

PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Measure 26-207

Referred to the People by the City Council

BALLOT TITLE

Levy Renewal to Maintain Teaching Positions and Classroom Supports

Question: Shall district maintain teaching positions, classroom supports; renew levy of \$1.99 per \$1,000 assessed value for five years beginning 2020? This measure renews current local option taxes.

Summary: Portland Public Schools' current local option levy was approved by voters in 2014 to provide funding for schools over 5 years. The renewed levy will provide an estimated \$99.9 million in the first year. Over the past five years, the levy has funded an average of 825 teaching positions each year and, if approved, the renewed levy is projected to maintain that average over the next five years.

This renewed local option levy would continue to fund teaching positions to:

- Support a well-rounded education, including career and technical programs and enrichments and electives for all students.
- Help maintain class sizes
- Provide supports, such as reading specialists, for struggling students.

Levy cost remains \$1.99 per \$1,000 assessed property value, the same as the 2014 levy.

Funds will be placed in a sub-account, and independent citizen oversight will review expenditures to verify that funds are used as approved by voters. No levy funds will be spent for administration. Performance auditing of school district programs also will be done.

The levy will produce an estimated \$99.9 million in 2020-2021; \$103.9 million in 2021-2022; \$108.1 million in 2022-2023; \$112.4 million in 2023-2024; and \$111.9 million in 2024-2025. 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.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Portland Public Schools currently serves over 49,000 students in 81 schools and other programs throughout the neighborhoods of Portland.

For the ninth straight year, PPS' 4-year graduation rates increased in 2017-2018. The graduation rate of 79.6% remains above the statewide average and has risen more than 17 points since 2010.

In serving the students of Portland, the district continuously strives to be fiscally responsible with taxpayer resources. Through many years of budget cuts, the school district and Board have worked to preserve classroom education. 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 used for educational services for students. In

December 2018, independent auditors gave PPS a clean bill of financial health. The district will receive regular performance audits to monitor effective use of taxpayer resources.

The legislature has recently increased its investment in K-12 education, but more investments are needed to continue to build career and technical programs, maintain class size and better support struggling students. In the meantime, funds raised by this local option levy will help to close the funding gap.

If renewed, the levy is estimated to produce \$99.9 million for Portland Public Schools in school year 2020-2021. The proposed levy renewal would:

Fund teaching positions and classroom supports 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 and disciplines for high school students.
- The funds help support career and technical programs and STEM programs, including computer science education, so students can graduate with the skills necessary to be career or college ready.
- Over the past five years, the levy funded an average of 825 teaching positions annually. If approved, that average will be maintained.
- Academic support for struggling students is included.

Continue to provide fiscal accountability and independent oversight

- This renewal maintains the existing local option levy rate of \$1.99 per \$1,000 assessed value and ensures that all funds raised are directed to the voter-approved purpose of supporting schools.
- This local option requires independent citizen oversight so that tax dollars are used only for purposes approved by local voters.
- Funds will be placed in a sub-account to ensure their correct use and accurate reporting.
- No funds from this local option levy will be used for district administration.

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

- For a home with an average assessed value of \$233,925, the cost would be less than \$39 per month, or \$465 per year.

This local option levy replaces the one passed by voters in 2014, and maintains the existing tax rate.

Submitted by
Amy Kohnstamm
Board Chair, Portland Public Schools

NO ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION TO THIS MEASURE WERE FILED.