

Local Option Levy Renewal Documents 2024–subject to further revision

RESOLUTION No.

Call for Five-Year Local Option Levy to Support Schools

RECITALS

- A. Strong, healthy public schools are the foundation of Portland and are vital to educating students to prepare them for college, work, life and their future; supporting families and equitable student outcomes; keeping neighborhoods thriving; building community; and strengthening the local economy.
- B. Portland Public Schools (PPS) serves more than 42,000 students and enrolls a high proportion of the city’s students in its schools.
- C. Through conversations and engagement with the greater Portland school community, PPS created a vision that reimagines what and how our students will graduate prepared for college, career and beyond. After identifying the essential skills and attributes educators should have and changes needed in our school systems, PPS released a multi-year strategic plan focused on ensuring that all students have equitable opportunities and supports to achieve high academic goals and outcomes.
- D. PPS’s staffing levels and educational programming, which support every student’s success, are essential to realizing the vision and implementing the strategic plan.
- E. For over two decades, Portland voters have shown their support for strong schools and educational programs by approving and renewing a local option levy to fund PPS schools.
- F. As recently as 2019, voters again affirmed their support for Portland Public Schools and its students by passing a five-year local option levy to support teaching positions and educational programs with 77% approval.
- G. Since it passed in 2019, the local option levy has supported an average of 850 teaching positions each school year, contributing to the school district’s equitable staffing of schools and commitment to providing necessary supports for struggling or underserved students.
- H. PPS has dedicated significant focus and resources to supporting students following the pandemic, including specialized support in reading and math, as well as more counselors, social workers and mental health supports.

I. This local option levy requires independent oversight by the Community Budget Review Committee (CBRC) to ensure that levy dollars are used only for purposes approved by local voters.

J. The CBRC has affirmed, in annual reports to the PPS Board of Education, that local option funds have primarily been used to fund hundreds of teachers and maintain or lower class sizes.

K. PPS intends that all funds raised under this proposed levy will be used for Portland students in PPS schools; and none of the funds will be intended for distribution under the state school funding formula.

L. The District has an independent financial audit annually and independent performance audits of District operations.

RESOLUTION

1. The Board shall ask voters to approve a five-year local option levy in May 2024 that will provide an estimated \$111.3 million in 2025-2026; \$112.6 million in 2026-2027; \$113.8 million in 2027-2028; \$115.1 million in 2028-2029; and \$116.4 million in 2029-30.

2. The levy revenue shall be used to fund teaching positions at every school in the District, ensuring students have access to a well-rounded education with many equitable enrichments for elementary and middle grades and focused electives that help prepare high school students for a career or college, including career and technical programs and STEM programs.

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 who need support with mental or behavioral health issues, academic issues, or other needs.

3. The fully allowable levy rate shall continue to be \$1.99 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The cost for a home with an assessed value of \$275,706, the current average in the PPS district, would be \$45.72 per month.

4. The Community Budget Review Committee will continue to provide independent oversight so that the funds are spent as the voters intended. The CBRC will continue to publish an annual

report about the use of the local option revenues and their contribution to student achievement.

5. The Board will continue to require performance audits of the District's activities, programs and services to support efficient use of resources, as well as to seek opportunities to improve school effectiveness and capacity-building for increased accountability. Audits will continue to be conducted by internal auditors who will work at the direction of the Board to define the scope and design of audits.

6. The Board of Directors of School District No.1J, Multnomah County, Oregon, finds that, for the reasons and purposes described in the proposed measure set forth below, it is necessary and appropriate to levy a local option tax under ORS 280.040 et seq. for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and for four additional fiscal years thereafter each commencing July 1.

7. A serial levy election is hereby called to be held at the General Election on the 21st day of May, 2024, in the manner and between the hours provided by law, at which there shall be submitted to the electors of School District No. 1J, Multnomah County, Oregon.

8. PPS authorizes the Board Chair, Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee (the "Authorized Representative") to take any actions necessary to place the measure that is attached as Exhibit A on the May 21, 2024, election ballot, and to place the explanatory statement that is attached as Exhibit B in the voter's pamphlet for that election. The Authorized Representative shall file the measure with the elections officer of Multnomah County not later than March 1, 2024, and the explanatory statement not later than March 21, 2024. The Authorized Representative is authorized to make technical corrections or correct typographical errors to the filed documents.

EXHIBIT A:

CAPTION (10 words): Levy Renewal to Maintain Teachers and Classroom Support Staff

QUESTION (20 words): 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 (175 words): Portland Public Schools's current local option levy was approved by voters in 2019 to provide funding for schools over five years. If renewed, the levy will provide an estimated \$111.3 million in the first year and is projected to fund approximately [760] teachers and classroom support staff each year over five years.

If renewed, the 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 can 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 and prevent significant class size increases across the district.

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

Funds will be placed in a sub-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 \$111.3 million in 2025-2026; \$112.6 million in 2026-2027; \$113.8 million in 2027-2028; \$115.1 million in 2028-2029; and \$116.4 million in 2029-30. The cost for a home with an assessed value of \$275,706, the current average in the PPS district, would be \$45.72 per month. The estimated tax cost for this measure is an ESTIMATE ONLY based on the best information available from the county assessor at the time of estimate and may reflect the impact of early payment discounts, compression, and the collection rate.

**EXHIBIT B:
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT (500 words)**

Portland Public Schools currently serves over 42,000 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 lower class sizes. At the same time, PPS has advocated for a greater level of state investment by the Legislature and worked to ensure that all 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 \$111.3 million for Portland Public Schools in school year 2025-2026. The proposed levy renewal:

Funds teachers at every school in the District

- The levy is projected to fund approximately [760] teachers—nearly one-quarter of all teaching positions in the district—and classroom support staff each year over five years.
- 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.

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 an sub-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