

Special



CAMAS
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Levy Edition

2013

Marching band is one of the many extra-curricular activities which levy dollars help fund.



Local Levies Make the Difference to Our Success

The Camas School Board has approved a resolution asking for a four-year Maintenance and Operations Levy and a four-year Technology Levy to replace the current levies which will expire at the end of 2013. Ballots for the February 12 levies will be mailed to voters' homes on January 24. *Look inside for detailed information about these funding measures...*

*Replacement levy
election to fund
educational and
technology programs
February 12, 2013*



Levy funds support the Camas High School tennis team, which is celebrating after winning the Regionals.



Ceramics class is supported by the M & O Levy.

{ MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT }

Community support creates great schools



Dear Patrons,

It is hard to believe we are ringing in a New Year, and the school year is close to half over. I hope you all had an enjoyable holiday and were able to spend time with friends and family. It was great for my wife and me to have all three of our daughters home at the same time. Now that we are empty-nesters, it does not happen very often.

As we embark on a New Year, I strongly believe 2013 will be another year of high student achievement and accomplishment in which all of us in the Camas School District can take pride. Enrollment continues to grow, student academic achievement ranks among the top, and our athletic and extra-curricular programs continues to demonstrate excellence. If you peel back the layers to determine why the Camas School District is so successful, you will discover three main reasons:

- » A highly trained, knowledgeable, and professional staff;
- » Students who are motivated with a desire to learn and pursue their dreams; and
- » Parents who are involved and a supportive community that expects nothing less than excellence from their schools.

In the Camas School District, we are committed to providing a quality education to each and every student. The school board is committed to continuing the “Tradition of Caring and Quality” that has been part of the Camas culture for decades. In February, we have two important ballot measures which, if approved, will allow us to continue to provide the same high-quality education our students now enjoy. The measures include a replacement maintenance and operations levy as well as a replacement technology levy. The Camas School Board and staff, with input from patrons, researched and studied the needs of our students while taking into consideration an economy that is still not fully recovered. The result is a request to replace the expiring levies with four-year levies which will provide the same outstanding academic as well as extra-curricular programs that our community expects and our students deserve. Because we have remained fiscally conservative and have refinanced existing bonds, the actual overall local school tax will be less than our patrons currently pay

if the levies are approved. This publication should answer, in detail, the questions you may have about the replacement levies. I urge you to read the materials, visit our schools, or call to ask us any additional questions you may have.

Even though the past several years have been financially difficult, we have not lost sight of our most important challenge—to provide a quality and academically demanding education for our students. There is a rich tradition of supporting education in Camas, and it will only continue with

Because we have remained fiscally conservative and have refinanced existing bonds, the actual overall local school tax will be less than our patrons currently pay if the levies are approved.

your assistance. Camas is a great place to live and raise a family; and our schools are a great place to build the future. Thank you for your support of Camas Schools.

Sincerely,

Mike Nerland,
SUPERINTENDENT

Levy Q & A



{ THE MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS LEVY }

What is a Maintenance and Operations (M & O) Levy?

A maintenance and operations (M & O) levy provides local funding support for educational programs and services.

Why is the Camas School District proposing a levy?

The state provides most but not all of the total dollars necessary to maintain basic education. The federal government provides additional funding. Local levy dollars make up the shortfall (approximately 20 percent of the district's budget).

Is this a new levy?

No. This levy replaces the current levy which expires in 2013. The Camas School District has had an M & O levy in place for more than forty years.

Why is the district asking for a replacement levy now?

Voters must reauthorize the levy for each year of funding. Voters approved the current levy in 2010 for three years. The replacement levy on the February 12, 2013, ballot will continue programs and services for four more years: 2014 through 2017.

Why is the district asking for a four-year levy?

Multiple-year levies help with planning and save election costs.

What is the total amount of the M & O levy proposal?

The district is requesting authorization of \$11.45 million for 2014, \$11.8 million for 2015, \$12.2 million for 2016, and \$12.75 million for 2017.

How do M & O levy funds benefit students?

