

Pullman Public Schools
Investing in Our Schools
2020 Bond and Levy
Frequently Asked Questions

Pullman Public Schools will have three ballot measures on the February 11, 2020 ballot:

- Proposition #1: General Obligation Bonds - \$15,000,000
- Proposition #2: Replacement School Support Levy for Educational Enrichment Programs and Operations
- Proposition #3: Replacement Technology Capital Projects Levy

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Why are we voting on a levy again?

State law limits the duration of school levies to two, three or four years. According to state law, school levies must be voted on every two, three or four years by the registered voters residing within the school district.

What are the three most important things I need to know about the February 11, 2020 Ballot Measures?

1. The tax rate per thousand dollars of assessed property value will not increase.
2. The levies will maintain the current levels of funding in our district, for continued excellence.
3. The bond proposition was recommended by a committee of community members, parents, and staff.



Who pays for a levy or bond tax?

Any property owner residing within the Pullman Public Schools district.

How will the three ballot measures impact my taxes?

1. Local school tax rates, per thousand dollars of assessed property, will not increase. The district is asking voters to replace the existing 2017-2020 \$5.5 million dollar per year Maintenance and Operations or “M & O” levy. It will now be referred to as an **Enrichment Levy**.
- The Maintenance and Operations Levy (now known as the Enrichment Levy) will be a four-year levy (2021-2024).
- The Technology Levy was wrapped into our 2017-2020 M & O Levy. It will now be its own ballot measure on the 2020 ballot.
- The Technology Levy tax rate will remain at \$0.08 per thousand dollars of assessed property value.
- The levy and bond tax rates have a history of decreasing over time. Total property valuation has increased over the past years due to economic growth in and around Pullman.

BOND

What is a bond?

- A bond funds the construction, renovation, or expansion of school facilities.
- Typically paid over 20+ years
- Bonds are funded by property taxes based on the assessed value of property owned.
- The district receives all money upfront to pay for construction or facility improvement costs once approved by voters.
- Requires 60% voter approval

Proposition #1: BOND for BUILDING: 20 Year \$15 Million Bond for the Renovation and Expansion of Lincoln Middle School and HVAC Upgrades to Three Elementary Schools

What is it?

- A \$15 million bond over 20 years
- Current LMS Bond Tax Rate: \$2.78 per thousand dollars of assessed property value (the current LMS Bond expires December 2020)
- Proposed LMS Bond Tax Rate: \$2.78 per thousand dollars of assessed property value (effective January 2021)

Background:

- The Capital Projects Advisory Committee, a committee of community members and Lincoln Middle School staff representatives, carefully reviewed feedback from community surveys and forums to identify needs and priorities.
- The committee also studied district finances to determine the bond amount and term that would least impact taxpayers.



Capital Projects Advisory Committee (CPAC) Recommendations:

- A \$15 million bond over 20 years
- Renovation and expansion of Lincoln Middle School to:
 - Relieve overcrowding
 - Upgrade safety and security
 - Meet projected enrollment needs
- Cooling system additions (HVAC upgrades) to improve health and safety at:
 - Franklin Elementary School
 - Jefferson Elementary School
 - Sunnyside Elementary School

How was the bond recommendation developed by the Capital Projects Advisory Committee?

- The Capital Projects Advisory Committee, a committee of community members and Lincoln Middle School staff representatives, carefully reviewed feedback from the community to identify needs and priorities.
- The committee also studied district finances and information provided by bond financing experts to determine the bond amount and term that would least impact taxpayers.

Why is there a need for a renovated and expanded Lincoln Middle School?

- Our current Lincoln Middle School building was expanded and upgraded in 2005 to accommodate up to 600 students. We currently have 690+ students attending LMS and anticipate having between 750 and 800 students by 2030, necessitating larger commons spaces and more classrooms.
- LMS currently has inadequate science and health lab spaces.
- The LMS roof is in need of being replaced.
- All other schools in our district currently have a controlled entrance where visitors must check in to the school office before they can access the school.
- LMS currently has no air conditioning or cooling system. Exterior windows cannot be used for ventilation when air quality is poor (e.g. fire season, harvest) or when individuals have allergies that could be life threatening.

Why request a bond now?

- We need to add more classrooms to address current and future enrollment needs and safety updates to enhance student well-being.
- The current LMS bond expires December 2020.

