



MEAD MATTERS

Volume 19 No.2
February 2009

Town Hall Forum Announced

The Mead School District and the Mead Citizens Advisory Planning Committee invite you to join them for a community forum to learn more about the spring Maintenance and Operations Replacement Levy.

Wednesday, February 18th at 7:00 p.m.
Mountainside Middle School,
4717 E. Day-Mt. Spokane Rd., Colbert

Mead Maintenance and Operations Levy Funds Support

- Smaller class size
- Expanded student transportation
- On-going maintenance of all buildings and facilities
- Funding for over 1600 extra-curricular programs
- Expanded college readiness programs
- After-hours facility access for youth and adults
- Instructional materials

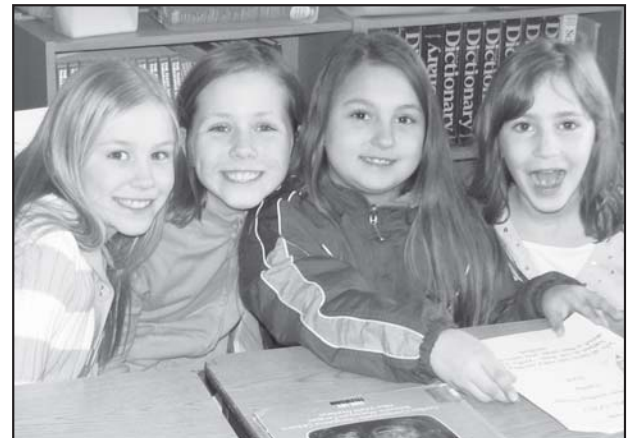
Board plans M & O Levy Election

On March 10, 2009, District patrons will be asked to vote on the Mead School District Maintenance and Operations Levy. The Maintenance and Operations Levy is a critical part of funding for the District. The money raised through the Levy goes toward paying for, among other things, class size reductions, advanced placement courses, and extra-curricular activities throughout the District.

This issue of Mead Matters contains information regarding the Levy and the impact it has on the District. In addition, a community forum will be presented at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 18th at Mountainside Middle School. I encourage you to attend this forum. If you have any questions, more information is available on the District website, and you may always contact the District office directly.

The projected levy rate for the upcoming M & O election is \$2.88 or less per \$1000. That is 66 cents less per \$1000 than the approved rate for the last levy. As a result, this levy does not represent a new tax, but is a replacement levy at a reduced rate.

The Mead School District has been extremely fortunate to have a long history of support for its M&O Levies, which has helped enable the District to offer a rich diversity of programs and opportunities to all of our students. This support has been greatly appreciated. Please take the time to review the information presented here, and remember to vote on March 10, 2009. Thank you for your continued interest in the Mead School District.



Ron Farley, School Board President

Mead Matters

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Detailed information on the Maintenance and Operations Replacement Levy is available inside this issue and online at: www.mead354.org. Please remember to vote!

Maintenance and Operations Levy Facts

Background Information

- The Mead School District will ask the Mead community to vote on a 3-year Maintenance and Operations Levy.
- This is a replacement levy. This is not a new tax.
- The proposed election date is March 10, 2009.
- This is a vote-by-mail election.
- Ballots will be distributed on or about February 18, 2009.
- Passage will require 50% plus one vote. This is a simple majority vote.

The estimated tax rate will be at, or below, \$2.88 per \$1000 of assessed valuation.

There are three types of resource requests that Washington school districts can ask of local taxpayers: Maintenance and Operations Levies, Capital Levies, and Bonds.

A **Maintenance and Operations Levy** is a local property tax, authorized by voters, to be used to operate educational programs for students and maintain facilities. This type of levy is a *replacement levy* because it replaces the previous levy, by voter approval, every three years. M&O Levies can pass with a simple majority approval (50% plus 1). M&O Levies pay for extended learning programs, additional staffing, facilities maintenance, and extra-curricular activities.

A **Capital Levy** is a mix between M&O Levies and Bonds and can only be spent on *things*, not people or learning programs. School districts typically use this request to address capital needs that fall short of larger construction needs funded by bonds. This could be for such things as carpeting, roof replacements, upgrades to athletic fields, or replacing equipment originally purchased when the building was new. When people speak of tech levies, they are speaking of a capital levy for computers, technology infrastructure, digital projectors, software products, etc.

Voter approved **Bonds** provide funding to pay for the construction or modernization of buildings and facilities. The district sells bonds and pays interest for them. Bonds can pay for things like facility improvement or construction. Bonds cannot be used to operate schools or pay for student programs. A Bond election must be passed by a super-majority vote (a 60% approval). They act like a home mortgage and are generally carried for 10 to 20 years. Prairie View Elementary and Mountainside Middle School were constructed using bond funding.

Voters are being asked to consider only a Maintenance & Operations Levy in this election.