- » **SMALLER CLASS SIZES**—additional staffing to help maintain low class size
- » **TEXTBOOKS AND CURRICULUM MATERIALS**—math, science, English, and history textbooks, including novels, materials for reading and writing instruction, and supplemental teaching materials for all subjects
- » **STUDENT SAFETY**—including our school resource officer, security systems and cameras, security personnel/supervision, safety fencing, drug and alcohol intervention programs and anti-bullying programs
- » **GROUNDS, MAINTENANCE AND UTILITIES**—costs for maintenance and custodial services, grounds, heating and lighting our buildings and fields, insurance and transportation
- » **ALL EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**—including athletics, band, choir, dramatic productions, and academic teams such as Knowledge Bowl, Science Olympiad, and FIRST Robotics
- » **SPECIAL EDUCATION**—adaptive equipment for children with special needs, staff including teachers, paraprofessionals and counselors, textbooks, supplies and materials needed for special services programs
- » **STUDENT HEALTH**—all nurses, health room paraprofessionals, health screenings, and student health plans for medically fragile children
- » **ACCELERATED PROGRAMS**—training for advanced placement courses, world language classes, Science Olympiad programs for grades 3-12, FIRST Robotics program, Math, Science and Technology Magnet program, elementary highly capable programs and middle school Honors/Pre-AP programs
- » **TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT**—all personnel to support information technology used throughout the district
- » **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**—all workshops, seminars, and any related special training for our staff
- » **SCHOOL LIBRARIES**—library staff, library books, curriculum and reference materials

Will Camas School District receive levy equalization funds from the state?

The district receives levy equalization funds from the state, but only if the local levy is approved by voters. For the 2012-2013 fiscal year, the district will receive approximately \$1.2 million in equalization funds from the state. With passage of the replacement levy, the district can expect equalization funds to continue. Our school district qualifies for equalization funds because our assessed value of property is lower than the tax base of wealthier districts.

What are the anticipated tax rates for the M & O levy?

Voters approve tax amounts for school levies, not tax rates. Tax rates (per \$1,000 of assessed property value) are more difficult to predict than in the past. Assessed values of many homes have gone down. As the assessed property value goes down, the rate per \$1,000 increases. Estimated replacement M & O levy rates are \$3.41 (per \$1,000 assessed property value) for 2014, \$3.48 for 2015, \$3.53 for 2016, and \$3.61 for 2017. Tax rates could go down as property values go back up or as more people move to the area and share costs.

How does the Camas M & O levy rate compare with other school districts?

Thanks to the strong industrial tax base in Camas, district tax payers enjoy the third lowest tax rates in the region. The chart below illustrates actual 2012 M & O rates.

SCHOOL DISTRICT	CURRENT 2012 RATES
Battle Ground	\$3.86
Camas	\$3.10
Evergreen	\$3.84
Green Mountain	\$3.72
Hockinson	\$3.91
La Center	\$3.41
Ridgefield	\$2.16
Vancouver	\$3.45
Washougal	\$2.79

How are technology funds spent?

Technology will continue to be purchased and upgraded for schools throughout the district. Tech levy funds pay for hardware, software, licensing and infrastructure, and other tools as designated to be age-appropriate and enhance the district's curriculum and learning goals. Specifically, the technology levy funds:

- » **MOBILE COMPUTING SOLUTIONS FOR STUDENTS**—laptop computers, tablets, and handheld devices
- » **ONLINE LEARNING SPACE**—student access to calendars, assignments, and digital resources for learning
- » **STANDARD CLASSROOM EQUIPMENT**—expansion and upgrade of interactive white boards, projectors, document cameras, and amplification systems
- » **STUDENT PC UPGRADE**—computer labs for state and district assessments, and for student projects
- » **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**—training for teachers to blend and integrate technology into teaching and learning
- » **INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT**—network systems, hardware and software, and technical assistance

How long will the technology levy be in place?

If approved, the technology levy will provide funds to the district for four years—2014 through 2017.

What is the total amount of the technology levy?

The technology levy will generate: \$1,289,739 in 2014; \$1,299,739 in 2015; \$1,329,739 in 2016; and \$1,349,739 in 2017. Funds from this levy can be used only for purchasing and supporting the use of technology in the district.

What are the projected rates of the technology levy?

Tax rates can vary due to changes in property tax assessments. The estimated rate is \$0.38 per \$1,000 of assessed property value each year for the four years of the technology levy.

