

LEVY FACTS: FAQs

FOR VANCOUVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WHAT IS A LEVY?

A local property tax collected to help finance educational programs and necessary day-to-day operations of our public schools. It includes items not funded or fully funded by the state.

LEARN MORE INSIDE.



ELECTION DATE:
FEBRUARY 9, 2016

Vancouver Public Schools
Imagine what you can learn

www.vansd.org/levy-bond

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Part I – Summary

Election date: February 9, 2016

- All mail-in election
- Ballots mailed by January 22, 2016

One measure will be on the ballot:

A replacement maintenance and operations (M & O) levy to continue basic programs and services for three years—2017, 2018 and 2019.

Replacement maintenance and operations (M & O) levy

Vancouver Public Schools has had a maintenance and operations levy in place since 1964. The levy on the February 9, 2016, ballot will continue funding for basic programs and services for the next three years.

M & O levy amounts

2017 — \$46.2 million

2018 — \$47.3 million

2019 — \$48.4 million

Estimated M & O levy rates per \$1,000 assessed value of property

2017 — \$3.04

2018 — \$3.02

2019 — \$3.00

Part II – Basic Facts about the Replacement Educational Maintenance and Operations Levy

1. What is a replacement educational maintenance and operations (M &O) levy?

A maintenance and operations (M & O) levy provides local funding support for educational programs and services.

2. Why is Vancouver Public Schools submitting a levy proposal?

The state provides most but not all (69.3 percent) of the total dollars necessary to maintain basic education. The federal government provides additional funding. Local levy dollars make up the shortfall (approximately 18.2 percent of the district's budget).

3. Is this a new levy?

No. This levy replaces the current levy, which expires in 2016. Vancouver Public Schools has had an M & O levy in place since 1964.

4. Why is the district asking for a replacement levy at this time?

Voters must reauthorize the levy for every year. Voters approved the current levy in 2013 for three years. The replacement levy on the February 9, 2016, ballot will continue programs and services for three more years—2017 through 2019.

5. How will the levy funds be spent?

- Teacher and support positions
- Classroom supplies, textbooks and equipment
- Instructional technology and software
- School safety and security
- Maintenance of buildings and grounds
- Staff training and professional development
- Support for programs of choice
- Extended day/year learning
- Education for students with special needs
- Extracurricular activities and intramural sports
- Technology support in schools
- Substitutes (teachers and classified staff)
- Portable classrooms
- Utilities, insurance and fuel

6. How does the McCleary decision affect funding?

The McCleary decision, mandating that the state fully fund basic education, has offset a fraction of budget cuts the state has made in the past several years. However, state dollars still only comprise approximately 69.3 percent of the district's general fund budget. The local levy, federal money and other sources make up the remainder. The M & O levy comprises about 18.2 percent of the district's general fund budget.

7. Why is the district asking for a three-year levy?

A multiple-year levy helps with planning and saves election costs. However, due to the unpredictable nature of economic conditions and the uncertainty of state funding beyond 2019, the district is not asking for a four-year levy, the maximum allowed by law.

Part III – Maintenance and Operations Levy Amounts

8. What are the dollar amounts of the district's maintenance and operations (M & O) levy proposal?

The district is requesting authorization of \$46.2 million for collection in 2017, \$47.3 million for collection in 2018 and \$48.4 million for collection in 2019. The increase year-over-year is based on a conservative estimated 3 percent inflation rate.

9. How are those amounts set?

Washington state law limits the amount local districts can request to 28 percent of the district's revenue from the previous year and projected inflationary costs. Amounts for the 2016 levy were based on a levy lid of 24 percent.

10. Will Vancouver Public Schools receive levy equalization funds from the state?

The district receives levy equalization funds from the state, but only if the local levy is approved by voters. For the 2015–16 fiscal year, the district will receive approximately \$9.5 million in equalization funds. With passage of the replacement levy, Vancouver Public Schools can expect equalization funds to continue. Our school district qualifies for equalization funds because our assessed value of property is lower than the tax base of wealthier districts.

11. What are the anticipated tax rates for the M & O levy?

Voters approve tax amounts for school levies, not tax rates. Assessed values of many homes have risen. As the assessed property value goes up, the rate per \$1,000 decreases.

Estimated M & O levy rates (per \$1,000 of assessed property value) are \$3.04 for 2017, \$3.02 for 2018 and \$3 for 2019. Alternately, rates could further decrease as property values rise or as more people move to the area and share costs. The current estimated rate for 2016 is \$3.06 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

12. How does Vancouver Public Schools’ M & O levy rate compare to the rate of a similar school district?

In both size and location, Evergreen Public Schools is the most similar to Vancouver Public Schools, though Evergreen is larger. Vancouver’s proposed levy rate is lower than Evergreen’s projected levy rates.

