

# LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

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## Education Funding

A two-part documentary recently aired on Washington State Public Affairs TV Network on education funding in Washington state for Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. If you missed the broadcasts, you may view both parts on [www.twv.org](http://www.twv.org). Part I: "What's the Cost of Basic Education?" and Part II: "More Money or More Reform?"

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## Lake Washington School District Levies and Bonds

Although Washington State's Constitution defines education as the "paramount duty" of the state, school districts increasingly rely on local funding sources. About 16% of total statewide school funding comes from local taxes, primarily property taxes through maintenance and operations levies. A levy loss can be devastating to a school district.

### Levies and Bonds: What's the difference?

A **levy** is a request by a school district to raise or continue property taxes for a limited number of years for operations costs or capital improvements that fund essential education programs and activities such as textbooks, computers, tutoring programs and extra-curricular activities such as music and athletics.

A **bond** is a request by a school district to sell bonds to raise funds for capital expenses, such as constructing or renovating school buildings.

### LWSD Public Hearings

Lake Washington School District will hold six public meetings to gather input on replacement of the current educational programs and operations levy, capital projects levy and a new bond measure to prevent overcrowding. At these meetings, Superintendent Chip Kimball will review several options for each measure, what the cost would be for each option and what that money would pay for.

At each session, property owners will have the opportunity to fill out a form that would help them determine the cost in property taxes depending on the levy and/or bond options they select. All attendees will be able to submit input forms with their preference for levy and bond options.

Please see *Levies and Bonds* on page 4

## Citizens Levy Committee Needs You!

For the vote on February 9, 2010, the Lake Washington School District will probably have two levy measures and potentially one bond measure on the ballot. In order to have these measures passed, the Citizen's Levy Committee needs the assistance of Redmond Junior High Parents and Staff. The Maintenance and Operations Levy makes up over 18% of the LWSD general fund budget. These funds are critical to continuing staffing and programs in the District. Approval of this levy is a renewal of funding - not a new tax. A likely Technology/Capital Levy is also a renewal levy. These funds are used for technology equipment purchases and updates. The capital portion's funds are used to upgrade, repair, and replace facility items.

Volunteer callers will use a software program that provides them phone numbers and a script. The script used will ascertain if the voters are supportive or not of the levy measures. All answers are recorded on the computer. All answers are collected and



*Volunteer callers use a script to ascertain if voters are supportive or not of the levy measures.*

calling is monitored by a Levy Committee volunteer. Each volunteer caller will be asked to call 20 to 40 people (number depends on the number of volunteers per school). Calls are made from home, and **MUST BE MADE.**

The Levy Committee analyzes the data to identify enough "yes" voters to pass the measures. Levies require 50% plus one to pass. Bonds need 60% to pass.

In the past, the Levy Committee has had volunteers call the identified "yes" voters to remind them to vote. This year the Committee will use phone calling software to perform this task.

Contact Lisa Schildt for more information at [Lschildt@verizon.net](mailto:Lschildt@verizon.net)

## RJH Parent Volunteer Levy Coordinator

A Redmond Junior High parent levy coordinator is needed as soon as possible to oversee and coordinate levy activities at our school, in cooperation with teacher union representatives.

A training session will be provided on November 10, 2009, at 4:30 p.m. at the Lake Washington School District Resource Center

The coordinators role will include:

- Working with the RJH staff representative to find 30 volunteers from RJH. This is a mixture of parents and school staff.
- Attend training session for calling software
- Train RJH volunteers on the software
- Encourage volunteers to make their calls
- Work with the LWSD PTSA Levy Coordinator

Interested? Contact Lisa Schildt at [Lschildt@verizon.net](mailto:Lschildt@verizon.net)

## WA State PTA Platform Issues

During the 2009 Washington State PTA Legislative Assembly (October 2-3), WSPTA will develop the second year of its two-year legislative platform. All issues that were placed on the platform at the 2008 Legislative Assembly will remain on the platform for this year and will retain their rank order.

