct a candidate search, held a series of meetings on March 14 and 15 with Tahoma students and staff as well as community stakeholders to gather comments about desirable qualities for the new superintendent. The company also conducted an online survey, which ended March 18.

National and regional advertising is underway. The application period opened March

28 and ends on April 26. The School Board plans to narrow the field of candidates to three by May 21. There will be opportunities for the public to meet the three finalists; meeting schedules will be announced in early May.

The search process is designed to end by May 25, when the school board plans to select a new superintendent. That also allows time for Morrow to meet with his successor and share information prior to the end of the school year.

The job description and application information is available on the McPherson and Jacobson website: <http://macnjake.com/openings/>



School Board makes annual school tour

The Tahoma School Board conducted its annual tour of each school in the district on Feb. 5. In the top photo, the board chats with ASB officers at Cedar River Elementary School. In the left photo, Vice President Bill Clausmeyer observes students in a classroom at Cedar River Elementary School. Though each board member is assigned to represent one or more schools, this is the only time when all five board members can visit each school together.



Tahoma School District's fleet of buses will need more drivers next year, due to retirements and other staff attrition.

Applicants sought for bus driving positions

Applications are being accepted for bus driving positions. Tahoma Transportation Department anticipates there will be openings for substitute and permanent drivers later this year and next year, due to retirements and usual attrition. The de-

partment will host training opportunities this spring and invites people who are interested to contact the school district's Human Resources office by calling 425-413-3400 or check the employment page on the TSD website, www.tahomasd.us.

Harlem Wizards return for April 20 benefit basketball game vs. Tahoma teachers

Tahoma families and community members are invited to this year's all-new basketball game pitting the Harlem Wizards against the Tahoma Teaching Jedi, featuring Tahoma teachers and staff members.

This year's event will feature an all new Fan Fest with carnival-type games before the hoops start, plus an all new team from the Harlem Wizards with different tricks.

The game will be in the gym at the new Tahoma High School at 7 p.m. on April 20. Presented by the Tahoma Schools Foundation with the support of school

PTA and PTO groups, local business sponsors and the Maple Valley Lions Club, ticket proceeds will benefit the schools foundation and student programs such as Kindergarten Camp.

Sales of merchandise will benefit parent-teacher groups. Before the game begins, kids and families are invited to come early to enjoy carnival-style games provided by the PTA and PTO groups.

For tickets, visit www.harlemwizards.com and click on "Schedule & Tickets," then scroll to April 20 on the calendar.



Tahoma Community Report is produced by the Tahoma School District Communication Office and mailed to all school district residents four times a year. Contact the Communication Office by calling 425-413-3409 or by email to Kevin Patterson, communication director, at: kpatters@tahomasd.us

The Tahoma School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

The following employees are designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination:

Title IX Officer

Director of Human Resources
25720 Maple Valley Highway
Maple Valley, WA 98038
425-413-3400
TitleIX@tahomasd.us

ADA Coordinator

Director of Human Resources
25720 Maple Valley Highway
Maple Valley, WA 98038
425-413-3400
ADA@tahomasd.us

Section 504 Coordinator

Director of Special Services
25720 Maple Valley Highway
Maple Valley, WA 98038
425-413-3400
Section504@tahomasd.us