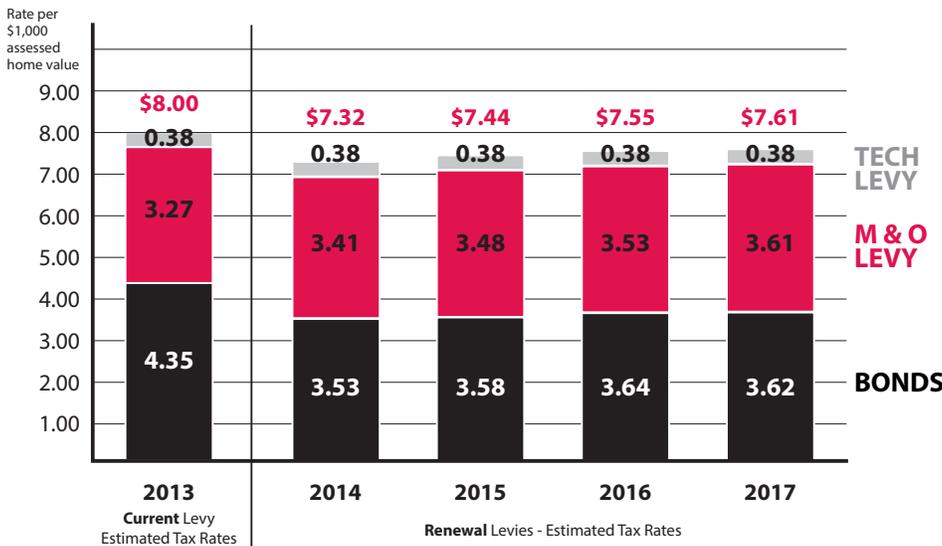


Theatre students bring humor, sadness, and gravitas to CHS with their production of Catch 22.

The M & O Levy funds the Grass Valley Elementary student choir.

{ TOTAL TAXES }

How much do Camas patrons pay for all local school taxes?



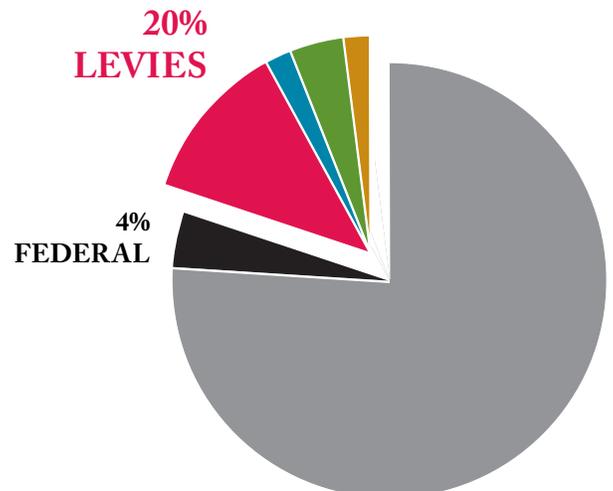
Camas has experienced decades of growth and housing development. Thanks to the support of local voters, the district passed several bond issues during those decades. In 2014, voters will experience a significant bond rate decrease due to repayment of some bonds. Additionally, some bonds have been refinanced at lower interest rates in order to save taxpayers money.

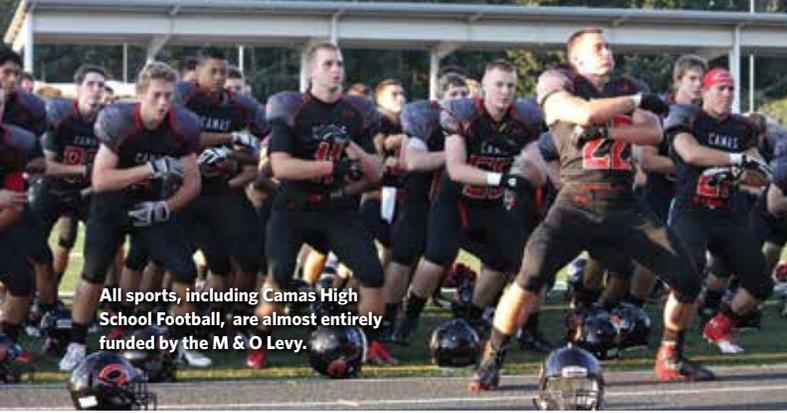
If both the M & O and technology levies are approved, taxpayers will still see an overall decrease in their tax rates compared to the current 2013 rates.

What do the Levies pay for?

Levies bridge the gap between what the state and federal governments pay and the actual costs of operating our schools.

- » **60% - Teaching and Support Staffing Costs (including 21% for Special Education)** - Additional teachers, counselors, media specialists, and special education staffing including teachers, para-educators, and specialists. Funds also provide additional nursing and safety services at schools.
- » **10% Extra Curricular Activities**
- » **18% Utilities, Insurance, Maintenance & Operations**
- » **11% Transportation to and from School**





All sports, including Camas High School Football, are almost entirely funded by the M & O Levy.

{ THE ELECTION }

What percentage of “yes” votes is required for levy approval?

A 50 percent majority of “yes” votes is required to approve both the replacement maintenance and operations (M & O) levy and the technology levy.

How will this election be conducted?

This is an all mail-in election. Ballots will be mailed to registered voters by January 23. Persons who reside in Clark County but who will be out of town between January 23 and February 12 may call the elections office to have a ballot mailed to an alternate address.

How can I cast my ballot?

Ballots may be returned by mail to the Clark County Elections Office. They must be postmarked by February 12. First-class postage is required. Remember to sign your ballot.

