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A Publication of Mount Vernon Schools



IN THIS ISSUE

WINTER 2017 NEWSLETTER

Featured Alumni

You will find our alumni working in every field imaginable, changing the world around us every day. Take a look at what our alumni are doing today and where they started.

Featured Articles

- *Answers to your 2017 Levy Questions*
- *Your Levy Dollars at Work*
- *School Board Appreciation Month*
- *Thank you to our 2016-17 Calendar Sponsors!*

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Answers to your 2017 Levy Questions



The February 14 Special Election will include two propositions related to funding for Mount Vernon Schools – a Replacement Educational Programs and Operations (EPO) Levy and a Replacement Technology Levy. If approved, both propositions will replace our current levies, passed by voters in February 2014, which expire on December 31, 2017. These propositions must be approved by the voters this school year to ensure continued funding.

School levies have been an important part of funding for public K-12 schools in our state for many years. Yet our District and School Board want to ensure voters know how levies work and what these funds provide. Information in the following pages is intended to answer some of the most frequently asked questions.

Continued on inside »

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FEATURED ALUMNI

Our alumni are working to change the world around us.

MVHS grad brought his "A" game home to his school and community...

For Mount Vernon High School alum Bill McCutchin, athletics played not only a major role in his academic years, but in his long-term career. It's no surprise then, that he chose to serve as a teacher and coach at MVHS for more than three decades, or to retire in the Mount Vernon community he so clearly loves.

McCutchin graduated from MVHS in 1953 and credits physical education teacher and coach Paul Reiman for sparking his interest in PE education and coaching. "My memories of MVHS are good and positive," McCutchin says. "Coach Reiman and all my teachers underlined the need to work hard, set goals and maintain a positive outlook on whatever I chose to do."

McCutchin went on to earn a BA degree and teaching certificate from then Western Washington State College in Bellingham. After graduation he began what would be a 32-year career as a teacher and coach at MVHS, helping student athletes to be the best that they could be.

"I loved going to work every day," says McCutchin. "Working with young people, helping them improve and learn skills that would shape their lives can be challenging, but it is truly rewarding."

Now retired, McCutchin enjoys reading and being involved in church activities and in the Marine Corps League. He's proud that as a coach and teacher, he was able to give back to his school and his community, and he is grateful to have done just what he wanted to do in his life.

"...I loved going to work every day. Working with young people, helping them improve and learn skills that would shape their lives can be challenging, but it is truly rewarding."

— Bill McCutchin



Bill McCutchin and all his family are MVSD alumni and Bulldogs!

Foreground: Bill and Marie McCutchin Back row: daughter Vicki Semrau and sons Scott & Mike McCutchin

ANSWERS TO YOUR 2017 LEVY QUESTIONS

Mount Vernon School District

Q&A

What is the purpose of school levies and how are they collected?

School districts receive funding through levy propositions, which are approved by voters and based on local property valuations that are determined by the County Assessor. Property owners pay a set amount for each \$1,000 of their assessed property value. Once approved, levy amounts cannot be increased. The amount per \$1,000 may increase or decrease, however, when community property values change. State law limits the amount of funding a district may request.

What is the duration of the proposed levies?

Both the EPO and Technology Levies will remain in effect for two calendar years, beginning in 2018. This represents a change from the district's current three-year levies. The School Board has chosen to limit the replacement levies to two years due to continued uncertainties around state funding for schools.

