

ELLENSBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 401

PROPOSITION NO. 1

REPLACEMENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND OPERATION LEVY

The Board of Directors of Ellensburg School District No. 401 adopted Resolution No. 14.11.25, concerning a proposition to finance educational programs and operation expenses. This proposition would authorize the District to meet the educational needs of its students by levying the following excess taxes, replacing an expiring levy, on all taxable property within the District, for support of educational programs and operation expenses not funded by the State of Washington:

<u>Collection Year</u>	<u>Estimated Levy Rate /\$1,000</u>	<u>Assessed Value</u>	<u>Levy Amount</u>
2027	\$2.42	\$13,500,000	\$13,500,000
2028	\$2.42	\$14,300,000	\$14,300,000
2029	\$2.42	\$15,150,000	\$15,150,000
2030	\$2.42	\$16,050,000	\$16,050,000

all as provided in Resolution No. 14.11.25. Should this proposition be approved?

Levy . . . Yes

Levy . . . No

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

PROPOSITION NO. 1 – REPLACEMENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND OPERATION LEVY

Passage of Proposition No. 1 would allow Ellensburg School District to replace an existing educational programs and operation levy that will expire at the end of calendar year 2026. The replacement levy will be used to pay for expenses of educational programs and operation that are not fully funded by the State of Washington, including, but not limited to, nurses, special programs, counselors, athletics, advanced courses, extracurricular activities, transportation, and pay and training for ESD staff. Further information is available at: www.esd401.org.

The proposed four-year replacement levy would authorize collection of up to \$13,500,000 in 2027, \$14,300,000 in 2028, \$15,150,000 in 2029, and \$16,050,000 in 2030. The levy rate required to produce these amounts is estimated to be \$2.42 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Exemptions from taxes may be available to certain homeowners. To determine if you qualify, contact the Kittitas County Assessor at 509.962.7501.

Explanatory Statement Prepared by: Foster Garvy P.C.

STATEMENT IN FAVOR OF PROPOSITION NO. 1

As an Ellensburg resident with deep roots in our K-12 educational community, I ask you to please vote on February 10, 2026 to renew Ellensburg School District’s existing Educational Programs and Operation levy that expires at the end of calendar year 2026.

This replacement levy will be used to continue paying for expenses not fully funded by the State of Washington. These expenses include athletics, nurses, special programs, counselors, advanced courses, extracurricular activities, transportation, and pay for training ESD staff. The replacement levy will generate between \$13 million and \$16 million a year in over the course of levy’s four-year life.

This is not a new tax. The estimated tax rate is \$2.42 per \$1000 while the estimated rate of the expiring tax was \$2.50 per thousand. For many years, School District voters have continued to support this levy to fund student programs and essential school staff. Ellensburg Schools values your support and uses your money wisely.

Approving this levy will benefit every student in the District. Good schools positively affect community’s children, our neighborhoods, and they help build stronger communities. Join your neighbors and continue to support this important investment in our community by voting yes on Proposition 1.

Phil Backlund

REBUTTAL OF PRO STATEMENT

PROPOSITION NO. 1

The pro statement claims the District “uses your money wisely,” yet provides no clear breakdown of which programs will be funded, how priorities are set, or how success is measured. Voters are asked to trust broad promises without accountability. If these costs stem from state-level decisions, residents deserve transparency on whether funded programs reflect local community values or unfunded mandates from Olympia. Taxpayers should not write a blank check.

Jessica Karraker

The Auditor’s Office does not make corrections or verify the accuracy of statements submitted by jurisdictions.

STATEMENT AGAINST PROPOSITION NO 1

This levy asks voters to approve a four year excess property tax totaling nearly \$59 million, with annual collections increasing each year; from \$13.5 million to \$16.05 million. At a time when property values, inflation, and household costs are already straining families, seniors, renters, and local businesses, this proposal adds another significant and long term tax burden.

