

# Kitsap Sun

## NEWS

# South Kitsap school board sends support levy to February ballot

**Jeff Graham** Kitsap Sun

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South Kitsap board members on Wednesday approved a resolution to bring a school support levy before voters during the Feb. 9 special election. The new levy would replace the former Educational Program and Operations Levy, which expires at the end of 2021.

Board members Eric Gattenby, Liz Sebren, Rebecca Diehl and John Berg voted "yes," and Jeff Daily voted "no" on the resolution during Wednesday's meeting.

The four-year replacement levy would maintain the current tax rate of \$2.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Because of a decrease in overall student enrollment, the district could end up collecting a lesser amount, but Diehl and others felt it was important to ask for the maximum allowed and adjust later if required.

Berg, who opposed the resolution during a Nov. 18 meeting, didn't put up a fight Wednesday.

"Although at our previous meeting I disagreed with the exact amount," Berg said. "I'm assuming this is going to be adopted and I will cheerfully assist in carrying it out," Berg said.

Daily previously proposed lowering the local levy rate to \$2 per \$1,000 of assessed value with the possibility of running a 25 cent per \$1,000 capital levy in the future.

On the topic of return-to-school plans, Superintendent Tim Winter provided an update Wednesday. The goal is for kindergarten, first grade and second grade to return Jan. 11; third-, fourth- and fifth-grade students to return Jan. 26; and middle-school and high-school students to return Feb. 8.

"A lot of thought went into this," Winter said. "It gives us a week after coming back from the (holiday) break to just get settled and see where things are."

Daily asked Winter about how rising case numbers might affect the Jan. 11 target date.

"I don't know the answer to that question," Winter said. "I would agree that the odds are probably against us, but I think it's important to set a date and work toward that to try to get in."

"We need to make sure the data is working in our favor," Winter continued. "We have followed the

data all along and will continue to do so. ... Health and safety is the priority. We have to make sure that is the key to any movement that we make."

South Kitsap's board voted on positions heading into 2021. Gattenby will remain as president and Berg will take over as vice president. Both Gattenby and Berg received four "yes" votes with Daily abstaining twice.

Diehl will serve as legislative representative, Sebren will serve as Washington Interscholastic Activities Association representative and Berg will serve as Washington State School Directors' Association delegate.