

Parkrose School District Measure 26-229

Ballot Title:

Five-Year Operating Levy for Parkrose School District

Question:

Shall District retain teachers, classroom assistants by levying one dollar per one thousand dollars assessed value for five years beginning 2023? This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than three percent.

Financial Impact:

This measure would impose a levy rate of \$1.00 per \$1000 of assessed value for five years beginning July 1, 2023. For a home assessed at \$250,000, the cost would be \$250 per year. According to the measure summary, the measure would raise approximately \$2,600,000 in 2023-24, \$2,700,000 in 2024-25, \$2,700,000 in 2025-26, \$2,800,000 in 2026-27, and \$2,900,000 in 2027-28,

Note: assessed value (AV) is the value used to calculate your property tax. It is shown on your property tax statement. It is NOT the same as real market value (RMV), which is the market price of your home.

Probable Results of a Yes Vote:

A “Yes” vote would allow the District to raise over \$2,500,000 annually to fund teaching and instructional assistant positions. This amount would compensate in part for a projected shortfall of \$3.2 million in 2023-24.

Probable Results of a No Vote:

The District would not be able to fund teaching positions at the current level due to the projected shortfall.

Background:

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) school district report card from 2018-19 notes that the Parkrose School District provides instruction and support for approximately 3,000 students in NE Portland. It consists of a high school, a middle school and four elementary schools. ODE noted that 79 percent of students were on free or reduced-price lunch and that within the District, 41 languages are spoken. According to the ODE, on-time graduation was 79 percent. Staff includes 153 teachers, 53 educational assistants, 8 counselors and 4 psychologists. According to the superintendent, student and family needs are high in the community, which has also been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

The District projects a budget shortfall of \$3.2 million in 2023-24, primarily due to enrollment decline and increased costs. Past budget shortfalls (more than \$1.8 million in 2018 and \$1.3 million in 2021-22) have already resulted in staff reductions. Federal Emergency Relief Funds have helped to minimize cuts. However, this additional funding will last only through the 2023-24 school year. The measure summary notes that the projected 2023-24 shortfall would equal the loss of 26 teachers or 18 days of school.

Summary of Measure:

If approved, the measure would fund approximately 22 positions: 60 percent or about 13 teachers and 40 percent or nine educational assistants. Goals include

- Maintaining or decreasing class sizes in the elementary schools, and reducing class sizes in the 6th through 12th grades
- Specialists that would provide career-oriented electives to middle and high school students
- Educational assistants in kindergarten
- Access to physical education in the elementary schools, a State mandate

Supporters Say:

- 100 percent of the funds generated by the levy will be used for classroom instruction.
- Annual reports to voters would ensure accountability.
- According to the Parkrose Faculty Association, “We are one of the most diverse, high need student populations in the state. . . . This is a chance to build our district and ensure our kids have the education they deserve at the local level.”

There is no organized opposition to this measure.