Preliminary, Estimated Levy Amounts being Requested

Year	Net Levy Amount (Local Monies Collected)	Levy Equalization (From State LEA Fund)	Total
2010	\$14,800,000	\$2,295,583	\$17,095,583
2011	\$15,400,000	\$2,805,731	\$18,205,731
2012	\$16,300,000	\$2,890,370	\$19,190,370

The **Net Levy Amount** refers to the amount of tax dollars the district collects from the Mead community. To this amount, the State of Washington adds **Levy Equalization** dollars, up to 25% of the net levy amount, for a total amount available to the school district.

Estimated tax rate for this levy will be at, or below, the rate of \$2.88 per \$1000. This is down from the tax rate of \$3.54 per \$1000 for the levy passed in 2006. Tax rates and amounts listed in the table above are estimates based on current state funding formulas that are subject to change pending the passage of the Washington State budget. For more detailed tax information, visit the Mead School District website at www.mead354.org.

With M&O Levy support we can:

- Keep class sizes smaller through increased staffing
- Expand Advanced Placement coursework
- Provide curriculum materials
- Offer extra-curricular activities: athletics, debate, drama, music, and student clubs
- Provide staff specialists in PE, music and social work
- Maintain above state average WASL scores
- Expand student transportation services.
- Provide college readiness programs and elective courses offering college credits
- Provide on-going maintenance of all Mead schools and facilities
- Provide facility access for community youth and adult programs, meetings, athletics, and adult educational classes
- Maintain fields and playgrounds

Asking Matters: Questions you've asked about the M & O Levy

Q. What is on the March 10th 2009 ballot?

School Proposition One is a replacement school program Maintenance and Operations Levy that replaces an expiring levy approved in March 2006. **It is not a new tax.**

Q. When will the election take place for the Maintenance and Operations Levy proposition?

The election date is March 10th, 2009. Ballots should be in the hands of voters around February 18th.

Q. Why does the school district believe they need this levy? Doesn't the State of Washington fund public education?

The state provides what they call the *Basic Education Allotment*. This consists of the state money plus some federal dollars. School districts are allowed to secure additional revenue from a local Maintenance and Operations Levy up to 20% of their total revenue. Very few school districts in our state operate without this local levy support.

Q. Is this a new property tax?

Absolutely not! If approved, it will be strictly a renewal of the existing levy. In fact, while the maximum dollar amount is expected to increase, it is anticipated that the levy rate per \$1,000 will stay the same or drop due to new properties on the tax role and increased property value adjustments.

Q. Might we pay less or more than what is approved by the voters?

The levy amount is based on an estimation formula using a number of factors such as future state revenue amounts, enrollment, property assessments, etc. If the estimates are higher than what actually occurs, the school district is required to roll back the levy to the correct amount. The district cannot collect more than the amounts stated on the ballot. In fact, in each of the last three years, taxpayers paid less

for the levy approved on the ballot because of rollbacks. If the district underestimates the needed levy amount, it still cannot exceed the amount approved by the voters.

Q. Do local taxpayers have to pay the full M&O levy? Doesn't the state help out?

Mead School District does qualify for a state contribution toward the local levy. This is called Local Effort Assistance (LEA). The state's contribution of up to \$3,237,452 (under the current state budget) only occurs if the voters pass the levy.

Preliminary budget proposals indicate state funding cuts for schools this year. The state budget will not be finalized until spring.

Q. Will home value increases also increase the school district tax collection?

Rising property values do not increase taxes for schools. The amount of taxes collected by the district does not change after they are set in place, regardless of changes in the district's assessed value.

Q. What percentage of voters does it take to pass each levy?

It takes a simple majority of the total number of ballots cast, or 50% plus one vote to pass.

Q. How does this levy compare with the existing M&O levy?

In March 2006 the citizens of Mead School District approved a three year M & O levy. At the time of the election the following rates were estimated:

Year	Rate		Amount	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
2007	3.54	2.94	11,800,000	11,316,107
2008	3.54	2.65	12,700,000	11,928,992
2009	3.54	2.73*	13,600,000	12,929,126

*Estimates were based on historical patterns of assessed value and new construction growth. Actual tax rates were lower than anticipated due to unprecedented increases in property values and additions of new construction. * Based on preliminary information received from the county, the 2009 estimated rate is listed as 2.73.*

Tax Exemptions Information for Seniors

If you are a senior citizen or a disabled person, you may be tax exempt if you meet certain income, residence, age, and/or physical disability requirements.

For information about eligibility or to apply for exemption, please contact the Spokane County Assessor's Office, County Courthouse, 1116 W. Broadway, or call 477-5754.

Voting Information

This election will be VOTE BY MAIL ONLY. Ballots will be mailed to registered voters about February 18, 2009.

You may register to vote in the March 10, 2009 levy election by mailing in the voter registration form that must be postmarked no later than February 7, 2009, or you may register to vote in person at the Spokane County Elections Department, 1033 W. Gardner Avenue, **no later than February 23.**

You may obtain voter registration forms at your neighborhood school, library, or fire station, at the Spokane County Elections Office (477-2320), or online at www.spokanecounty.org/elections.

