

August 14, 2006

26-84

CAPTION

Portland Schools levy for teachers, classrooms, educational programs, learning materials

QUESTION

Shall PPS protect class size, educational programs; levy \$1.25 per \$1000 assessed value for five years beginning 2007; mandate oversight? This measure may cause property taxes to increase by more than three percent.

SUMMARY

Portland Public Schools designs its budget to provide the learning tools, instructional programs and materials that students and teachers need for a well-rounded education.

Levy Funds will be dedicated to:

- teaching positions;
- preventing increases in class size so students receive more individual attention from teachers;
- replacing out-of-date textbooks and workbooks;
- modernizing teaching materials, science labs, equipment;
- continuing vocational and technical training;
- providing extra assistance to at-risk kids; and
- ensuring more kids have access to physical education, music and art classes.

Financial Accountability and Taxpayer Oversight: Mandates independent citizen oversight so funds are used as approved by voters. No funds will be used for administration.

The levy will produce an estimated \$33.0 million in 2007-08; \$35.7 million in 2008-09; \$37.7 million in 2009-10; \$39.5 million in 2010-11; and \$41.6 million in 2011-12. The levy is one dollar and twenty-five cents (\$1.25) per \$1,000 assessed value per year. The typical homeowner will pay about \$12.88 per month.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

In the year 2000, voters approved a five-year local option levy for Portland Public Schools. Over that period of 2000-2005, student achievement improved at virtually every grade level in the four subjects tested by the Oregon Department of Education: reading, mathematics, writing and science. Portland students now regularly match, and often exceed, the state averages in terms of percent of students meeting standards, a rare occurrence among urban districts.

That local option expired in 2005.

Currently, Portland Public Schools serves students in 85 schools throughout the neighborhoods of Portland.

PPS has designed its budget to provide its 47,000 students with educational services including:

- Class sizes that provide students with individual attention from teachers;
- Up-to-date textbooks and learning materials;
- Extra help for at-risk and struggling students;

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Art, music and PE classes as part of a complete curriculum;
Classrooms that are safe and maintained; and
Curriculum, technology and training that prepare students for their future – whether they go on to college or career.

In order to meet these goals, the Portland Public School District has referred a new five-year local option levy to the voters.

The local option levy will help fund:

1. Teachers in every school with class sizes that provide students the chance for individual attention.

2. Tools for learning and teaching including:

Up-to-date textbooks, workbooks, and teaching materials; and
science labs and libraries equipped with current technology.

3. Classroom safety and maintenance

In addition, Portland Public Schools will use this funding to:

Protect reading programs that promote literacy in early grades;
Strengthen math and science programs;
Protect vocational and technical classes that provide skills that prepare students for the workplace; and
Provide more kids with access to art, music and physical education.

Schools with Fiscal Accountability and Taxpayer Oversight

Since the last local option levy was passed in 2000, Portland Public Schools has:
Reduced central administration costs;
Sold or leased unneeded buildings and land;
Ended the practice of administrative contract buyouts; and
Had key functions audited by independently-elected auditors.

This local option will mandate independent citizen oversight to ensure that tax dollars are used for purposes approved by local voters--teachers, classrooms, learning materials, educational programs and curriculum.

No funds from this local option levy will be used for district administration.

C. Minberg