

Proposition 4 Frequently Asked Questions

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE VOTED LOCAL LEVY (PROPOSITION 4)

Q: How can you lower taxes and increase employee salaries, improve student safety, and eliminate or reduce school fees?

A: The voted local levy that would be created if Proposition 4 is approved by the voters will generate \$7 million for the school district. The district will use that money to increase employee salaries, improve student safety and eliminate or reduce student fees. The Uintah School Board would then lower the capital levy – which can be used only to fund buildings, maintenance and equipment – by \$8 million. This would create a \$1 million savings for Uintah County taxpayers each year.

Q: What is the savings to me as a property owner? How much will taxes be lowered for the average citizen?

A: The tax savings is \$12.64 per \$100,000 of the value of your primary residence annually or \$22.98 per \$100,000 of the value of your commercial property or secondary residence annually. The median price for a home in Uintah County is \$192,265, which means the median tax decrease would be \$24.31 annually.

Q: When will the voted local levy take effect?

A: If Proposition 4 passes, taxpayers will see the reduction in their taxes in 2020.

Q: What is the difference between a capital levy and a voted local levy?

A: The money generated by the capital levy can only be used to perform maintenance on school district buildings, to build new facilities, to remodel existing ones or to purchase equipment. Money generated with the voted local levy proposed in Proposition 4 can be used for any of the district's general operation needs, including salaries, fees and filling open positions.

Q: What happens when we need to build a new school?

A: Building a new school would only be necessary if there were a significant increase in student numbers. The district's current enrollment projections do not anticipate significant growth like that for the near future. However, if Uintah County does experience growth in enrollment of a magnitude that requires construction of a new school, the board would have to consider going to the voters for a General Obligation Bond or increasing the capital levy to pay for the new school. The Uintah School Board is legally required to hold a public truth-in-taxation hearing before it can raise the capital levy.

Q. The language on the ballot says the board will commit to not increasing the capital levy for the next 3 years. What happens after 3 years?

The district believes the current proposal is adequate and sustainable beyond the three-year obligation. Its enrollment projections do not anticipate growth that would be significant enough to require the need for any new schools in the next three years. However, if after three years there is a significant increase in student enrollment, the board may be faced with several decisions. If there is a need to increase the capital levy to meet building needs, a public truth-in-taxation

hearing will be held as required by state law. The board is not required to raise the capital levy in the future to the prior level. The capital levy should only be raised to a point where it generates the amount of capital funds needed at the time.

Q: Why won't the school board commit to reducing the capital levy permanently if voters approve Proposition 4?

A current school board cannot commit or constrain a future school board to a specific plan for funding the district. This means the current board cannot make a binding decision that a future board would have to follow, such as stating that there will never be an increase in the capital levy at anytime in the future if Proposition 4 is approved by voters.

There is no way to predict the future. Currently, the school board and the school district believe the funding plan proposed by Proposition 4 is sustainable far into the future without having to raise the capital levy. However, nobody can predict whether there will be another energy boom in our community that may require the construction of new facilities or the expansion of existing ones.

In reality, if the district did need to build a new school, which again is not anticipated, the school board would most likely ask voters to approve a general obligation bond instead of voting to raise the capital levy. If the board voted to increase the capital levy instead, it would take too many years to generate enough capital to build an entire school.

Q: Why can't the district pay for these needs from its financial reserves?

A: The reserves in the capital outlay fund cannot be used for the critical needs the district has identified. The capital reserves will be drawn down over the next few years to pay debt payments over and above the debt levy, and to build support services buildings that are needed and are currently in the planning stages. About \$4 million that will still be collected annually will only enable the district to maintain its existing buildings.

The reserves currently available in the operations fund (M&O) will not allow the district to make the proposed changes in employee salaries, student safety and school fees permanent. If the district funded these critical needs from its M&O reserves, it could only sustain the proposed changes for about a year-and-a-half before the fund balance would fall below the 20 percent required by district policy. At that point, the changes in employee salaries, student safety programs and school fees could no longer be funded.

Q. How can we be certain that the money generated by the Voted Levy will be spent as proposed?

A. From the July 11th work session with Marcus Keller from Zions Public Finance regarding item 3 Local Levy Discussion:

There are rules in place to make sure that the levy money is spent on the items promised by the board during the election process. Basically, the board can't promise to spend the money on one thing, then change to another after voter approval is granted. If the board can show cause, or a major change in circumstance, then changes can be made; but generally speaking, the money must be spent in the manner it is advertised.

QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL AND STUDENT SAFETY

Q: What does it mean to improve school safety?

A: With the passage of Proposition 4, the district would have the funds to increase the number of school resource officers on our campuses through contracts with local law enforcement agencies. The plan also calls for increased mental health support in the form of elementary school counselors, social workers and behavior specialists, some of which may be employees of local mental health organizations working with the district under contract.

Q: Why is it necessary to increase law enforcement at schools?

A: School safety is a critical issue nationwide. School resource officers play a crucial role in deterring violence on campus and addressing threats before they can be carried out. They are also trained to quickly intervene and summon additional help if a violent act happens in one of our schools.

Q: Why is it the school's responsibility to provide counseling and mental health services for students?

A: The feedback on annual stakeholder surveys completed by parents, students and staff, shows that school safety is consistently the primary area of concern. It is the district's responsibility as the local education agency to ensure all students receive the support they need to be successful. This support includes mental and emotional support systems for our most fragile students. Currently, the district does not have counseling services at our elementary schools. Early intervention and proactively addressing needs at an early level is critical to reducing the need for remediation later.

QUESTIONS ABOUT EMPLOYEE SALARIES

Q: Will the salary increase for district employees go away after three years?

A: No. The planned salary increase will be a stipend and will be built into ongoing salary schedules just like the \$4,200 legislative increase on the current teacher salary schedule.

Q: When will the employee raises take effect?

A: The levy, as well as any expenditures from it, will take effect in the 2020-21 fiscal year and would begin with the start of the new school year in 2020.

Q: Which employees would get raises?

A: Classified and certified employees on an established salary schedule will receive an increase in the form of an annual stipend.

Q: Does the salary increase count towards retirement?

A: Yes. The salary increase is a stipend and does count towards your URS retirement as part of your total salary.

QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL FEES

Q: What are curricular fees?

A: Curricular fees are the fees charged for classes, such as lab fees for a science class or material fees for a sewing class. These fees would be eliminated and covered through under the voted local levy in Proposition 4.

Q: What are extracurricular fees?

A: Extracurricular fees are the fees for activities offered by the school district outside of the classroom. These activities include sports and school clubs. These fees will be reduced through the voted local levy in Proposition 4.

Q: Will I still have to pay to get into school functions (sporting events, plays, etc.) or will this do away with those fees, too?

A: Yes. Admission will still be charged for the same activities that admission is charged for now. These are the same activities admission is charged for at all schools in our region.

Q: Will fundraising from teams and clubs still take place?

A: The intent of Proposition 4 is to reduce or eliminate extracurricular fees. However, if the band, for instance, chooses to go out of state for a major performance, band members may have to raise funds for that specific event.

Q: As a classroom teacher, how will I cover fees if fees are eliminated?

A: The district's Business Administrator will review all current fees for each academic program and work on a case-by-case situation with teachers and school administration to determine each program's financial needs.