

Portland Public School District

Measure 26-246

BALLOT TITLE

Levy Renewal to Maintain Teachers and Classroom Support Staff

Question: Shall district maintain teachers, classroom support staff; renew levy of \$1.99 per \$1,000 assessed value for five years beginning 2025? This measure renews current local option taxes.

Summary: Portland Public Schools' local option levy was approved by voters in 2019 to provide funding for schools over five years. The renewed levy will provide an estimated \$101.5 million in the first year and is projected to fund approximately 660 teachers and classroom support staff annually over five years.

This renewed local option levy would fund teaching and other positions to:

- Support a well-rounded education, including career and technical programs and enrichments and electives, so students graduate with the skills they need to be career or college ready.
- Provide classroom supports, such as educational assistants and reading specialists for students struggling with academic or mental/behavioral health issues.
- Help maintain class sizes and prevent significant increases across the district.

Levy rate remains \$1.99 per \$1,000 assessed property value, the same as the 2019 levy.

Funds will be placed in a separate account; independent community oversight will review expenditures to verify funds are used as approved by voters. No levy funds will be spent for administration. District is subject to annual independent financial and performance audits.

The levy will raise an estimated \$101.5 million in 2025-2026; \$103.0 million in 2026-2027; \$106.0 million in 2027-2028; \$109.3 million in 2028-2029; and \$112.5 million in 2029-30.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Portland Public Schools currently serves over 44,000 students in 81 schools and other programs throughout the neighborhoods of Portland.

PPS's graduation rate of 84.5% remains above the statewide average and has risen 26 percentage points since 2010.

In serving the students of Portland, the district continuously strives to be fiscally responsible with taxpayer resources. Through many years of volatile budgets and the pandemic, school district leaders have worked to preserve classroom education and class sizes. At the same time, PPS has advocated for a greater level of state investment by the Legislature and worked to ensure that dollars are spent well and focused on the classroom. PPS is subject to regular independent financial and performance audits to monitor effective use of taxpayer resources.

Continued investments are needed in our schools to continue to build career and technical programs, prevent class-size increases, and better support struggling students, especially coming out of the pandemic.

If renewed, the levy is estimated to produce \$101.5 million for Portland Public Schools in school year 2025-2026. The proposed levy renewal:

Funds teachers at every school in the District

- The funds help support a well-rounded education, with enrichments for elementary and middle grades, and electives in varied interest areas for high school students.
- The funds help support career, technical, science, technology, engineering, and math programs, including computer science education, so students can graduate with the skills necessary to be career or college ready.
- The funds provide academic supports, such as reading specialists for students working to recover from learning loss.
- The levy is projected to fund teaching positions / classroom supports at every school in the district, approximately 660 positions annually over five years—nearly one-fifth of all teaching positions in the district.

Allows funding for other classroom support positions

- The levy revenue could also fund other classroom support positions across the District, such as educational assistants, reading specialists, and special education certified personnel to help identify and support students with mental or behavioral health issues, academic issues, or other needs.

Continues to provide fiscal accountability and independent oversight

- This local option requires independent community oversight so that tax dollars are used only for purposes approved by local voters.
- Funds will be placed in a separate account to ensure their correct use and accurate reporting.
- No funds from this local option levy will be used for district administration.

Maintains the existing tax rate of \$1.99 per \$1,000 of assessed value

- This local option levy replaces the one passed by voters in 2019 and maintains the existing tax rate.
- For a home at the current average assessed value of \$275,706, the levy cost is \$45.72 per month, or \$548.65 per year.

Submitted by:

*Dr. Sandy Husk, Interim Superintendent
Portland Public Schools*