

# Sumner School District levy earns grassroots support

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Vote-by-mail ballots for the Feb. 9 special election were mailed to voters Friday.

Voters in the Sumner School District will note that the ballots include a levy measure for funding educational programs, maintenance and operations. The measure would replace the previous levy measure passed in 2006 which passed with more than 58 percent of the vote.

Sumner district parent Mark Evers is working to build grassroots support for the replacement measure to pass, ensuring the school district is able to keep the source of 20 percent of its general fund budget.

Evers is the owner of a mortgage company, a Sumner City Council member from 1998 to 2006, the parent of a Lakeridge Middle School student and the current co-chair of Citizens for Education, alongside his wife.

"Whether I had a kid or not, I would still be campaigning for the levy," he said. "It's important for everyone that we support our schools."

Previously, he campaigned on behalf of a 2007 bond measure for reconstruction of Lakeridge, modernization of multiple campuses and acquisition of land for new schools, which passed successfully.

This time around, Evers has organized door-to-door and mailer campaign to raise awareness of the levy's essential contributions to district operations. Door-to-door visits were scheduled for Saturday and again on Feb. 6, shortly before election day. Mailers were sent out within a few days of ballot distribution.

The Sumner levy would cover four years, 2011 through 2014, and would replace the previous levy passed in 2006. The total dollar value of the proposed levy is lower than that of the levy it would replace, according to a press release from district spokeswoman Ann Cook. It is \$17 million for 2011, \$18 million for 2012, \$19 million for 2013 and \$21 million for 2014.

The estimated tax cost to individual property owners, in the first year, would be \$2.93 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

"Sumner has always been very good about supporting its educational institutions," Evers said. "I would like people to know that this is replacing something that was already there. I know we're in tough economic times, so it's important that people know this isn't extra money coming out of their pocket, but something that

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already existed and helps out their children's education."

Evers is optimistic about the replacement levy passing on election day. In

2006, the only opposition he encountered to the levy was a written statement published in the voters' pamphlet.

This year, no argument against the levy was submitted for publication in the pamphlet.

For more information

about the levy measure, visit the elections page for the Pierce County auditor, which can be found at [www.co.pierce.wa.us](http://www.co.pierce.wa.us).

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