- The 2004 bond that funded an expansion of LMS will expire at the end of 2020, and we now have the opportunity to address facility needs at LMS without increasing tax rate per thousand dollars of assessed value. If approved, the requested \$15 million, 20-year bond, would take effect in January of 2021.

What has the district done to address growing enrollment?

- Added six classrooms to Franklin elementary school, maximizing its capacity
- Added four new classrooms to Jefferson Elementary
- Kamiak Elementary opened in August 2019, with 24 classrooms that allow all elementary classes to realize smaller class sizes and discontinue the use of unconventional classroom spaces like music rooms and staff lounges. (Paid for in part with a \$7.4 million grant from the State of Washington)

What has the district done to address student safety?

- Created controlled entrances at five schools
- Added additional cameras in all schools
- Added a SafeSchools Alert to district and school websites
- Administrators meet annually and as needed with City of Pullman Police and Fire Departments to adjust safety protocols based on new research and best practices.

LEVIES

What is a levy?

- A levy is a local property tax that helps bridge the gap in funding between what the state pays and the actual cost of operating our schools
- The levy provides the resources to help our students be successful
- The levy provides approximately 14% of the district’s operating budget
- Levies are property taxes based on the assessed value of property owned
- The levy amount is collected annually for the life of the levy once approved by voters
- Requires 50% +1 voter approval



What is “new” regarding school levies?

The state has established new guidelines related to school levies, which means that our levy measures on local ballots will look different in 2020. Two main changes include:

1. The name of our primary levy was previously known as the Maintenance and Operations or “M & O” levy. It will now be referred to as an **Enrichment Levy**.
2. In 2016 we combined the Maintenance and Operations Levy (\$5,300,000) with the Technology Levy (\$200,000) totaling \$5.5 million a year. Due to recent legislative changes, the February 11, 2020 ballot will separate these two levies again. The ballot will have separate propositions for the Enrichment Levy and the Technology Levy, as has been done in previous years.

Why is the district asking for a four-year levy?

- Levies can be requested for two, three, or four years. Asking for a four-year levy provides the district with the opportunity to implement long-term financial planning over four years. In addition, the district must pay the Whitman County Elections office a fee to conduct an election. By having the election every four years, costs are minimized.

More about what the Enrichment Levy funds

- Nearly all professional development and training of district employees is made possible with Enrichment Levy dollars.
- The current state staff allocation funding model does not meet all of our staffing needs. For example, the state allocation funds only a .4 Nurse (just under half-time) to cover our entire district (six schools). Due to student health and medical needs, we currently employ 4 full time nurses – 3.6 nurses are a direct benefit of our enrichment levy funds.

What portion of the district's revenue does the Enrichment Levy provide?

The Enrichment Levy funds approximately 14% of the District's operating budget.

Proposition #2: LEVY for LEARNING: Four-Year Enrichment Levy (Previously Known as Maintenance and Operations or M & O Levy) – Replacement

What is it?

- Replacement of existing levy
- \$5.3 million per year for four years
- NO Increase in the rate per thousand dollars of assessed property value
- Current Rate: \$2.42 per thousand dollars of assessed property value
- Proposed Rate: \$2.25 per thousand dollars of assessed property value

Why is it important?

- A levy helps bridge the gap in funding between what the state pays and the actual cost of operating our schools.
- The levy provides approximately 14% of the district's operating budget.
- Levies bring our schools to life!
 - Activities and Athletics
 - Arts and Drama
 - Counselors
 - Libraries
 - Music
 - Professional Development
 - Safety and Security
 - Small Class Sizes
 - Social Emotional Learning
 - Teachers and Staff
 - Technology
 - Nursing Services
 - Transportation

Proposition #3: LEVY for LEARNING: Four-Year Technology Levy – Replacement

What is it?

- Replacement of existing technology levy amount (currently wrapped into the \$5.5 million levy)
- \$200,000 per year for four years
- NO Net Increase in the rate per thousand dollars of assessed property value
- Current Rate: \$0.08 per thousand dollars of assessed property value
- Proposed Rate: \$0.08 per thousand dollars of assessed property value

What does it provide?

- Computer Technology
- Technology System Updates
- Network Connectivity and Data Security
- Software and Online Applications
- Updated Hardware

