

Cosmopolis School District
Replacement Maintenance & Operations Levy Information
For the February 14, 2012 Election



A Community Question and Answer Fact Sheet

Why do public schools need maintenance and operation levies?

The State of Washington provides funds for a narrowly defined basic education program. Those funds are not sufficient to pay the actual costs of operating our school. Between the State of Washington and the federal government, the Cosmopolis School District receives about 74% of the cost of running our school plus 6% from other revenue sources. The local community contributes approximately the other 26% through the local school maintenance & operation (M&O) levy.

Why does the Cosmopolis School District need a replacement levy?

In February 2010, the community approved a two-year levy that expires in December 2012. The proposed levy will replace the expiring levy.

What will the proposed levy cost?

The levy will raise \$660,000 in the year 2013 and \$670,000 in the year 2014. Our levy will cost the local property owners an estimated \$3.87 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation in 2013 and \$3.93 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation in 2014. A tax payer with a home valued at \$100,000 would pay \$387 in 2013 and \$393 in 2014. Remember that this is a replacement levy that will take the place of the current levy.

How does the Cosmopolis School tax rate compare with surrounding Districts in 2011?

<u>District</u>	<u>Maintenance Levy</u>	<u>Bonds</u>	<u>Project Levy</u>	<u>Total</u>
Cosmopolis	\$3.31	\$0.76	\$0	\$4.07
Aberdeen	\$3.96	\$1.95	\$0	\$5.91
Hoquiam	\$4.11	\$0.74	\$0.81	\$5.66
Montesano	\$3.07	\$1.57	\$0.15	\$4.79
McCleary	\$2.44	\$1.96	\$0	\$4.40

Cosmopolis School Tax Comparison
Rates show in dollars per \$1,000 of assessed property value

<u>Year</u>	<u>Levy</u>	<u>Bond</u>	<u>Total</u>
2007	\$ 3.23	\$ 0.87	\$ 4.10
2008	\$ 3.33	\$ 0.97	\$ 4.30
2009	\$ 3.84	\$ 0.99	\$ 4.83
2010	\$ 3.88	\$ 1.03	\$ 4.91
2011	\$ 3.31	\$ 0.76	\$ 4.07
2012	\$ 3.31	\$ 0.76	\$ 4.07
2013	\$ 3.87	\$ 0.76	\$ 4.63
2014	\$ 3.93	\$ 0.76	\$ 4.69

Given the financial news from Olympia and the anticipated loss of levy equalization funding beginning in 2013, the proposed Cosmopolis School District levy assumes no state levy equalization relief for local taxpayers. Unfortunately, the increased

levy amount will not completely make up for the anticipated loss of levy equalization and the District will need to make financial cuts.

What is levy equalization?

Levy equalization is a financial adjustment made by the state to reduce the total tax burden on property owners within school districts that have a lower average assessed property valuation than the statewide average. Currently, Cosmopolis receives about \$155,806 in levy equalization for the year 2012, representing about 9% of the annual operating budget. Local taxpayers fund the remaining 26% (\$560,000), for a total levy contribution of \$715,806 to the district's annual operating budget. The state only provides these funds if a levy passes and if the district is eligible.

How are local levy monies spent?

Levy proceeds are used for a wide range of costs associated with operating the school's academic program as well as building maintenance and operations. Levy dollars are used to pay a portion or all of the following:

- Non-high payment to Aberdeen School District for providing 7-12 education for our students
- Staff including teachers, school counselor, nurse, instructional paraeducators, playground aides, library support, clerical and custodial/grounds
- Textbook adoptions and instructional materials
- Classroom technology, hardware, software, service and support
- Utilities, (i.e. electrical, heating, telephones, fuel, etc.)
- Full day kindergarten and part-time preschool program for four year old students
- Preventative maintenance and repairs, such as roof repair and painting
- Equipment replacement including obsolete fire alarm systems
- General improvement projects as determined by the Board of Directors

Non-High School Payments

Districts in the State of Washington that do not operate a junior high or a high school must make payments to the district where their resident students attend. Through the application of a set formula, Cosmopolis is billed annually for each student attending the Aberdeen School District in grades 7 through 12. We must pay the Aberdeen School District for our share of their local levy money spent on educating Cosmopolis students. Our payment for 2010-11 was \$225,913 and \$220,129 for 2011-12. We estimate our cost for 2012-13 will be \$225,880.



What happens if the replacement levy does not pass?

Without levy funds, the District's operating budget would be reduced by approximately 26 percent (\$560,000, current levy collection) plus any levy equalization funds. The School Board of Directors would be required to make program reductions and adjustments in order to balance the budget. The loss of levy funding would have a significant impact on students and educational programs.

When will the levy election be held?

The date of the election is **Tuesday, February 14, 2012**. The County Auditor's Office has set Friday, January 27, 2012, as the date to mail out ballots. Ballots need to be returned or postmarked no later than Tuesday, February 14th to be validated.

Are tax exemptions available?

Yes. Exemptions are available if you are 61 years old or permanently disabled, own and occupy as your principal residence in Grays Harbor County and have a household income of \$35,000 or less per year. For more information, contact the Grays Harbor County Assessor at 100 West Broadway, Suite 21, Montesano, WA 98563 or at (360) 249-4121.

Do you have other questions regarding the February 14, 2012, M&O Levy?

If so, please call Cherie Patterson, Cosmopolis Superintendent/Principal at 532-7181.

PLEASE VOTE BY TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2012.