

Dear Residents of the Issaquah School District,

Thank you for taking time to read this mailing and become informed about the Issaquah School District's upcoming renewal levies on the February, 2018 ballot. Residents who have lived in the District for some time may notice that this election year, our Educational Programs and Operations Levy, referred to in the past as a "M&O Levy" is a two-year levy. Traditionally, the District has run its Educational Programs and Operations or EP&O Levies as four-year issues. I would like to take a moment to provide some background and our rationale for the change this year.

The most significant change to the way basic education is funded in the history our state was signed into law by the legislature on June 30, 2017. You may hear this law referred to in the media or by others as House Bill 2242 or "The McCleary fix." While we believe our District will see definite benefits from this new funding model, as with any change of this magnitude, there is uncertainty about some parts of the law. Specifically, the law in its current form still does not fully fund Special Education and there are questions to be answered regarding inequities in districts across the state, salary allocations, and the amount of authority districts have with their local levies. These may be addressed in the upcoming legislative session, but without clarity on these issues now, we are unable to accurately forecast how much we will need to ask local voters to pay for to maintain and grow our programs and operations over a four-year period.

That said, we are confident about the amount we need to collect locally in the next two years, or through 2020. For this reason, we are running our EP&O levy for only two years on this ballot issue. This means that, if the two-year EP&O levy on the February 2018 ballot is approved, taxpayers will be asked to vote to replace it again in February of 2020. Please note that we are also running a one-year School Bus Levy to replace and maintain buses and a four-year Critical Repairs and Technology Levy. You may not realize this, but even with the new state funding model, we receive only a portion of the funding we need from the State to adequately provide transportation and technology.

However, we do expect an increase in State funding of about \$30 Million beginning in 2018. This is great news for our District! For nearly 30 years, the Issaquah School District has been one of the least state-funded districts in Washington. We are grateful that we have always had the support of our voters in approving local levies so that we could offer the high quality education our community expects and deserves. The increase in State funding gives us an opportunity now to plan for and implement new programs that our parent community has been demanding. These include a Dual Language Program, increased mental health and guidance counselors, an expanded Early Learning Program, and a high school schedule that provides more opportunities for our students. The increase in state funding is due to an expected increase in state school taxes of approximately \$0.96 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Because we are receiving more money from the state, we are able to ask for less local money and decrease local school taxes by \$0.69 per thousand of assessed property value in 2019 and \$0.49 per thousand \$1,000 in 2020.

Remember that about 15% of our total operating budget still needs to be paid for with local levy dollars! The State does not pay for athletics or extracurricular activities and provides only a portion of our

operating budget for bus drivers, substitute teachers, professional development for teachers, paraeducators, school nurses, counselors, and many more supports vital to our mission. Ballots are arriving in mailboxes at the end of January and the last day to mail in or drop off your ballot is February 13. Please remember that each of the issues on the ballot are meant to replace levies expiring December 31, 2018 that allow us to continue serving the ISD community with our high-performing, safe, and efficient schools. I encourage you to read the enclosed materials and, for more details, to visit the District website at www.issaquah.wednet.edu.