

2021 Capital Levy: April 27

Equity. Engagement. Excellence.

Frequently asked questions

Why is the Edmonds School District asking voters to approve a 2021 Capital Levy on April 27?

It's important to understand that school districts, including the Edmonds School District, seek local funding to provide tools, equipment and space students need in order to attend safe and well maintained learning environments. The state does not provide adequate funding for capital facilities (aka buildings), so the law allows districts to ask for local assistance via levies and bonds.

Capital levies allow school districts to collect property tax money from local property owners to fund capital improvements. Capital improvements typically refer to the addition of permanent structural improvements or upgrades that will enhance value or increase the useful life of a property.

The district is asking for the 2021 Capital Levy in order to address the following needs:

- Make necessary improvements to maintain the district's buildings
- Safety, Security and accessibility
- Capacity challenges
- Replace aging schools

How did the district decide on a 2021 Capital Levy?

Summer 2019:

In the summer of 2019, after two years of the Facilities Advisory Committee working to identify the district's capital needs, it was determined that the cost of all district projects was \$1.7 billion. The committee was made up of students, staff, parents/guardians and community members. This committee visited every district school building to assess the capital needs for each building.

The School Board looked at all the needs and approved the district to ask voters for a \$600 million Bond in February 2020.



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February 2020:

The bond was unsuccessful. Even with 56 percent of our community supporting the bond, the district needs 60 percent by law to pass a bond.

Summer 2020:

In summer of 2020, the School Board held a study session on August 4 to examine capital funding options and to review capital facility priorities. The Board considered all of the projects that were originally part of the February 2020 bond. They looked at the size of the measure and the impact of any new measures to future tax rates.

Upon review of outstanding projects, the Board prioritized necessary improvements to maintain buildings; safety, security and accessibility improvements; improve capacity challenges; Completing Phase 2 of Spruce Elementary; and replacing Oak Heights Elementary.

October 2020:

In October 2020 the Board approved a capital levy to provide \$30 million a year for the next six years – a total of \$180 million.

Why do a Capital Levy now?

The capital work needed for our district is critical. Think of your own home, if you wait and put off critical and necessary improvements, those issues continue to get worse and can often add to more damages, which can cost you even more. That's exactly what the district wants to avoid, further damage and needed improvements if we continue to wait on critical capital projects. The longer we wait, the more it will cost our community.

How will the Capital Levy address capacity challenges?

Capacity is a challenge in our district. 107 percent of our elementary schools are over capacity. This overcrowding exists now and will likely continue with future growth in enrollment.

Solutions to these challenges through the capital levy would include:

- Adding building capacity for the existing overcrowding through installing and relocating portables – or as we refer to them, relocatables.
- The district currently has 44 relocatables spread throughout our schools. The purpose of putting these at schools is to address capacity challenges and add space for classrooms.
- With the passing of the Capital Levy, and the building of two new school buildings, that frees up some of the district's relocatable classrooms to provide capacity relief at other schools.
- Add new covered play areas at elementary schools. These covered spaces will help with issues caused by gyms and cafeterias sharing one area.



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Why do communities have local levies?

People want their local schools to provide the tools needed to improve student learning and provide students with well-maintained, safe learning environments. The state does not provide adequate funding for technology or capital facilities, and the law allows school districts to seek local funding support in these areas through levies.

What's the overall projected tax impact for the Capital Levy if approved by voters?

The district only collects up to the amount approved by voters regardless of assessed property valuation. These estimated figures do not take into consideration new homes being built or new commercial businesses being added to tax rolls, which would result in decreased taxes for existing homeowners.

The district estimates the combined rate for all the district's tax measures for 2022 will be \$3.36 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. This would maintain a steady local education tax rate over the next six years.

Why did the district only build half of Spruce Elementary School?

Completing Phase 1 of Spruce Elementary in September 2019 saved taxpayers approximately \$3 million by avoiding construction inflation costs if we had waited a few years to begin the new build. If voters approve the April 2021 capital levy, Phase 2 (the final phase) of construction would begin spring 2021 and finish by September 2022. You can read more about this fiscally responsible move by the district in our December 2020 printed newsletter that was mailed out to every household in our district. [It's also available on our website in a PDF.](#)

How can I get additional information on the levy?

Please visit the [2021 Capital Levy website](#) or contact the Communications department at 425-431-7045, or communications@edmonds.wednet.edu.

Where can I get Capital Levy information materials to share with others?

Please visit our [Capital Levy materials webpage](#). There you will find presentation slides, a flier and a printable PDF of these Frequently Asked Questions.

