



Selah School District No. 119

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Press Release

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Selah School District Returns to Voters with Enrichment Levy Request

Levy package includes a reduction in collection rate

Over the years, the Selah School District has valued the support of its community. With the backing of patrons, the District has cultivated a culture of life-long learning. Through the passage of Facilities Bonds to construct new buildings, and the approval of levies that support student learning, the District provides a quality educational experience that parents and patrons have come to expect.

Now, again, the District is turning to the Selah community to “renew” its commitment to students as the School Board of Directors has announced that it will submit to voters a two-year Enrichment Levy request on the February 12, 2019, election ballot. This Enrichment Levy is **NOT** a new tax, but a replacement of the Maintenance and Operations Levy expiring in 2019. Even with a new name, the Enrichment Levy is still for learning and a renewal of the tax that is currently being collected to support programs. If approved, Levy funds will comprise 12% of the District's Operating Budget.

The proposed collection rate per thousand for each of the two Levy years, 2020 and 2021, is \$1.50 per \$1,000 assessed value. The proposed amount for the Enrichment Levy is a decrease in the current collection rate by taxpayers of \$3.53 per \$1,000. Also, if passed, the District will continue to receive Levy Equalization Funding, projected at \$3.1 million per year.

Even though during last year's Legislative session the State capped the local amount that school districts can collect in Levy tax rates, the funding to be generated is still needed to help support valuable programs essential to student learning. In Selah, if approved, Levy dollars would continue to support and enhance three main areas: Student Learning Support, Technology, and Co-Curricular Activities. Specifically, Levy funding provides the District with professional development opportunities for staff, instructional materials, certified staff at the secondary level, ELL support, nursing support, classified staffing for supervision and intervention, campus security support, drug and alcohol education, Highly Capable Program Support, technology devices, tech support, athletics, activities and academic competitions, to name items.

With the recent changes in how schools are funded in Washington State, the new funding formula has created a gap between what the state funds and what our students need to succeed. As with other school districts, voter-approved levies help bridge that funding gap. Although the Legislature allocated more money into education this past session, the amount of "no strings" revenue does not cover the loss in local levy funds driven by the new cap of \$1.50 per \$1,000 for collection. The loss in local levy funding

for the Selah School District is approximately \$3.2 million over the two-year period representing the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years.

According to Superintendent, Shane Backlund, the approval of February's Enrichment Levy will help maintain existing student learning opportunities and programs the community expects.

"Our District values the support it has received throughout the years from the Selah community," said Backlund. "With continued support we have been able to provide a quality-learning environment for students where they can learn, grow, and succeed.

"Now, with the state's new structure in how education is funded, the Levy renewal is critical to the District so it can continue providing tomorrow's leaders with the quality learning programs and opportunities they deserve," said Backlund. "As we work on having a world-class learning system, levy funds are valuable to ensure every student is prepared for college and career opportunities."

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