

Important operations levy election February 14, 2012

Richland School District Voter's Pamphlet

A new reality for this year's levy election....

Legislature shifting funding to local taxpayers

Dear Community Member,

The Richland School District asks you to renew our operations levy every two years. However, there is a new reality this election cycle. The state legislature has reduced District funding by \$9.2 million over the last two years. Only by wisely managing resources has the District been able to weather the storm of the state's economic woes. And, unfortunately, those woes are expected to continue.

What it means is this.....your support of the local operations levy is more important than ever before. The state legislature is shifting the burden of education funding to local taxpayers.

Be assured that we are being as efficient as possible. Keeping money in the classroom is our top priority. We have reduced the numbers of school and central office administrators. We have refinanced bonds at lower interest rates. We continue to actively explore reducing energy, travel and insurance costs. The good news is we have not had to cut any programs. On the other hand, we have had to reduce teaching staff so class sizes are larger. This negatively impacts student learning.

What is best for students remains the focus of Richland School District decision making, but it is a challenge during these economic times. A \$9.2 million reduction is significant. There is no way to sugar coat this new reality of state funding. That is why we are asking for a slight increase in the operations levy.

This pamphlet provides information about levy costs, what the replacement levy pays for and why it is needed. Thank you for taking the time to study the facts presented here. If you want more information, please call the superintendent at 967-6001, or contact your school board members (www.rsd.edu).

You can expect your mail-in ballot to arrive around January 25, 2012.

Sincerely,

Richard Jansons
President, Richland School Board

Jim Busey
Superintendent, Richland School District

The operations levy is not a new tax. It will replace the current levy which expires at the end of 2012.

On the February 14 election ballot, the Richland School Board is submitting a two-year operations levy to voters....\$19.76 million for 2013 and \$20.94 million for 2014.

If the levy is approved, the District will receive an additional \$4.1 million in state levy equalization money in 2013 and \$4.1 million in 2014 (assuming that the state legislature continues funding of this program).

Levy amounts and tax rates

	Current <u>2012</u>	Proposed <u>2013</u>	Proposed <u>2014</u>
Levy Amount	\$18.35 million	\$19.76 million	\$20.94 million
Tax Rate*	\$3.09	\$3.14	\$3.14

* Estimated rate per \$1,000 of assessed valuation

- ◆ The levy amounts are increasing by 7.7% in 2013 and 5.9% in 2014.
- ◆ The estimated tax rate would increase 5 cents per \$1000 in 2013.
- ◆ Yearly property taxes would increase \$5 on a \$100,000 home.

The Richland School District cannot continue to absorb state funding cuts by taking money out of its cash reserve account.

What does the replacement levy pay for?

Art, music and physical education programs

Athletics and activities

Painting buildings

Repairing roofs and fixing HVAC units

Technology improvements

Security personnel to assure student safety

Updated instructional materials

Bus transportation

Utilities expenses

Staff training workshops

Personal and sick leave cash out

Teacher preparation and planning pay

The state has never fully funded these programs and now.....the new reality.....the state is reducing funding.

The burden of funding Richland School District programs is shifting to local taxpayers.

2009-10 school year - **15% of District funding** came from local levy taxes.

2010-11 school year - **17% of District funding** came from local levy taxes.

If the state economy continues to struggle, this trend will likely continue.

Quality instruction continues despite cuts

Despite state funding cuts, the Richland School District remains focused on quality instruction and improved student learning. District staff are doing their best to protect students from the state cuts that could impact their ability to learn. We are trying to do more with less and have made thoughtful choices to put as much money as we can into the classroom.

Have a question? You can contact us at 967-6030 or info@rsd.edu

Answers to February 14 levy questions

Q. Why does the Richland School District need an operations levy?

A. The levy allows the District to continue basic educational programs and services which are not fully funded by the state. Levy money makes up 17 percent of the District's operating budget.

Q. Didn't we pass the levy two years ago?

A. Yes. The current levy expires at the end of 2012. Every two years, we ask voters to renew the levy.

Q. How is levy money used?

A. Levy money is used to fund basic programs including bus transportation, textbooks, technology, library materials, athletics/activities and utilities expenses.

Q. What is levy equalization money?

A. If the levy is approved, the district will receive an additional \$4.1million in state levy equalization money in 2013 and \$4.1 million in 2014 (assuming that the state legislature continues funding of this program). The state provides this money to school districts which have relatively low property values so students in less affluent or smaller districts receive a comparable education to students in wealthier districts.

Q. Will some levy money go toward maintenance?

A. Yes. Levy money supports both corrective maintenance to replace broken equipment as well as the preventive maintenance program to better protect your investment in our facilities.

Q. As the total assessed valuation of all property in the Richland School District goes up, does the District collect more money?

A. No. The District can only collect the fixed amount of money approved by the voters - \$19.76 million in 2013 and \$20.94 million in 2014. As total assessed valuation goes up, the District's tax rate goes down.

Q. Are there levy exemptions for senior citizens and disabled persons?

A. Yes. Disabled persons and senior citizens (61 years of age and older) with household incomes of \$35,000 or less may qualify for an exemption from levies. Call the county assessor at 736-3088 if you have questions or want more information.

Learn more about the Richland School District at www.rsd.edu

Richland School District Levy Tax Rates			
Residence value	Current* 2012 levy \$3.09 per \$1,000	Estimated 2013 levy \$3.14 per \$1,000	Estimated 2014 levy \$3.14 per \$1,000
\$100,000	\$309.00	\$314.00	\$314.00
\$150,000	\$463.50	\$471.00	\$471.00
\$200,000	\$618.00	\$628.00	\$628.00
\$250,000	\$772.50	\$785.00	\$785.00
\$300,000	\$927.00	\$942.00	\$942.00

*Estimate

Levy Voter's Pamphlet is published by the Richland School District as a community service to citizens of the area. Levy questions can be directed to 967-6030.

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