

November 19, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: School Board sends levy proposals to voters to maintain high quality education on Mercer Island.

The Mercer Island School Board approved three levy renewal propositions to come before voters on February 9, 2010 at their regular meeting on November 18, 2009. These include: the General Fund Levy, Capital Projects Levy and the Transportation Vehicle Levy. These three propositions will allow the Mercer Island students to maintain the high quality programs parents expect in light of diminished State funding.

The four-year General Fund levy pays for 23.6% of all educational and support programs in the district. This support provides 88 teachers and support staff across the district. The current levy expires at the end of 2010. The levy pays to lower student-to-teacher ratios K-12 beyond what the state funds, the seven-period day at the high school, enhanced special education programs, programs for English-language learners, most of the athletic and sports programs, as well as transportation, custodial services and maintenance of buildings

The six-year Capital Projects levy is a replacement levy needed to renovate and maintain our buildings and other facilities across Mercer Island such as: the expansion of the band room at the Mercer Island High School; facilities for special education programs; improved safety and security systems; new track surfaces; and technology to improve the learning environment. The current levy expires at the end of 2012, but the district needs two additional years to attend to emergent needs including: additional learning spaces to teach a growing student population over the next six years; expanded and improved student play areas; replacement of worn-out heating systems, roofs and carpets; and increased energy efficiency in all of the buildings.

The Transportation Vehicle levy is a one-year, replacement levy in the amount of \$500,000. This levy allows the district to replace school buses at the end of their serviceable life and buy additional buses to transport students to and from school.

The total additional cost to taxpayers for the three levies is \$460 for the owner of a house assessed at \$1,000,000.