

In a sign of growing distrust, voters reject two-out-of-three local school bond proposals

By LIV FINNE | Mar 11, 2024





In the latest sign of declining public confidence in the education system, voters in February turned down two-thirds of proposed local school bond measures, rejecting 14 out of 21 proposals.

The failed bonds range from \$34 million in the Hood Canal School District to \$242 million in the North Kitsap School District.

School construction bonds impose long term debt on homeowners for 25 to 30 years. The bonds are structured as public debt, so brokers add millions of dollars in interest and fees to the amount that would be spent on schools.

For example, the Hood Canal school bond of \$34 million would have required voters to pay an additional \$25 million in interest and fees, adding a 74% premium to the cost. The North Kitsap school bond of \$242 million would have required repayment of an additional \$162 million in interest and fees, boosting the cost to taxpayers by a whopping 67% (see www.schooldataport.com)

Seven school construction bonds were approved, ranging from \$525,000 in Prosser to \$650 million in Tacoma.

These special February elections typically have a low voter turnout. This means school district officials, public employees and unions disproportionate impact on the results. For example, voter turnout in Tacoma was just 28%, meaning only 21% (the proportion of "yes" votes) opted for a financial burden imposed on 100% of Tacoma home and business owners, plus all future taxpayers, until the principal, interest and fees are paid off in 2050.

The low-turnout election brings Tacoma's to just over \$2 billion in total (see https://schooldataport.com/report_levies_20240213).

School officials and the powerful WEA union select a February date for bond elections because they know most voters won't notice and won't take the opportunity to participate.

This year, however, the tactic didn't work as expected. The most recent results show that increasingly voters understand the game. In North Kitsap for example school superintendent Laurynn Evans [was caught on videotape](#) stealing opponents' yard signs.

Voters responded by voting down her bond proposal by 64% to 36%.

Such antics, combined with sexualized curriculum, promotion of race ideology, and low academic standards, feeds the public's growing distrust of the public school establishment.

School districts can win voter approval if their proposed projects are reasonable and affordable, and will contribute to better learning outcomes for students. The failure of so many school bonds is a warning sign that many voters are no longer willing to pay high taxes for a public education system they no longer believe in.

ALSO ON WASHINGTON POLICY CENTER

Opponents are somehow confused ...

16 days ago · 2 comments

I kid you not. This half-page, clear-language initiative was called confusing, vague ...

Lawmakers pass three out of six citizen ...

10 days ago · 1 comment

The legislature has passed three of the initiatives submitted by citizens.

Initiative 2111 would ban the imposition ...

17 days ago · 2 comments

I had the privilege of being invited to testify on a proposal to keep ...

P

p

2

H

w

sc