Around the District

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Directors
Denny Denholm
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Bob Olson

Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Thomas Rockefeller

Mead School District Guiding Principles

As the Mead Community we are:

Focusing on students and their learning

Creating democratic structures for participation

Increasing the connections between parents, business, community and our schools

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Questions or Comments?
Questions, comments or news to share? Write to us at: Mead Matters, c/o 12828 N. Newport Highway, Mead, WA 99021 or e-mail us at: MeadMatters@mead.k12.wa.us

The Mead District would like to thank the Maintenance, Custodial and Transportation employees for their outstanding efforts during the December-January snowfall. We also thank the airmen and soldiers from the Washington State National Guard units headquartered at Camp Murray for their help in clearing the roofs of several of our schools.



Fourth Annual eye4art Coming in February

Nearly 40 local professional artists, led by Harold Balazs, Ned Fox, Patty Osebold, Darrell Sullens, Carla Hoch, and Marti Bennett, will join Mead School District student artists in February for an art exhibit and auction benefiting the Mead Education Foundation.

eye4art, is the centerpiece of the MEF's community outreach and fundraising efforts. **This year's event is February 21, 2009, 2-6p.m. at Mead High School.** In addition to the exhibit and auction, artwork by both professional and student artists will be available for purchase. The event includes appetizers provided by *Just A Couple of Mom's* catering and music from student orchestras, jazz bands and choirs.

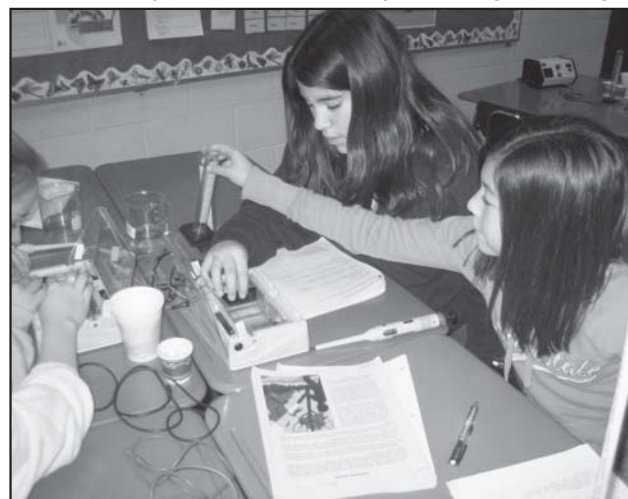
Proceeds from admissions, as well as a portion of the artists' sales, will provide funding for innovative classroom programs. All teachers, staff, and students of the Mead School District are eligible for this funding, which is distributed through grants twice a year. Since 2004, nearly \$42,000 has been awarded. Because the MEF has virtually no overhead, money raised goes right back to the schools.

Tickets to the event are \$10 a person or \$25 a family, with all proceeds directly benefiting the Mead Education Foundation. For more information about eye4art, to purchase tickets, or to volunteer for the event, call (509) 465-6032. Tickets are available at the door.

The MEF, online at www.meadeducationfoundation.org, is a non-profit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. All donations to the fund are tax-deductible.

Seventh Graders Fingerprinting D.N.A.

Not many people know exactly what fingerprinting D.N.A. is, but ask 7th graders at Northwood Middle School



and they'll tell you all about D.N.A. electrophoresis, the scientific term for fingerprinting. Students spent two weeks learning how to move molecules around based on their charge and their size in order to identify their fingerprints. In order to accomplish this laboratory, students had to first learn about atoms, ions, electrical currents, PH scales, and chemical reactions.

Any good scientist would require the appropriate equipment to accomplish this task. Equipment, valued at \$20,000, was loaned to the Northwood science teachers by Washington State University's Howard Hughes Loan Equipment Library. Science teacher Dave Gamon has been coordinating this exchange for eleven years and receives donated D.N.A. from the New England Bio Labs. Fellow teachers Renee Demand, Pat Round, and Katherine Keener spent two weeks learning the lab from Gamon before teaching it in their own labs.

It's Time to Register

Mead Public School Kindergarten And
New Elementary Student Registration
2009-2010



Mead's dedicated teaching staff is committed to making your child's first year of school educational and enjoyable. Learning experiences have been designed to ensure that our kindergarten students have a strong foundation in literacy development.

It's easy to register. Just visit your neighborhood Mead Elementary School and provide the following information:

- A copy of your child's birth certificate (children must be 5 years old by August 31st, 2009)
- A copy of your child's immunization records.
- Proof of residence in the Mead School District (District Residency Affidavit) Including:
Current Mortgage Statement or Lease Agreement
Current Utility Bill
One other bill sent to your current address (3 pieces in all)

For questions regarding proof of residency call: 465-6008

Registration Hours: 8:00 am to 3:30 pm

Child Care

Day care programs are available for kindergarten students before and after school at some buildings during the school year. Call the YMCA (838-3577) or your neighborhood school for specific details.

Seventh graders Christina Sanchez and Madeline Leslie at work on electrophoresis project