

# SCHOOL LEVY FACTS

Meridian School District  
Election Date: February 3, 2004

## Fact #1

On February 3, the Meridian School District will ask voters to approve a four-year school levy. Approximately 14.5% of the district's regular operating budget comes from voter approved levies. When one levy expires, citizens must vote to continue providing local school support through levy dollars.

## Fact #2

**This is NOT a new tax.** In April 2002, voters in Meridian School District approved a two-year school levy which expires at the end of 2004. The levy on the February 3 ballot will replace the expiring levy and provide school funding for the next four years (2005-2008).

## Fact #3

**Levy dollars make up the difference between what the State pays and what it actually costs to operate our public schools.** State allocations and federal funding provide only a portion of the total dollars needed to operate public schools. Local funding through school levies makes up the shortfall. In Meridian, this is approximately 14.5% of our total budget.

## Fact #4

**Levy dollars help support the following programs/activities:**

- Textbooks and teaching supplies
- Computer technology/support
- Utilities and maintenance
- Special education services
- School bus transportation
- Drug/Alcohol prevention
- School nurse services
- General classroom programs and

support

- Student activity programs (Band, Choir, Drama, Math Club, Athletics, etc.)

## Fact #5

The tax rate for the levy is expected to be **LOWER** than the rate previously approved by voters (\$3.46). The proposed levy will not go into effect until the current levy expires. When it does, the rate is projected to be \$3.26 per \$1,000 of assessed property valuation.

TAX YEAR	PROJECTED TAXRATE	LEVY AMOUNT
2003	\$3.46	\$1,625,000
2004	\$3.46	\$1,675,000
2005	\$3.26	\$1,820,000
2006	\$3.26	\$1,875,000
2007	\$3.26	\$1,930,000
2008	\$3.26	\$1,990,000

## Fact #6

The levy rate may fluctuate depending on changes in assessed valuation (including new businesses and housing, etc.), but the levy amount collected does not change. The tax rate is based on the assessed value of property. At a tax rate of \$3.26, the owner of a home valued at \$100,000 would pay \$326.00 per year.

## Fact #7

If the levy is approved, the district will receive about **\$368,000** in State Levy Equalization funds each year. This addi-

tional funding is lost if the levy is not passed.

## Fact #8

A Citizens Advisory Committee, including over twenty parents and community members, reviewed district financial needs and made recommendations to the School Board regarding the levy election.

## Fact #9

School districts have the option of presenting levy proposals for 1, 2, 3 or 4 year terms. The Citizens Advisory Committee has recommended a four-year levy due to the following advantages:

- Reduced election costs
- Improved stability of funding
- Reduced time and effort on levy work
- Alignment with other area districts

## Fact #10

You may be eligible for an exemption. Disabled persons or those 61 years of age and older may be eligible for a tax exemption on school levies. Call the Whatcom County Assessor's Office, 676-6790, for information.

## Fact #11

The polling places for Meridian voters are the same as those for any other election. Specific information on your polling place is available from the Whatcom County Auditor at 676-6742. Absentee ballots are mailed to voters on approximately January 16.