Q&A on Replacement Levies

Q: Why is the school district putting a Replacement Educational Maintenance and Operations levy and a Replacement Capital Projects levy on the ballot?
A: These levies replace existing levies that were passed by Mercer Island voters in 2018 and 2016 respectively. These levies would replace the expiring levies and would continue local levy funding for Mercer Island schools through 2026 and 2028, respectively.

Q: Isn’t the State supposed to pay for basic education?
A: Yes. The State provides a funding allocation for Basic Education Services. However, the State funding formula doesn’t provide sufficient funding to meet our specific needs within our District. We are required to use Basic Education Services funding for basic education first, before using local resources to meet the standard of education that our community desires.

Q: How much can the District collect from the levy?
A: The District may collect only up to an amount dictated by the State and approved by voters regardless of assessed valuation changes. Senior citizens or disabled persons may qualify for tax exemptions. Contact the King County Assessor’s Office for information, 206.296.3920 or kingcounty.gov/depts/assessor

Voting Information

Ballots will be mailed on January 19, 2022 and must be postmarked by February 8, 2022. There will be a ballot drop box located at the Mercer Island Community and Event Center, 8236 S.E. 24th St., open until 8 p.m. on February 8.

If you are a new voter to the state of Washington, you may register in person at the King County Elections offices in Seattle or Renton up to eight days before the election. Call 206-296-VOTE (8683) or visit kingcounty.gov for more information.
The Mercer Island School Board unanimously approved both an Educational Programs and Operations (EP&O) Replacement Levy and a Capital Tech Projects Replacement Levy (Proposition 1 & 2 respectively) to be put to the voters on the February 8, 2022 special election ballot. These proposition levies replace existing levies that were passed by Mercer Island voters in 2018 and 2016 respectively. These are not new taxes.

Educational Programs & Operations Levy
If approved, the replacement EP&O levy would annually collect up to $12 million from 2023-2026 for educational programs and services beyond the state’s definition of basic education. It will continue to fund 17 percent of the Mercer Island School District general fund, including 40 percent of special education funding.

How has MISD used levy funding to enrich programs?
- Establishing a seven-period day at the high school, which allows students to more easily meet the 24-credit graduation requirement and take electives as well.
- Elementary K-5 Music, Art & PE.
- Expanded electives at Mercer Island High School and Islander Middle School, including advanced science and fine arts courses beyond the traditional one-year sequences and classes not normally available to students, including the award-winning radio station at the high school.
- Smaller class sizes for focused sections to provide services for students needing additional support.
- Professional development opportunities for staff to enhance their practice.
- Stipends for staff to offer additional opportunities for students, including after-school clubs and activities at all grade levels.
- Paraprofessional support in classrooms, as well as student supervision and safety.
- Nurses at each school site.

Capital Tech Projects Levy
If approved, the replacement Capital Projects levy would annually collect between $7.75 million in 2023 and $8.4 million in 2026 for facility renovations and instructional technology. The levy provides funding for extensive upgrades and repairs. The technology portion provides for instructional technology, information technology infrastructure and professional development.

What does the Capital portion of the levy cover?
- General Replacement Items: Paving, Carpets, Furniture, Generators.
- Life cycle replacements: Gym curtains, Stadium Turf and Track, Roofing, Boilers.
- Classroom upgrades: Special Education, Radio and Music.

What does the Tech portion of the levy cover?
- Staffing: Technology coaches, Building techs, District IT staff and professional development time.
- Curriculum and Software: Trend of moving towards digital platforms instead of paper textbooks and classroom instructional tools.
- Classroom Projects: Promethean Boards, 1:1 iPads and potential student laptop adoption.
- Infrastructure Improvements: Internet and phone networks, server upgrades, security cameras.

For more information on both levies, contact Ty Bergstrom, executive director of finance, e-mail: tyrell.bergstrom@mercerislandschools.org.

Scan the QR code with your cell phone camera to visit the Bond & Levy information page on the MISD website. This page has information on why the District is seeking to renew the Educational Programs & Operations Levy and the Capital Tech Projects Levy.