

Kitsap Sun

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SK's past mismanagement led to too large levy

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While Bremerton, Central Kitsap, North Kitsap and the majority of the Washington 295 school districts are at \$1.50/\$1,000 in property taxes, South Kitsap is asking for \$2.50. This is not a continuation of an expiring four-year M&O, as the yellow yard signs would leave you to believe. It does not need to be run for 4 years and should not be, given the COVID crisis. Three of the five school board members had it right during early levy discussions at \$1.50, only to be pressured into changing their position. Clearly \$1.50/\$1,000 is correct and supports our students, families, and taxpayers.

The state clearly is funding Washington Schools and doing so with your state tax increase and annual COLA adjustments. A large driver of South Kitsap's woes is poor money management by previous superintendent, leaving Superintendent Winters in a bind. An example of this is a 20% pay hike for teachers driving all other unions to demand the same resulting in gross negative payroll state income. When the state pays \$76,000 and SK pays \$89,000 plus \$20,000 in benefits for teachers there is a problem. The state pay scale is fair and taxes us accordingly.

We as a community must demand fiscal responsibility. This levy will run again if it fails. It should run for two years at \$1.50 per thousand and give those of great need in our community some relief and align with all other Kitsap districts. Demand fiscal accountability.

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