

ANSWERS TO YOUR 2019 LEVY QUESTIONS

Mount Vernon School District



What is the purpose of a Supplemental Educational Programs & Operations (EPO) Levy?

A supplemental EPO Levy is intended to increase the amount of the EPO Levy most recently passed by voters. Voters in Mount Vernon passed a replacement EPO Levy in February 2019. This measure goes into effect in January 2020 when it replaces the District's 2017-2019 levy. If approved, the Supplemental EPO Levy would supplement the funds provided by the EPO Levy, for calendar years 2020 and 2021.

Why is the District requesting a supplement the EPO Levy?

The District's replacement EPO Levy passed in February 2019 was calculated based on a levy cap of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. This cap was approved by the State Legislature in their 2018 session in response to the McCleary lawsuit.

The \$1.50 levy cap reduced the Mount Vernon School District's allowable levy by 66% or approximately \$9.0 million. While the state did provide some additional funding, these funds did not begin to make up for the amount lost in EPO levy funding. As a result, the District was forced to reduce our educational programs by several million dollars for the 2019-20 budget. This included cuts to teaching, support staff, and administrative positions, curriculum improvement efforts, and before and after-school supports for students.

In the 2019 Legislative Session, the Legislature raised the EPO Levy cap from \$1.50 to \$2.50 per \$1,000. The District's Supplemental EPO request is intended to provide the difference between what voters approved in February 2019 and the new EPO state cap of \$2.50. The

additional funds would be used to restore some of the most important programs and services that were reduced, helping lower class size, supplying teachers and students with updated curriculum materials, and providing after school programs for students in need of enrichment and tutoring.

How will the Supplemental EPO Levy impact current property taxes?

Taxpayers in the Mount Vernon School District are currently paying \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for the current EPO Levy. Together, with the voter-approved Levy from February 2019, the Supplemental EPO Levy would add \$.79 per \$1,000 in calendar year 2020 and \$0.54 per \$1,000 in calendar year 2021, bringing the total EPO Levy to \$2.50 per \$1,000.

For a home assessed by the County at \$300,000, the increase would be \$237 per year in 2020, or \$19.75 per month. The cost for that same home, assessed in 2021 at \$300,000, would be \$162 or \$13.50 per month.

While the EPO tax rate will increase for 2020 and 2021 with the Supplemental Levy, it's important to note that it will still remain \$1.43 lower than the 2018 EPO rate, when property owners paid \$3.93 per \$1,000.



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Continued



The District and State collect other property taxes beyond the EPO. How will this supplemental levy impact the combined tax rate?

In addition to our EPO Levy, the District collects funds from local taxpayers through our Technology & Security Levy and our construction bond approved by voters in 2016. The State also collects a property tax for schools.

In 2018, before Legislation passed in response to the McCleary lawsuit, the total combined tax rate for schools in Mount Vernon was \$8.70 per \$1,000. The legislature's reduction of the EPO rate to \$1.50 combined with increases in assessed property values has resulted in a combined rate of \$6.28 per \$1,000 for 2019.

With the Supplemental EPO Levy, the combined rate is estimated to increase to \$7.67 in 2020 and 7.54 in 2021. This is approximately \$1.00 per \$1,000 higher than the current rate, but \$1.00 per \$1,000 lower than the combined rate in 2018.

Calendar Year	Estimated Rate per \$1000	Cost for a Home Assessed at \$300,000
2020	\$0.79	\$237
2021	\$0.54	\$162

While the combined estimated tax rate will go up with the Supplemental Levy in 2020 and 2021, it will remain below the combined rate in 2018.

What is the date for the election?

The District's Supplemental EPO Levy will be on the November 5 General Election ballot.

When will ballots be mailed?

Domestic ballots are scheduled to be mailed on October 16, 2019.

Can senior citizens or individuals with a disability receive an 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 Assessor's Office at (360) 416-1780 for more information.

For more information, please call Executive Director of Finance, Jennifer Larson or Superintendent Carl Bruner at 360-428-6110.

LEVY	2018	2019	2020	2021
State Tax for Schools	\$2.04	\$2.45	\$2.45	\$2.45
2016 Construction Bond	\$2.24	\$1.89	\$1.66	\$1.58
Technology & Security Levy	\$0.49	\$0.44	\$1.06	\$1.01
EPO Levy	\$3.93	\$1.50	\$1.71	\$1.96
Supplemental Levy	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.79	\$0.54
TOTAL	\$8.70	\$6.28	\$7.67	\$7.54