



## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### Renewing our commitment to 53,000 school children Propositions 1 & 2 on the Feb. 12, 2019 Ballot

#### **What does the Educational Programs and Operations Levy fund? Is it a new tax?**

This three-year school levy replaces an expiring levy, so it is not a new tax. The Operations Levy provides critically needed funding for the day-to-day operations of Seattle Public Schools, and bridges the gap between what the state pays for and the programs and services that are currently offered to 53,000 students including:

- Nurses and librarians
- Counselors and other support workers
- Special education services
- Textbooks and materials
- Resources for English language learners
- Custodians

#### **Isn't the state now obligated to pay all these basic education services?**

Yes, but the state has not provided enough funding to fully pay for salaries, special education services, and other basic education responsibilities leaving districts like Seattle in a bind. The so-called McCleary fix left Seattle with a \$50 million budget deficit.

#### **Size and cost of the Educational Programs and Operations Levy?**

On the Feb. 12, 2019 ballot, Seattle voters will be asked to approve a 3-year \$815 million-replacement levy. Currently, property owners pay \$1.10 per \$1000 of assessed value. If approved, and if the state legislature raises the levy cap to allow this amount to actually be collected, the levy rate would drop to \$1.05. The cost per year on a \$700K home in 2020 would be \$735 dropping to \$609 in 2022.

#### **What is BEX V?**

The Building Excellence V Capital Levy replaces a 6 year expiring levy. It is not a new tax. It renews our commitment to giving Seattle school children safer and healthier learning environments. School facility funding is a local, not a state responsibility. The Seattle school district has a well-deserved reputation of delivering its capital projects on time and on (or under) budget.

BEX V projects include new or modernized schools

- Alki Elementary
- Kimball Elementary
- Mercer International Middle School
- Montlake Elementary
- Northgate Elementary
- Rainier Beach High School
- John Rogers Elementary
- Viewlands Elementary

#### **Every Seattle school will benefit from the Building Excellence Capital Levy**

- **Security and safety** upgrades including earthquake safety, secure entrances, and updated fire alarm systems
- **Classroom technology** and district infrastructure
- **Additional capacity** for nearly 2000 students. More classrooms and removes over 75 portables.

- **Future planning** for Aki Kurose Middle School, and Sacajawea, and other new schools.

### **What is the size and cost of the Building Excellence Capital Levy?**

BEX V is a replacement levy that will raise \$1.4 billion over 6 years. Property owners will start out paying the same \$.90 per \$1,000 assessed value with BEX V that they currently pay with BEX IV. That rate declines over time. The cost per year for the owner of a \$700,000 house will be \$632 in 2020, declining to \$523 in 2022.

### **How were the BEX V projects selected?**

The school board developed and voted on the project list. They used weighted criteria that first considered racial and equity factors. The other criteria were health, safety and security, capital needs, building condition and educational adequacy.

### **What other levies support Seattle school children?**

Voters recently renewed the City of Seattle's Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise Levy. That levy does not fund school district operations or capital projects, so there is no duplication. The school district has a second smaller 6- year Buildings and Technology capital levy that will be expiring in 3 years.

### **Will charter schools receive any of this levy funding?**

No. Charter schools are not eligible to receive any funding from local school levies.

### **How can I afford these levies? My taxes are too high.**

These are not new taxes. These levies replace ones that are expiring. King County offers exemptions and deferrals for low-income seniors (over 60) and disabled taxpayers.

Good schools are the heart of a strong community. Renewing these school levies is an investment in our future.

### **Why are donations needed?**

Donations are needed to pay for campaign materials like yard signs, media support and social media efforts.

### **What do we do after we endorse the levies?**

Please visit the Schools First Website and list your organization under endorsements.

<https://www.schoolsfirstseattle.org/endorse/>

### **How can we donate?**

- Donations can be done online at [www.SchoolsFirstSeattle.org](http://www.SchoolsFirstSeattle.org)
- Checks made payable to "Schools First" can be mailed to:  
PO Box 22204, Seattle WA 98111