13. What are the M & O tax amounts on a median-priced home?

Tax rates can vary due to changes in property tax assessments. The following numbers are based on a home assessed at \$250,000 and adjusted for estimated changes in valuation. Estimated rates are per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

For the purposes of the following example, we have assumed this sample house has increased in value at a rate of 3 percent per year as homes are projected to increase during this levy period.

Year	Valuation	M & O Tax Rate	Amount
2017	\$250,000	\$3.04	\$760.00
2018	\$257,500	\$3.02	\$777.65
2019	\$265,225	\$3.00	\$795.68

Part IV – Total Levy Amounts and Budget Information

14. What are the total anticipated local tax rates for schools based on a median-priced home?

Vancouver Public Schools has some outstanding capital construction bonds from bond sales approved by voters in 2001. Bond sales fund construction and renovation of facilities.

Voters approve levy and bond amounts, which set a limit on the taxes that can be collected in any year. Tax rates vary, depending on housing growth, assessments, the economy and local industry. Lower assessments typically mean higher tax rates, but taxes are figured on the lower assessed amount. For Vancouver Public Schools, total tax rates per \$1,000 have ranged from a high of \$10.61 in 1977 to a low of \$1.42 in 1982.

The following numbers are based on a home assessed at \$250,000 in 2017 and adjusted for anticipated changes in valuation of 3 percent for both the overall district assessed value and this individual sample home. Estimated rates are per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

Year	Valuation	M & O Levy	Tech Levy	Bond	Total Tax Rate	Total Amount
2017	\$250,000	\$3.04	\$0.26	\$1.56	\$4.86	\$1,215
2018	\$257,500	\$3.02	\$0.26	\$1.56	\$4.84	\$1,246.30
2019	\$265,225	\$3.00	\$0.25	\$1.54	\$4.79	\$1,270.43

15. Where can I find more information about the district’s budget?

More information about the budget can be found at <http://vansd.org/budget-information>.

Part V – The Election

16. What percentage of “yes” votes is required for approval of the levy?

A 50 percent plus one majority of “yes” votes is required to approve the replacement maintenance and operations (M & O) levy.

17. How will this election be conducted?

This is a mail-in election. Ballots will be mailed to registered voters by January 22. Persons who reside in Clark County but who will be out of town between January 22 and February 9 may call the elections office to have a ballot mailed to an alternate address.

18. How can I cast my ballot?

Ballots may be returned by mail to the Clark County Elections Office. They must be

postmarked by February 9. First-class postage is required. Remember to sign your ballot.

Ballots also may be dropped off at the Elections Office (1408 Franklin Street) or at the Elections Drop Box (center of 14th Street, between Franklin and Esther streets) between January 22 and February 9. On Election Day only, ballots may be dropped off at some schools.

Part VI – Voters

19. Who is eligible to vote on the levy?

Registered voters residing within the boundaries of Vancouver Public Schools may vote on the district's February 9 replacement maintenance and operations (M & O) levy.

To become a registered voter for this election you must:

1. Be a United States citizen
2. Be a resident of Clark County
3. Be 18 years of age by the day of the election
4. Have full civil rights

20. How do I register to vote?

Register online at www.clarkvotes.org. To register online, you must have a valid Washington state driver's license or a state identification card. Voter registration forms also are available at the Clark County Elections Department (1408 Franklin) and at school offices.

You may register to vote in Clark County up to 29 days prior to the election date if you are a voter currently registered in the state of Washington. Registration forms may be submitted by mail, online or in person. If you are not registered to vote anywhere in the state of Washington, you may submit your registration form in person at the Elections Department up to eight days before the election date. For more information, contact the Elections Department at 360-397-2345.

Note: Some disabled and senior citizens are exempt from paying all or part of school levy taxes. Refer to the Department of Revenue Property Tax Exemption for Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons publication (www.dor.wa.gov). You also may contact the Clark County Assessor's Office at 360-397-2092 ext. 5689 or taxreduction@clark.wa.gov.

Part VII – Sources of Levy Information

21. What information does the school district provide?

A school district can, and must, provide information about proposed levies to the citizens of the community. The school district puts levy information on the district website and in an issue of *Inside Vancouver Public Schools*. The district also mails a levy fact brochure to all community residents.

22. Who promotes passage of the levy?

The Citizens' Committee for Good Schools, a community group that stays informed about Vancouver Public Schools, endorses and promotes levies and bonds.

23. Where can I get more information about the levy?

Go to the levy and bond page of Vancouver Public Schools' website: <http://vansd.org/levy-bond>. Community members also are welcome to contact the district's communications office at 360-313-1230 or vpscommunications@vansd.org, a school board member or their local school principal.