Ballots also may be dropped off at the Elections Office (1408 Franklin Street, Vancouver) or at the Elections Drop Box (center of 14th Street, between Franklin and Esther streets) between January 23 and February 12. On Election Day only, ballots may be dropped off at these schools: Camas High School, Dorothy Fox Elementary, Helen Baller Elementary, and Prune Hill Elementary.

Who is eligible to vote on these school levies?

Registered voters residing within the boundaries of Camas School District may vote on the district’s February 12 replacement maintenance and operations (M & O) levy and technology levy.

To become a registered voter for this election you must:

- » Be a United States citizen
- » Be a resident of Clark County
- » Be 18 years of age by the day of the election
- » Have full civil rights

How do I register to vote?

Register online at www.co.clark.wa.us/elections/voting/register.html. To register online, you must have a valid Washington State driver’s license or a state identification card. Voter registration forms also are available at the Clark County Elections Department, 1408 Franklin, Vancouver, and at school offices.

You may register to vote in Clark County up to 29 days prior to the election date if you are a voter currently registered in the state of Washington. Registration forms may be submitted by mail, online or in person. If you are not registered to vote anywhere in the state of Washington, you may submit your registration form in person at the Elections Department up to eight days before the election date. For more information, contact the Elections Department at 360-397-2345.

{ SOURCES OF LEVY INFORMATION }

What does the school district provide?

A school district can, and must, provide information about proposed levies to the citizens of the community. The school district puts levy information on the district website and mails a levy brochure to all community residents.

Who promotes passage of the levies?

The Camas Citizens’ for Quality Schools, a community group that stays informed about Camas School District and endorses and promotes levies. For information or to become a member, go to <http://www.facebook.com/VoteCamasSchools> or contact Bob Engel at votecamasschools@comcast.net.

Where can I get more information about the levies?

Go to the Camas School District website at www.camas.wednet.edu. Community members also are welcome to contact the district’s communication office at 360-833-5563, the Superintendent’s office at 360-833-5512, a school board member, or their local school principal.



Liberty Middle School teacher helps students learn with tablets.

Did You Know?

Technology levies help fund classroom technology advancements for our students. In every classroom across the district, students of all ages are using technology to learn reading, writing, math, social studies, and science.

Innovation in the Classroom with Technology

Thanks to local funding for technology, the Camas School District is not being left behind in the digital age. Camas students are using technology to make learning more accessible and pertinent. A priority for the district is to assure students and teachers can access technology anywhere in the school with Wi-Fi on portable devices. Teachers are eager to learn new technologies, and have integrated computers with their lessons.

Everywhere in the district, students are using computers, iPads, and other technologies as an integral part of their education. These and other classroom learning opportunities would not be possible without funding from the Technology Levy.



Prune Hill Elementary Teacher Librarian Sherry Loniewski puts a high-tech spin on the traditional book report using iPods.

What's the difference between a levy and a bond?

The difference between a bond and a levy is that “Bonds are for Buildings” and “Levies are for Learning.” Levy dollars can only be allocated to programs that directly affect student success and achievement in the classroom. In this case, the M & O Levy and Technology Levy allow Camas School District to provide programs and services to our children that could not otherwise be funded. Levies need 50% support to pass and bonds require a 60% passage rate. Bonds are used for construction projects that address facility deficiencies throughout the district. In 2007, Camas passed a bond measure for new school construction.

Postal Customer

Camas School District Mission Statement:

We teach academic and behavioral excellence by demonstrating high quality performance.

Did You Know?

The following programs are not covered by the state under the definition of basic education. Even though the State Supreme Court recently ruled the state is not meeting its constitutional obligation to fund K-12 basic education, local funding will still be necessary to fund non-basic education programs such as:

- » Sports
- » Extra-curriculum programs
- » Advanced placement courses
- » Smaller class sizes
- » Transportation (partially funded)
- » Student safety
- » Supplies and other non-employee costs



A graduate receives a hug at Hayes Freedom High School's graduation ceremony.

Camas Noted for Great Schools

LOCAL SUPPORT HELPS STUDENTS THRIVE

Camas School District has a long history of providing a quality education unparalleled in many parts of the country. Recent test scores show Camas students scored well above the average on all state tests. 82.9% of third graders passed in reading while 82.7% of all Camas third graders passed state tests in math. The average scores for the state were 68.8% and 65.35% for reading and math, respectively.

Impressively, 100% of all middle school students who took the End-of-Course (EOC) assessment in algebra passed.

At the high school level, Camas' focus on math has paid off with 91.2% of 10th graders passing the geometry exam and 85.4% passing the algebra exam, compared with the state average of 71.6% in geometry and 64.3% in algebra.