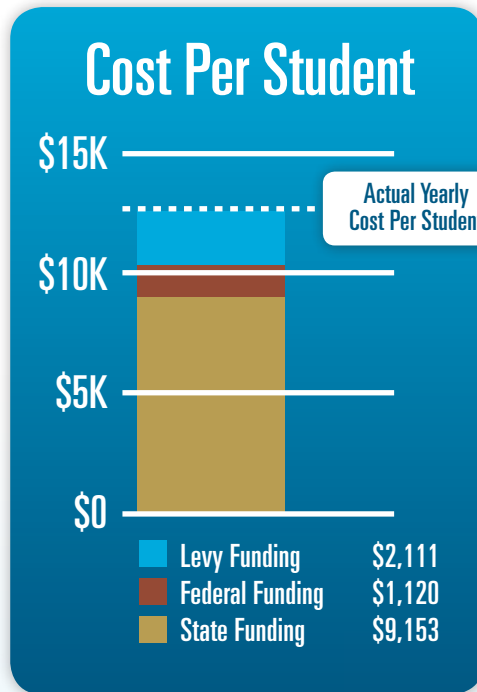
What is the purpose of the Replacement Technology Levy?

Funds provided by this replacement levy will be used to:

- Provide students with greater access to technology in the classroom by adding mobile technology labs.
- Replace and repair aging equipment.
- Upgrade software licenses.
- Fund support staff to maintain the District's equipment and network, and to provide training for teachers in using technology to increase student learning.

What portion of the District's budget does the Educational Programs and Operations (EPO) Levy provide and what do these dollars fund?

The District's EPO levy provides approximately 17% of our total operating revenues. As shown below, the funds are used to bridge the gap between the state and federal dollars the District receives and the cost of educating our students.



These dollars provide support for:

- Teachers, instructional assistants, bus drivers, custodians, secretaries, nurses, counselors, security staff, and administrators.
- Programs for students with disabilities and other special needs.
- Programs for highly capable students.
- Art, music, and athletic programs.
- Upkeep of facilities and grounds.

Funding provided through the 2018-19 replacement EPO levy will also be prioritized to:

- Purchase updated teaching materials, particularly in K-5 Science and Reading.
- Provide supports for students experiencing the effects of childhood trauma.

What if the February 14 levies fail to win voter approval?

By law, school districts are allowed two opportunities in a given school year to seek voter approval for school levies. If our replacement levies are not approved in February, the District would have one more opportunity to seek voter approval next spring. If the levies fail a second time, the District would be forced to make significant program reductions for the next several years.

Can senior or disabled citizens receive a tax exemption?

Yes. If you are 61 years of age or older or legally disabled, you could be eligible for an exemption from all or part of the property tax. Contact the Skagit County Auditor's Office at (360)416-1780 for more information.



What if I don't receive my ballot?

Ballots are expected to be mailed on or around January 24, 2017. If your ballot does not arrive within one week of this date, please call or visit the Skagit County Auditor's Office at (360) 336-9305 for a replacement. Ballots must be returned by February 14, 2017.

Are the February 14 levies new taxes?

No. The EPO and the Technology Replacement Levies are not new taxes. They are replacements of expiring levies approved by voters in February 2014.

Reducing the amount of the Technology Replacement Levy by \$174,135 in both years, we estimate that the rate per \$1,000 for taxpayers will not increase over current values.



How do the costs of the February levies compare to the levies they are replacing?



The charts below show how both levies compare to those they are replacing:

Replacement EPO Levy

YEAR	AMOUNT	CHANGE FROM PRIOR YEAR	ESTIMATED TAX RATE PER \$1,000
2018	\$15,078,402	\$505,590*	\$4.19
2019	\$15,417,716	\$339,314*	\$4.20

**Additional funds will be used to:*

- Purchase updated teaching materials, particularly in K-5 Science and Reading.
- Provide supports for students experiencing the effects of childhood trauma.

Replacement Technology Levy

YEAR	AMOUNT	CHANGE FROM PRIOR YEAR	ESTIMATED TAX RATE PER \$1,000
2018	\$1,887,305	-\$174,135	\$.52
2019	\$1,887,305	\$0	\$.51



The estimated impact on taxpayers of both replacement levies combined is shown below:

Both Levies Combined

YEAR	ASSESSED HOME VALUE*	EST. COST OF PROGRAMS & OPERATIONS LEVY	EST. COST OF TECHNOLOGY LEVY	EST. TOTAL COST	EST. CHANGE IN COST FROM PRIOR YEAR
2018	\$230,000	\$964	\$120	\$1,084	\$0
2019	\$230,000	\$967	\$117	\$1,084	\$0

**The 2016 average assessed home value for a single family residence in Mount Vernon was \$230,000 according to the Skagit County Assessor's Office.*

Your Levy Dollars at Work

In our fall edition, we highlighted the new middle school English Language Arts curriculum materials purchased with our current Educational Programs & Operations (EPO) dollars.

