

# School Election: maintaining our investment



## LEVY 1: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS LEVY

This renews a levy that expires in 2010 and represents about 21% of the operating budget. It helps fill in the gaps between school needs and state funding by: providing more teachers and, therefore, slightly smaller classes; more textbooks and curriculum materials; enriched gifted and special education funding; broader course offerings; and more student transportation.

**Total Cost:** averages approximately \$48 million a year for 4 years for a total of nearly \$192 million

## LEVY 2: TECHNOLOGY AND CAPITAL PROJECTS LEVY

This funds periodic upgrades of computers and other classroom technology used for instruction; ongoing curriculum development for the district web; large-scale maintenance projects such as roofs, flooring, and mechanical, electrical, water and sewer systems on older facilities; upgrades to Ringdall Middle School to house middle school students whose schools are being remodeled; and improvements or replacements of school sports fields.

**Total Cost:** averages nearly \$15 million a year for 5 years for a total of \$74 million



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▶ ***WHY NOT DELAY UNTIL AFTER THE ECONOMY IMPROVES?***

The current Educational Programs and Operations Levy expires in 2010. The new levy is for 2011-2014 and represents about 21% of Bellevue School District's annual operating budget. It provides more teachers than the state pays for and, therefore, helps keep class sizes smaller. The levy helps fund textbooks, extracurricular activities, core courses plus many elective choices in middle and high schools, gifted and special education programs, and general operating expenses such as utilities and fuel. The current Technology and Capital Projects levy expires in 2011. This levy would fund periodic upgrades of computers and other classroom technology, large maintenance projects, for example, roof repairs or replacements, and sports field upgrades or replacements. It would continue to support curriculum development for the curriculum website.

▶ ***WHY NOT USE THE 2008 BOND MONEY FOR OPERATIONS?***

Bonds can only be legally used for school construction. With voter-approved bond funds we have rebuilt eight elementary schools and two high schools and are in the process of rebuilding a ninth elementary school. Tyee MS, Bellevue HS and Spiritridge Elementary will begin construction in June 2010. New schools have opened on-time and total costs have come in within the overall budget.

▶ ***CAN YOU SLOW DOWN THE RATE AT WHICH YOU UPGRADE CLASSROOM COMPUTERS AND OTHER TECH EQUIPMENT?***

We already have. Over the past few years we have fallen behind on our upgrade schedule, despite our desire to upgrade school mobile laptop labs on a 4-year cycle and our desktop computers on a 5-year cycle. This timeframe is based on expiring extended warranties and the on-going maintenance costs of purchasing replacement batteries, hard-drives and keyboards.

▶ ***HAVE YOU CONSIDERED MAKING BUDGET CUTS INSTEAD?***

The district made about \$10 million in budget reductions between the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years. These reductions represented about six percent of the district's total General Fund budget. Although this is a small percentage, since more than 80% of the district's expenditures are for personnel, the reductions led to the elimination of the equivalent of 85 full-time teachers, plus office personnel, classroom aides and administrators. Class size grew this year as a result of those reductions. Reducing our budget by about 21%, which is what the local Educational Programs and Operations levy covers, would necessitate three times as many reductions as already were made in the past two years. For a Q&A that answers questions about administrative staffing and other topics, go to [www.bsd405.org/levy2010](http://www.bsd405.org/levy2010)

▶ ***WHY MUST WE SUPPLEMENT STATE FUNDING?***

The Washington State Legislature only partially funds public education. For example, it pays for five class periods a day for middle and high school student, while Bellevue currently offers seven. In Bellevue about 21 percent of the district budget is funded through the Educational Programs and Operations Levy. Total levy dollars the district can raise are capped by the state.

▶ ***HOW WILL THESE LEVIES AFFECT MY TAXES?***

For each \$1,000 in assessed valuation, the estimated total local school tax rates for these two levies, combined with the debt service on bonds, would range from \$2.62 in 2011 to \$2.67 in 2014. The calculated growth of the local school property tax is less precise due to the potential impact of current and future legislative sessions on school funding. As of today, the forecasted annual increase in tax bills over the 4-year period is from 3 to 4.4 percent. More tax details at [www.bsd405.org/levy2010](http://www.bsd405.org/levy2010)