The levy funds broad “educational programs and operations,” including items that should be the responsibility of the State of Washington, not local taxpayers. Continued reliance on local levies to backfill state funding gaps shifts the burden unfairly onto property owners and contributes to rising rents and housing costs across our community.

The proposal also lacks clear accountability measures, performance benchmarks, or firm spending priorities. Voters are being asked to commit millions of dollars without guarantees that the funds will be used efficiently or that alternative cost-saving measures have been fully explored.

Supporting students does not require approving every tax increase placed on the ballot. Fiscal responsibility, transparency, and affordability matter, especially during uncertain economic times.

A NO vote sends a message that taxpayers expect sustainable budgeting, stronger state funding solutions, and greater accountability before approving another costly levy.

Jessica Karraker

REBUTTAL OF CON STATEMENT

PROPOSITION NO. 1

Approving this levy will not result in a tax increase. It approximately continues or may reduce the rate of the expiring levy. This measure does not add a long-term tax burden.

The responsibility for local education is a cooperative effort between the district and the state.

The district provides accountability data on budget use and has a strong record of fiscal responsibility.

A YES vote sends the message that local citizens support students and schools.

Phil Backlund

February 10, 2026 Special Election

What’s on your ballot?

Voters within the Easton, Ellensburg, Kittitas, and Thorp School Districts are receiving a ballot for the February Special Election.

Your ballot will only contain the district that you are eligible to vote on.

To be eligible to vote, a voter must be a resident and registered voter within the district.

You can track the status of your ballot at www.votewa.gov

Your status will update as your ballot is received and processed.

Ballots:

If your ballot is lost or damaged or you did not receive a ballot, you can go online to get a replacement ballot: www.votewa.gov

You can also stop in the office for a replacement ballot, or call us to request one be mailed to you: (509) 962-7503

Secure Drop Box Locations open for this Special Election:

Kittitas County Courthouse 205 W 5th Ave, Ellensburg

Kittitas County Auditor’s Office Inside Courthouse Building

CWU SURC 1007 N Chestnut St, Ellensburg

Thorp Fire Station 10700 Thorp Hwy N, Thorp

Easton Fire Station 180 Cabin Creek Rd, Easton

Kittitas City Hall Alley 207 Main Street, Kittitas

Ballots need to be postmarked by 2/10/26, or deposited in a ballot drop box by 8pm 2/10/26. No postage is required.

Drop Boxes close at 8:00pm sharp on Election Day 2/10/26.

How and When To Register to Vote

Anytime:

You can register online: www.votewa.gov

By mail or in-person at: 205 W. 5th Ave, Suite 105, Ellensburg

For this election:

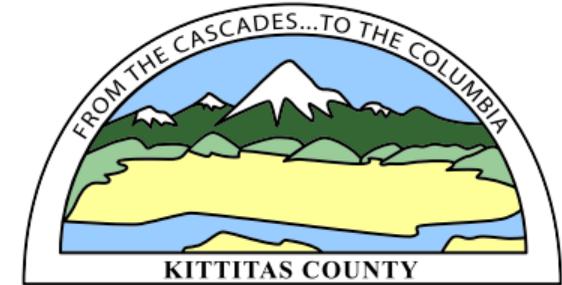
Online & Mail-in must be received by 2/2/26. If you need to update or register between 2/3/26 – 2/10/26, you must appear in person at the Auditor’s Office.

Who can Register?

To register to vote in Washington, you must be:

- A United States citizen
- A Washington state resident that meets the requirements for voting mandated by state law
- At least 16 years old but not voting in a special or general election until 18 years old
- Not disqualified from voting due to a court order
- Not serving a sentence of total confinement under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections for a Washington felony conviction or currently incarcerated for a federal or out-of-state felony conviction

DON’T FORGET TO SIGN YOUR BALLOT ENVELOPE.
Your signature on the declaration will be compared to the signature(s) in your voter registration file.



Kittitas County Official Local Voters’ Pamphlet

Special Election: February 10, 2026



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