

San Juan Island School District *Education Programs and Operations Levy*
Frequently Asked Questions
Election: February 10, 2026

When is the election? Didn't we just pass a levy in 2024? The Special Election for the public-school district's Educational Programs and Operations (EP&O) Levy will be held on February 10, 2026. Yes, we did just pass a levy in 2024, the Capital and Technology Levy. It was passed with 70.15% and supports the district capital projects and technology purchases. The EP&O Levy and the Capital/Technology Levy are each 4-year levies and are alternated for public approval every two years.

Is this a new tax? This is NOT a new tax. This levy replaces the current public school local operations levy and is essential for the continuation of our programs. This levy accounts for 17.25% of the district's annual revenues. Additionally, the mill rate, the amount collected per \$1,000 of property value, that is being requested this time is lower than the mill rate that was approved by voters in 2022.

What is the Education Programs and Operations (EP&O) Levy? This is the local funding for the day-to-day operations of the school district, from lights and plumbing to classroom supplies and augmented educational programs. It pays for materials, supplies, operational costs and unfunded student service costs such as instructional aides. Everything except for the bulk of teacher salaries, which are paid through the state.

What exactly does this levy pay for? The state and federal government do not pay for the full cost of public education to prepare students to be career and college-ready. More specifically, the EP&O Levy pays for:

- ✓ **Costs associated with non-mandatory but ESSENTIAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS:**
 - Reasonable class sizes and Instructional time beyond the basic state formula
 - STEM and an enriched elementary science program
 - Art, Music, and Drama programs
 - The superior *Food for Thought* food service program
- ✓ **Costs associated with the MAINTENANCE of school facilities:**

- Partial payment of lights, water, sewer, heat, power
- Upkeep of classrooms, buildings, and grounds
- Cleaning and ventilation supplies related to the health, well-being, and safety of students
- ✓ **Costs associated with the operation of the school district as a whole:**
 - Clerical staff for the support of teachers in the classroom
 - Student transportation beyond the state-funded amount
 - Health and counseling services district-wide

Why are levies needed? Local school levies are needed to strengthen the state's support for basic education. Although the state provides support for public schools, the support does not cover all costs.

Will this levy pay for class size reduction? Yes, the district makes every effort to provide small class sizes for the advantage of both the students and their teachers, district-wide. Class size is a function of many factors that include the number of students in a cohort group, scheduling logistics and facility constraints. If this levy passes, the schools will continue to have the financial resources to organize classrooms based on educational needs instead of cost-saving measures.

Where does the Island Rec district levy fit into all of this? The school district's athletic program is supported through the San Juan Island Park and Recreation Junior Taxing District (Island Rec) as a part of their tax base. We are very grateful for Island Rec's support! Without the Island Rec Levy, our high school athletic program costs would have to come out of the EP&O levy amount and the athletic program would possibly be in jeopardy.

What about the San Juan County Mental Health tax that goes for schools? Money is collected through San Juan County's sales tax and is then made available through a grant process for supporting the mental health needs of students county-wide. The San Juan Island School District utilizes this funding in support of student counseling, the elementary Primary Intervention Program (PIP), social/emotional support and intervention, and some professional development within our Special Services department.

Will the levy pay for new school buses? No, new buses are paid through a separate state funded

Transportation Vehicle Fund.

Do donors like the San Juan Public Schools Foundation pay for public schools? The San Juan Island School District is grateful for the support of the San Juan Public Schools Foundation. SJPSF provides supplies and materials for classroom experiences that would otherwise go unfunded. The district would like to thank the community for their support of this organization.

How much will this measure cost me? The State determines the allowable levy amount each year based on student enrollment. In order to collect the state-authorized levy amount, voters must approve the “Levy Authority.” **The levy request is the amount needed to maintain existing programs and services for the next four years.**

This levy will set the maximum that could be collected. Each December, the District “rolls back” any levy authority that is not collectable after reconciling actual enrollment. This levy includes a potential for 2% growth in enrollment. In the next four years, if enrollment increases, levy amounts for funding increases must have been approved by the voters in the current levy.

Therefore, understanding that the district “rolls back” any funding that does not meet required eligibility, we ask authority for the following potential scenario:

For a \$500,000 home, annual taxes could be up to a maximum of \$244.93 for 2027, \$249.11 for 2028, \$245.41 for 2029, and \$241.14 for 2030.

What percentage is required for passage? This levy renewal requires 50% + 1, a simple majority.

Where can I learn more about the proposed measure? Please see our website at www.sjisd.wednet.edu, or call the school district office at (360) 378-4133