Battle Ground School Levy Proposal – February 2017: 10 Facts

As you begin to consider whether to vote Yes or No on the Battle Ground School Levy there are some facts and information you may want to consider:

Fact #1: The "new" proposed levy is $136.54 million for the 4 years. This compares to the previous 4 year levy total of $103.3 million. Thus the new proposed levy would be **$33.24 million MORE** which is **~32.17% MORE** than the last levy!!!

Fact #2: The levy pays for "extras" beyond what the State pays for. Most of the money (~85-90%) is used to pay for extra personnel (including teachers and support staff). This number is ~150 EXTRA people that represent about 28% of the total positions (which is the largest in Southwest Washington State). These are at risk if the levy is not passed – not basic education.

Fact #3:There is no evidence or data that shows that the extra 150 personnel translate to improved graduation; better test scores or any other measure of performance. Nothing.

Fact #4: The increase needed to keep all of the extra ~150 personnel would need to be less than 3% increase per year. If a 3% increase per year was used the total 4 year levy would be $116.26 million vs the proposed $136.54 million. This means that the proposed levy is 117.44% LARGER than it needs to be. At 3% it is still 3x the average income increase of households in the school district.

Fact #5:61% of the households in the Battle Ground School District have NO children in them

Fact #6: Median household income in the district is $64,706 which has only increased 4% in the past 6 years which means income has increased by 2/3rds of 1% per year. Data suggests that in Clark County the average income increase in 2016 was ~2.3% which, after inflation (1.1%), yields a 1.2% gross income increase but after taxes appears to be 0.9%. So both analysis show almost no income gain. *Note: Social Security recipients have had no increase in 2 years while their Medicare fees have gone up (as has the cost of living). This proposed levy is a notable drain on seniors.*

Fact #7: National inflation is averaging 1.1% per year for the last 4 years. Based on Fact #5 the median household is losing ground so any increased levy costs will require them to not spend money elsewhere. Where will they cut expenses?

Fact #8: During the deliberations by the School Board they did not appear to weigh any of the information presented. They did not review economic projections. They presumed that the growth in property values would go up 5% per year even though we are at the end of a 7 year economic cycle with a downturn due. There was no formula used to determine whether/how much to raise the levy.

Fact #9: They are pitching that "your tax rate doesn't go up". This implies that your taxes don't go up...but they do go **UP by $33.24 million**. The "tax rate" refers to the amount per $1,000 of assessed value. If your property value doubles the rate drops in half but if your property value is cut in half the rate doubles. The REAL point is that taxes are going up and the amount they collect is **$136.54 million REGARDLESS** of the property values. The "tax rate" is a red herring and meaningless.

Fact #10: If this levy fails the world does not end. The school board directors can come back in April and ask again. If they do ask again ask them to stick with a 3% increase per year and no more.

Share your thoughts and facts and questions with us at www.swweducation.org Please share this info!