At the 2009 Legislative Assembly legislative advocacy representatives from state-wide PTA and PTSA units will address both the proposed

amendments to issues currently on the platform and new issues that will be voted on and ranked at the end of the current platform.

For more information on WSPTA platform issues and all aspects of Washington State PTSA Legislative Advocacy, see

[www.wastatepta.org/advocacy/index.html](http://www.wastatepta.org/advocacy/index.html)

## Washington State PTA Opposes Initiative 1033

During the August, 2009, meeting of the Board of Directors of the WSPTA, the Board voted unanimously to oppose Initiative 1033.

In a July 2009 memo from WSPTA Executive Director Bill Williams to the PTA's Board, Williams wrote: *I-1033, if adopted, could be problematic for the state as a whole and for K-12 education in particular.* He went on to conclude that the initiative *...would have significant detrimental impacts on state and local governments, and particularly in the area of education.*

Beginning in 2010, the initiative would freeze Washington's general fund budget at its current level, with annual adjustments based only on inflation and population growth. This means that the economic crisis-based 2009-2011 budget would become the baseline for future state budgets. This budget has already caused school districts to lay off teachers, increase class sizes, postpone building maintenance, reducing bus transportation, and canceling some music and athletic programs.

If I-1033 were to pass, state budgets would get tighter in the future.

Williams summarized points against I-1033 as follows:

- I-1033 attempts to limit expenditures by limiting revenue the state can keep
- The revenue limit is tied to the calendar year 2009 revenue, when state revenues have fallen and the Legislature has made significant cuts to education and other programs serving families and children.
- The initiative would have the effect of "locking in" the cuts made this year.
- For calendar year 2010, state expenditures would not exceed the 2009 revenues plus inflation and population growth:
- The Office of Financial Management has estimated that the initiative would result in a loss of \$5.2 billion dollars over the next three biennia (six years):  
[http://www.ofm.wa.gov/initiatives/i-1033\\_fiscal\\_impact.pdf](http://www.ofm.wa.gov/initiatives/i-1033_fiscal_impact.pdf).
- WSPTA helped lead the fight to implement the Basic Education Task Force report's recommendations, which would result in significantly increase spending on K-12 education. We want education spending to increase, not be reduced or even stay the same:

Please see *WSPRA Opposes I-1033* on page 4

*Levies and Bonds* from page 1

Meetings will be held:

Oct. 7 - 3:00-4:30 p.m., Redmond Junior High  
 Oct. 7 - 7:00-8:30 p.m., Eastlake High School  
**Oct. 8 - 7:00-8:30 p.m., Redmond High School**  
 Oct. 13 - 3:00-4:30 p.m., Kamiakin Jr. High  
 Oct. 13 -- 7:00-8:30 p.m., Juanita High School  
 Oct. 14 - 7:00-8:30 p.m., Lake Washington HS

“Many of our community members came out last spring to provide invaluable input as we looked at budget cuts,” noted Superintendent Chip Kimball. “I am looking to the community for the same kind of input to help us understand what the community wants with regard to technology in our schools, replacement of major systems in our facilities, and the kinds of basic programs paid for by our educational and operations levy.”

The district is also looking at a potential bond measure to address potential overcrowding in the next several years and beyond. Enrollment is up by 240 students district-wide at the elementary level this year. Projections indicate that the district will need space for approximately 1300 more students by 2014 and 2500 more students by 2019-20.

“With the need for more building space, we have an opportunity to look at the grade configuration in our schools,” Kimball said. “We have gotten very positive feedback to the proposal I raised last spring to move to a K-5, 6-8, 9-12 grade configuration. We have a choice now of adding space in the elementary schools to accommodate growth or to shift sixth grade and ninth grade up a level and build more space at the high schools to accommodate growth. Either way, we need to build or we will have too many students for our current buildings to hold.”

