

Stevenson-Carson School District LEVY INFORMATION



Our Vision

Students will thrive in an environment where staff, parents, and community partner to nurture a passion for lifelong learning.

Through these relationships, students will grow academically and experience success in school and beyond.

Four Fast Facts

- Over 95% of all school districts in Washington have an approved levy.
- Even with this levy the district will continue to make budget reductions.
- The SHS graduating class of 2016 exceeded the state's average for graduating seniors.
- Our district is not satisfied with "status quo", we are working diligently to improve. Levy funds will support these efforts.

The Stevenson-Carson School District will ask our voters to approve a three-year replacement levy on August 1, 2017. These funds will be used to support the basic operating expenses of our schools for 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020. The 3 Year Levy is requesting \$2 million each year.

The current approved levy is \$800,000. The proposed levy request is to increased from \$800,000 by \$1.2 million to cover the federal forest funds lost when Congress did not reauthorize the SRS (Secure Rural School) Act for 2016 nor 2017. This was a loss of \$1.4 million dollars, each year, to our district.

How much will it cost? Approximately \$2.41 per \$1,000 assessed value in the first year (see table on page three).



SES BULLPUPS

3 Things to Know about the Levy

It's not a luxury.

In the 2017-2018 school year, 17.9% of our budget will come from our approved local levy.

This is typical because the state doesn't provide adequate funding. 287 of 295 school districts in our state have local support through a levy.

It's a replacement.

The current \$800,000 levy expires at the end of December 2017 and we must replace it.

This new levy proposal will replace the \$800,000 and will increase by \$1.2 million to make up for loss of SRS funds.

It's essential!

Even with the approval of this levy on August 1st, budget cuts will still need to be made.

The school district has reduced its budget expenses by **over \$6 million** in the last six years and will be required to cut up to \$500,000 this school year.

Our students deserve the benefits of a high quality education!

What will the district do with the proposed levy funding if voters approve it?

- Purchase new elementary science curriculum to meet Next Generation Science Standards.
- Rehire or hire at least three certificated teachers.
- Rehire or hire at least five classified staff and/or return their hours to match 2016-17 school year.
- Maintain schools, buildings and grounds at the same level as the previous two years.
- Maintain extracurricular activities at the level they were offered for the 2016-2017 school year.
- Supplement the services our hi-cap and special education students receive because state funding simply isn't enough.
- Purchase new books and resources for our school libraries, replace secondary textbooks as needed.
- Maintain our technology at the same level as the previous two years through systematic upgrades and provide students a technology assistant.
- Stock supply cabinets for staff and students.
- Schedule field trips.
- Provide professional development and continue to work on improving student achievement.
- Improve communication so that voters have continual information about district happenings and finance. The district will improve communication **whether or not** this levy proposal is approved.

Here are just a few of the ways the district is saving money:

- ✓ Columbia Gorge School, an alternative program serving only a handful of students, was closed in June 2016. This is an annual savings of about \$160,000.
- ✓ The district had an energy audit completed on every facility in February 2017. This information is being used to apply for grants and to ensure money spent for upgrades are cost effective.
- ✓ The district's administration team was reduced in 2016 by one full time employee. An annual savings of about \$100,000.
- ✓ After a comprehensive facility study, public hearing and board approval, Wind River Middle School was moved from the Carson campus to the Stevenson High School campus in order to save an estimated \$300,000 each year. Today, with only 105 enrolled students, this is still a good decision.
- ✓ The Wind River Education Center (the previous middle school in Carson) is currently used for SCSD Preschool, Mid-Columbia Head Start, Forest Youth Success, Stevenson Library Events, SCSD Music, and a variety of school and community sporting events. Mt. Adams CrossFit is also relocating to this site, very soon. Although the facility is not used to capacity, it is still an asset to our school district and community and brings in some rental income.
- ✓ In the last six years, the budgeted expenditures have been reduced by over 6 million dollars.
- ✓ The district seeks grants and partnerships. This year alone over \$1,070,000 was brought in through grants and cash donations and over \$120,000 donated equipment because we simply asked.
- ✓ Volunteers have put in over 200 hours painting, cleaning and landscaping district grounds.
- ✓ Partnership created with an analytical operational specialist to reduce costs while improving productivity, beginning at the district office. This service is at no cost to the district at this time.

What is the Status of the Swim Pool?

