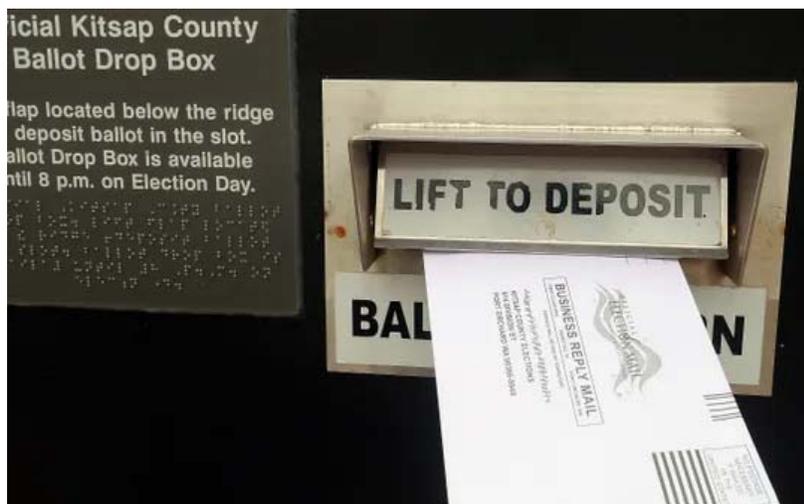


North Mason School District levy fails by a narrow margin

Chris Henry, Kitsap Sun Published 3:17 p.m. PT April 29, 2020

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FILE — A ballot is deposited into the drop box at the Kitsap County Administration Building. (Photo: Meegan M. Reid / Kitsap Sun)

NORTH MASON — North Mason School District's school support levy has failed a second time, after voters [rejected a levy measure in February](#) ([/story/news/local/2020/02/11/bremerton-school-funding-measures-passing-preliminary-results/4729731002/](#)). That means the district is looking at about \$4 million in cuts in the upcoming school year, including the loss of about 18 teaching positions, Superintendent Dana Rosenbach said Wednesday.

The levy was failing with 48.14% voting in favor in preliminary results on Tuesday. A simple majority of 50% plus one vote is needed. An updated count Wednesday showed the measure still failing but by a narrower margin, with 49.24% voting for the levy.

The levy would have generated just more than \$5.6 million per year for four years — for a total of \$22.6 million — beginning in 2021. The estimated property tax rate was \$2.16 per \$1,000 of assessed value in each year of the levy.

Election results included 102 votes cast by Kitsap County residents who live within the school district's boundaries. In Mason County, 5,099 votes had been counted in the levy election as of Wednesday afternoon.

Rosenbach noted the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on the economy as a likely factor in election results.

"We are of course disappointed, but running the levy at this time we knew was a really tough ask, because the world right now is so unsettled," Rosenbach said. "But we had to ask because this funding is needed to do everything we can to support our students."

More: [Central Kitsap Fire & Rescue won't put bond before voters in August](#) ([/story/news/local/2020/04/28/central-kitsap-fire-and-rescue-wont-](#)

Districts are allowed to run up to two levy measures per calendar year. Now, North Mason is looking at how to make roughly \$4 million in cuts and budget adjustments in the upcoming school year.

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The district has given notice to 10 starting teachers that their contracts will not be renewed for next year. Some positions could be restored, Rosenbach said, but districts are required to notify teachers of non-renewal of contracts or layoffs by May 15.

In addition to the 10 positions cut, the district will not fill positions left vacant by those retiring or resigning, resulting in a total of 18.6 full-time-equivalent teaching positions axed next year.

District administrators are in touch with union reps for non-teaching staff on potential cuts. Rosenbach said much could change between now and the fall because of uncertainties about how the coronavirus outbreak will affect schools.

Schools throughout Washington state have been closed since March 16 to curtail the spread of COVID-19, a respiratory illness caused by novel coronavirus that has sickened more than three million people around the world and caused more than 200,000 deaths. School buildings will stay closed and classes will be conducted online for the rest of the school year. Closures of non-essential businesses have resulted in widespread unemployment.

The impact of COVID-19 on the state's budget (and the funding it provides to schools) is also an unknown, Rosenbach said. The district will provide services with whatever resources it has, she added.

"We do know this is a very difficult time for our families, and we will do the best we can to provide the best possible education we can for our students," Rosenbach said.

The local school support levy makes up about 16% of the district's budget, according to its website, and pays for items like school safety, teachers' coaching, paraeducators, early childhood education, extracurricular activities, school counselors and nurses. It also supplements transportation and special education funding.

North Mason School District has about 2,400 students and an annual budget this school year of \$34.5 million.

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