



# LEVY

I N F O R M A T I O N

PLEASE REMEMBER TO VOTE IN THE FEBRUARY 14 ELECTION

## Levy Facts

Voters will decide on replacing two expiring levies in the Feb. 14 election. Both levies are essential for the basic operation of Bellingham Public Schools. Our schools cannot rely on the federal and state government to adequately fund a high quality education for our local children. These levies provide critical basic funding to help cover budget cuts and shortfalls from state and federal funding.

**They are not new levies, but replace levies that expire in 2012. They pay for nearly 25 percent of education in Bellingham Public Schools as well as technology, which is not funded by the state.**



*Local support pays for nearly 25 percent of education in Bellingham Public Schools, impacting almost every aspect of teaching and learning.*

## Why are the levies needed?

Local levies are no longer for enrichment only. They fund the basics of what the state and federal government do not provide. They support instruction, smaller class sizes, school bus transportation, safety and health, and technology for student learning. They also help cover expenses for full-time kindergarten, special education, Highly Capable Learners' program, English Language Learners' program, advanced placement and honors courses, extra-curricular activities that benefit the whole child such as arts and athletics, and much more. The levies also help our schools attract and retain highly qualified and talented staff.

## How can I vote?

Voters within Bellingham Public Schools' attendance areas will receive a ballot in the mail after Jan. 28, 2012 to vote on two school levies that are expiring and need to be replaced. Ballots must be postmarked and mailed or received at this city drop-box location by **Feb. 14, 2012: Whatcom County Courthouse South Parking Lot, 201 Grand Ave.**

*Locally funded, childhood education has one of the highest returns on investment by creating a skilled workforce, reducing crime and preventing dropouts.*



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# What is the impact?

The replacement operation (M&O) levy and a replacement technology (capital) projects levy total approximately \$32-37 million per year for four years.

**To replace our expiring levies, a property owner with an assessed value of \$250,000 would pay approximately \$8 more per month than the current combined levy rate beginning in 2013.**

## Projected Levy Information

	2013	2014	2015	2016
*Estimated total combined rate (operation, technology, bond) per \$1,000 assessed value	\$3.90	\$4.10	\$4.16	\$4.06

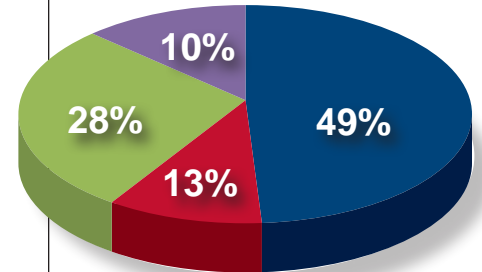
*\*The rates above are estimates based upon the assessed value data available in fall 2011. We anticipate a decline in assessed value based upon information from the Whatcom County Auditor's Office, which is how the above estimate is calculated.*



*Middle and high school students currently purchase expensive graphing calculators, which could be downloaded on computer devices in the future, further lessening the financial burden for families.*

## Technology Levy

Washington state does not fund technology for student learning and operations (phones, computers, wireless, software, etc.). This is supported locally through an expiring technology levy. The next technology levy will be spent on the following areas:



- Training & Development
- Innovation
- Infrastructure and Digital Equity
- Computers

*“Our district is so fortunate when it comes to all the technology we have, but none of that matters until we learn to use it to its full potential. If we can achieve that, then I believe that without a doubt our district can produce more capable and successful individuals.”*

**Student from the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council**

# The Bellingham Promise

A MESSAGE from SUPERINTENDENT of SCHOOLS GREG BAKER

Following my last year spent listening and learning in our schools and community, I will be talking more with our community starting in 2012 about The Bellingham Promise, the result of those many conversations.

This promise is part of our One Schoolhouse Plan to ensure that all of our children receives an outstanding education in Bellingham Public Schools, regardless of zip code, the school they attend, or other life circumstances. We want each of our students to graduate from high school as scholars, with strong character, a passion for learning, and eligible to apply to the widest range of post-secondary options to support a diversity of career choices.

Local levies support nearly every aspect of teaching and learning in our schools – nearly a quarter of the current experience we provide to children in preschool through grade 12. As federal and state funding continues to shrink, we remain steadfast in our promise to the Bellingham community. I thank you for your previous investment in our local children and continued support of outstanding education as we look to the future.



Greg Baker  
Superintendent of Schools

## Senior Citizens Exemption Information

Qualifying senior citizens and persons with disabilities may be exempt from paying school levies. For more information, please call the County Assessor's office at 676-6790 or visit: <http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/assessor/taxguides/homeowners/exemption.jsp>

**Questions? 676-6520**