

2024 GENERAL ELECTION Parkrose School District Tax Levy

Measure 26-254: Parkrose School District levy

OFFICIAL TITLE: Parkrose School District Levy to Maintain Teachers and Classroom Support

QUESTION: Shall district maintain teachers, classroom support; by requesting levy of \$1.25 per \$1,000 assessed value for five years beginning 2025? This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than three percent.

REFERRAL: This measure is a tax levy referred to voters by the Parkrose School District.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: The levy will raise an estimated \$3.6 million in 2025-2026; \$3.7 million in 2026-2027; \$3.8 million in 2027-2028; \$3.9 million in 2028-2029; and \$4.1 million in 2029-30. The local option levy will be for a period of five years. For a home at the current average assessed value of \$250,000, the levy cost is \$26.04 per month, or \$312.50 per year.

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

The estimated tax cost for this measure is an ESTIMATE ONLY based on the best information available from the county assessor at the time of estimate and may reflect the impact of early payment discounts, compression and the collection rate.

No funds from this local option levy will be used for district administration. Funds will be kept in a separate account/fund with independent community oversight to verify that funds are only used as approved by voters.

PROBABLE RESULT OF A “YES” VOTE: If this measure passes, the levy will produce an estimated \$3.6 million for Parkrose School District beginning in the school year 2025-2026.

PROBABLE RESULT OF A “NO” VOTE: If this measure fails, Parkrose School District will not be able to fund existing teaching positions at the current level.

BACKGROUND: Capital bonds can only be used to purchase property, while a levy helps pay for operations and maintenance.

In 2022, the District placed a measure similar to Measure 26-254 on the November

ballot (Measure 26-229). Measure 26-229 was defeated at the November 2022 election, 48-52%.

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) school district profile from 2022-23 notes that the Parkrose School District provides instruction and support for approximately 2,770 students in NE Portland. It consists of a high school, a middle school, and four elementary schools. ODE reported that 88 percent of students were on free or reduced-price lunch and that 44 languages are spoken within the District. According to the ODE, staff includes 153 teachers, 40 educational assistants, 8 counselors and 2 psychologists. According to the superintendent, student and family needs are high in the community, which was disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

Past budget shortfalls have already resulted in staff reductions, even though Federal Emergency Relief Funds have helped to minimize cuts.

The District Superintendent reported in 2024 that the District “will approach a budget cliff in the FY 25-26 school year if we do not see a more robust state school fund and the addition of a local option tax levy. We will not have \$2 million dollars to use from our ending fund balances in General Fund and Thompson fund. This one-time money will only keep us afloat for one school year. In FY 25-26 we will be required to make significant budget cuts to balance our budget.” He also reported that, “Our school district receives \$10,463 per student, but our total expenses per student are about \$15,000 a year.”

PROPOSAL: Parkrose School District is asking for a local option levy that will bring in an estimated \$3.6 million in the first year and is projected to fund approximately 28 teachers and classroom support staff annually over five years.

This local option levy would:

- Fund teachers at every school in the District. It would save and fund approximately 28 teaching and classroom support positions annually over five years—nearly 15% of all teaching positions in the District.
- Support a well-rounded education for Parkrose children, including career and technical programs and enrichments and electives, so students graduate with college and career ready skills.
- Provide classroom supports, such as educational assistants and reading specialists for students struggling with academic or emotional behavioral health issues.
- Support career, technical, science, technology, engineering, and math programs, including computer science education so students can graduate with the skills necessary to be career or college ready.
- Help maintain class sizes and prevent significant increases across the District.

SUPPORTERS SAY:

- This levy is a chance for our community to balance some of the serious inequities in how the state funds our district by placing our money directly into our community.
- The Parkrose School District has strong financial accounting practices in place to ensure levy funds are used responsibly and funds go directly into the classroom.
- This local option levy requires independent community oversight that will ensure tax dollars are used only for purposes approved by local voters.

OPPONENTS SAY:

- Declining district enrollment over the last eleven years does not justify a tax increase.
- The District should come back later with a smaller sized tax increase we can afford.
- Taxes should not be increased when graduation requirements have been reduced.