Current EPO funds were also pledged to add five non-student days to the school calendar to allow for professional development and planning for teachers and other certified specialists. Extending the school year to add these days has provided much needed time for professional learning, without using substitutes to release teachers from their classrooms.

During the two non-student days that have occurred this fall:

- Elementary classroom teachers and instructional specialists received training in the Benchmark Assessment System – a tool designed to identify students’ strengths and needs in reading.
- Teachers in both middle schools have collaborated to identify essential teaching standards and develop common assessments.
- A number of High School department and grade level teams have been meeting to discuss strategies, plan units, and develop common assessments.
- Special education teachers and specialists, music teachers, physical education teachers, library media teachers, and school counselors have collaborated on a variety of topics related to instruction and assessment in their areas.

Here's what teachers are saying about these days:

“...I find these non-student days valuable because we can develop our profession through workshops and training. We also collaborate to effectively plan engaging and rigorous lessons for our students.”

- Ashleigh Moe, 4th grade

“...Teaching is a complex endeavor, requiring careful preparation, planning, and time to reflect on “how it’s all going.” All of this takes time to do well. These five days give us chance to work on planning/learning when we are fresh and focused (i.e. not tired from teaching all day, or anxious about being away from our students and wondering how the sub is doing).”

- Kelly Joy, 4th grade



Thank you to **MV Public Schools Foundation** for donating \$1,000 to the MVSD Mariachi Band for band uniforms!

78 parents graduated from a 6 week MVSD Parent Academy, equipped with new skills to help their students be more successful!

School Board Appreciation Month

Proclaimed as School Board Appreciation Month by Governor Inslee, January is a time when we formally thank our five elected Directors.



LuAnne Burkhart



Rob Coffey



Tony Cook



Olivia DeLeon



Larry Otos



School Boards are at the heart of public school governance in Washington and across the country.

Responsible for an organization employing close to 1,000 staff and serving over 6,400 students, the Mount Vernon School District Board promotes student learning by establishing a vision and mission and annual work plan. They set clear standards for accountability, establish policy, and set and provide oversight for a budget totaling over \$88 million. They donate their time, which includes many hours attending Board meetings, work-study sessions, committee meetings, school events, and fielding questions and concerns from community members.

While school board directors from across the state deserve our respect for their commitment to the education of our children and youth, our local schools have benefited from a uniquely collaborative and dedicated team that continues to devote their time, attention, and efforts on those things that relate most directly to teaching and student learning. Their leadership continues to help us, as a District, become more focused.

Please join us in thanking the Mount Vernon School Board!



Thank you to our 2016-17 Calendar Sponsors!

The 2016-17 MVSD Calendar serves as an important guide to events, schedules, programs, and contact information for parents, families, and other community members. Again this year, photographs are provided by students in Mount Vernon High School's Audio and Video Technology program, under the supervision of teacher, Tim Hornbacher. Our thanks to this year's calendar sponsors for their support of this publication:

- Skagit Regional Clinics
- Mount Vernon Education Association
- City of Mount Vernon, Mount Vernon, Create a Great Life
- Halgren Orthodontics
- Skagit Pediatrics
- Williams and Nulle
- Public School Employees 1, General Teamsters Union Local 231
- MVSD Board of Directors
- BECU
- Skagit Valley College

MVSD Calendar and Student Guide can be found online at mountvernonschools.org. If you would like a printed copy, please contact the District Office at 360-428-6110.