Community input will be collected at these meetings and through the district Web site. A community/staff advisory committee will analyze the information and develop a recommendation to the superintendent, who will make a proposal to the board of specific levy and bond items to place on the ballot for voting in February. The district’s board of directors must approve any bond or levy items to go to voters.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

The Lake Washington Citizens Levy Committee (LWCLC) website [www.vote4lwskids.org](http://www.vote4lwskids.org) will be online in early October. It will be a resource of data, links, volunteer, and support opportunities.

The Lake Washington Alliance for School Funding is a group of local volunteers from the community, businesses, PTA, LW Schools Foundation, LW School Board, LW school district administration, and LW school staff unions.

Contact: Byron Shutz at [bcshutz@comcast.net](mailto:bcshutz@comcast.net).

#### *WSPTA Opposes I-1033* from page 3

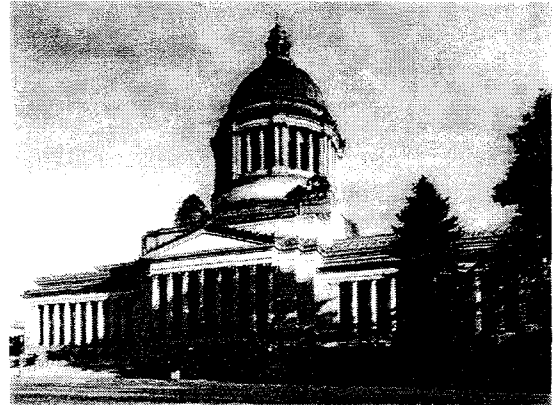
- For the current biennium, K-12 education was appropriated 42.9% of the state general fund; another 10.4% went to higher education; 28.5% went for social service programs for children, needy families and the elderly and disabled and another the 7.2 % for corrections and criminal justice, and 6.6% for debt service, and 2.7 % for the court system, the legislature and general government operations and 1.2% for natural resources, and the remaining .5% for other uses. Thus there’s little room to cut to allow for increases in expenditures for education or other programs.
- The annual adjustment for inflation used in the initiative is based on a national average, which doesn’t account for regional differences or differences in inflation in different economic sectors such as fuel costs and health care.
- The initiative allows Using growth in the general population doesn’t recognize the fact that different subsets of the population change at significantly different rates: for example,

Please see *WSPTA Opposes I-1033* on page 5.

*WSPTA Opposes I-1033* from page 4.

between the 2000 census and the 2008 population estimate published by the State Office of Financial Management, the overall population grew by 11.7%, while the population of those over 65 (who tend to rely more heavily on state support for medical and nursing home care) increased by 16.5%

- Allowing for an increase only by a vote of the people would hamper the ability of the state or local governments to respond to unanticipated disasters, such as an earthquake or a major epidemic



**MORE INFORMATION about I-1033 available from:**

**State agencies**

Office of Financial Management analysis of I-1033;:  
[http://www.ofm.wa.gov/initiatives/i-1033\\_fiscal\\_impact.pdf](http://www.ofm.wa.gov/initiatives/i-1033_fiscal_impact.pdf)

Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program Committee's information about the 2009-11 state budget:

<http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/budget/detail/2009/co0911p.asp>

Secretary of State's information about I-1033  
<http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/initiatives/people.aspx?y=2009> (scroll down to I-1033)

**Campaigns**

Vote No on 1033 campaign: <http://no1033.com/news/>

Vote Yes on 1033 campaign: <http://permanent-offense.org/>

**Municipal Research Services Center** (a non-profit research agency funded by cities and counties)

<http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/Finance/i1033.aspx>

**The Washington Budget and Policy Institute** (a private nonprofit)  
<http://schmudget.blogspot.com/2009/07/initiative-1033-experience-in-colorado.html>

**Newspaper opinion pieces**

[http://www.seattlepi.com/connelly/408001\\_joel10.html](http://www.seattlepi.com/connelly/408001_joel10.html)

<http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2009/jul/05/i-1033-bad-but-leaders-need-to-act-on-tax-reform/>

<p><i>We're on the Web!</i></p> <p>Visit us at:</p> <p><a href="http://www.rjhptsa.org">www.rjhptsa.org</a></p>
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## RJH PTSA Advocacy Resources – Fall 2009

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Learn** more about advocating for your local students' public education
- **Understand** how your advocacy has pervasive effects on our children's opportunities
- **Become more attentive** to all education funding issues
- **Speak up and speak out** – share your new knowledge with everyone
- **Take action** – be aware, ask questions, be active, participate in the solutions!