The swimming pool will open on June 23rd. It is reopening because of overwhelming community support and partnerships. The school district only funded about 25% of the reopening costs and the rest was **donated!** The goal is to reopen the pool at a cost not much greater than the amount we paid annually for the pool while it was closed (\$30K). If this goal cannot be achieved, the pool will be closed for good, draining it and repurposing the building. The pool will need continued community partners and participants to provide the annual revenue to make the pool sustainable.

Seeking More Information? Keep Reading!

What will the tax rate be?

Our tax rate is estimated to be no more than \$2.41 per thousand dollar property valuation. For a home worth \$200,000 the total tax collected for the school levy would be \$482 per year, about \$23 per month increase from this year's collection. For a home worth \$300,000, the total would be \$732 per year, about \$36.00 per month increase from this year's collection.

What do you mean "should be" in the above question?

School districts ask their voters for a specific total amount in their levies. However, in order to help our voters understand the impact of the levy, we *estimate* the tax rate based on property values and growth. Unlike other public entities, like fire districts, we do not collect more money if property values rise. We will collect approximately the same amount. In fact, our taxpayers will see a decrease in the school tax rate if property values rise.

How does this tax rate compare to previous years?

Local taxpayers paid a tax rate of .99 cents per thousand this year. If this new levy is approved, it will be an increase of approximately \$1.42 per thousand. This is a replacement tax, it is not in addition to the levy tax you are paying. This tax is a replacement of the tax you are currently paying.

What is the Levy Amount Per Home?

Assessed Valuation	\$150,000	\$200,000	\$250,000	\$300,000
Estimated 2017	\$149	\$198	\$248	\$297
Projected 2018	\$362	\$482	\$603	\$723
Monthly Difference	\$18	\$24	\$30	\$36



**Wind River Middle School
ROYALS**

It is projected that as the average home value increased in the Stevenson-Carson School District, the projected collection for each individual will decrease.

What other funding challenges are going on?

The Stevenson-Carson School District has not received any timber dollars (SRS) since fiscal year 2015. The SRS (Secure Rural School) payment was about \$1.4 million in 2015. This loss in revenue is very impactful to the programs we can offer.

If the district passes the Maintenance and Operations (M&O) Replacement Levy, the district will receive an estimated \$49,525 in levy equalization funds from the state. If voters do not approve the levy, this money will be given to other districts.

State funding could improve if the state legislature can reach an agreement on how to fully fund education, but there has been little headway since the State Supreme Court ordered them to do so three years ago.

What will happen if the levy is approved and Congress suddenly reauthorizes SRS funds?

The district desires to build a district budget that does not rely on SRS for daily operations. Any unforeseen SRS funds received by the school district, after an approved levy, would be used for one time projects (capital outlay—roof, student desks, track repair) and would not be used for the day-to-day operations.

Additional Information For Those Who Want More!

You may contact Karen Douglass, Superintendent with more questions 509-427-5674

Why do school districts in Washington state need to run local levies?

The state of Washington does not provide enough funding for school districts to educate all children adequately. Most school districts must ask their local communities to support maintenance and operations levies in order to have the resources to best serve students and meet the state requirements.

Why do some neighboring school districts not ask for a local levy?

Districts with under 100 students get special funding from the state at a much higher rate per student than districts like Stevenson-Carson School District.



What does the renewal of the levy mean to our schools?

The renewal of this levy would mean that about 18% of our budget would come from local funding. Personnel costs make up about 80% of our total \$11.7 million budget. Without the local levy, we will not be able to provide the teachers and programs our kids need and support our community values.

In the last two years, local levy dollars have allowed us to offer:

- A robust K-6 instructional program with both a certificated teacher and support staff to better meet our students' individual learning needs.
- Reasonable class sizes in most grades and content areas.
- Buildings with lights, heat and water! YES, levy dollars also assist in paying some of our basic operational needs because the state does not fully fund district maintenance or operational needs.
- New computers, software and other necessary technology for student use throughout the district.
- A full-time music teacher to offer a strong music program to students K-6th grade.
- An "Arts and Enrichment" program for our students at Stevenson Elementary.
- A drama course to engage kids in theatrical arts.
- A variety of electives at middle school and high school.
- An aligned K-6 Math Curriculum to better support our students' learning.
- An aligned K-12 English/Language Arts Curriculum to better support our students' learning.
- School libraries that have new books and reference materials added each year, staffed during the school day.
- Extra-curricular activities including sports, knowledge bowl and classroom extensions like pep band, choir and theater performances.
- Field Trips.
- Enriched opportunities for Hi-Cap and Special Education students.



Stevenson-Carson School District

There is a special tax exemption for senior citizens. For information about your status, please contact the Skamania County Assessor for details at 509-427-3721.