### Where To Advocate?

- your friends and peers
- your school and PTA groups
- your school board
- your district administration
- your unions
- your local govts and agencies
- WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS
  - House Representatives
  - Senator

### Steps To Take Now

- Become informed": Go to [www.wastatepta.org](http://www.wastatepta.org) - Click on "Legislation"
- Enroll at above site in PTA's Action Alerts: You'll receive PTA emails in the legislative session for requested action on an issue.
- Read at above site the PTA's Weekly "Grassroots Connection" weekly during legislative session, and the Bill Status

### Educate Others!

- The single greatest power of local advocacy is sharing your knowledge and urgency for managing change

### Lend Your Support

- Write or email your Leg. District Reps. & Sen.
- **Go to [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov)** - Click on "*Find Your Legislator*"
- Write letters to the editors at newspapers.
- *Vote! Vote! Vote! Vote! Vote!*
- **Support WSPTA**

## Web Links Resources

### Sources for data specific to your School District & Bldg.:

- Redmond Junior High School PTSA Advocacy webpage  
<http://rjhptsa.org/advocacy.aspx>
- Lake Washington School District – Budget 2009-10  
<http://www.lwsd.org/News/2009-2010-Budget/Pages/default.aspx>
- Lake Washington School District – Budget Overview:  
<http://www.lwsd.org/About/Budget-Info/Pages/default.aspx>
- LWSD - Vision 2020 for JHS and HS Teachers  
<http://www.lwsd.org/About/District-Admin/Superintendent-Message/Pages/default.aspx>
- WA OSPI: Home Page: [www.k12.wa.us/](http://www.k12.wa.us/)
- WA OSPI: Data & Reports:  
[www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/default.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/default.aspx)
- WA OSPI: District Report Cards:  
<http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/summary.aspx?schoolid=1&reportLevel=State&orgLinkId=1&yrs=>
- WA OSPI: Compare your District or School:  
<http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/SideBySide.aspx?schoollid=116&OrgTypeId=3&reportLevel=District&orgLinkId=116>

### Sources for understanding school funding:

- WA Legislature: *2007 Citizen's Guide to K-12 Finance*  
[www1.leg.wa.gov/documents/Senate/SCS/WM/SwmWebsite/Publications/2007/K12Guide2007.pdf](http://www1.leg.wa.gov/documents/Senate/SCS/WM/SwmWebsite/Publications/2007/K12Guide2007.pdf)
- Funding Washington Schools: resource to learn how & why  
<http://www.fundingwaschools.org>
- WA State Tax Overview:  
[http://dor.wa.gov/docs/reports/WA\\_Tax\\_System\\_11\\_17\\_2004.pdf](http://dor.wa.gov/docs/reports/WA_Tax_System_11_17_2004.pdf)
- WA State Tax Statistics:  
<http://dor.wa.gov/content/statistics/>
- WSPTA Legislation Web site –  
[www.wastatepta.org/legislation.htm](http://www.wastatepta.org/legislation.htm)

**Find & contact your government representatives:**

*RJH is in the 45th (+ 48th) Leg. District & 8th Congressional District*

King Co. Council member

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/council.aspx>

State Legislator

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder/>

WA Governor

<http://www.governor.wa.gov/>

Congressman

<http://www.house.gov/>

Senators

<http://www.senate.gov/>

US President

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/>

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**RJH's PTSA Advocacy Chair 2009-10**

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