

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

School board needs to support us

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The amount of the upcoming levy will probably be finalized at the next South Kitsap School District school board meeting. Our community has strongly supported our school district, but has our district supported us? Here are some items to consider.

The district has at least 185 people over what the district is “authorized.” These people cost us over \$2 million a year.

The McCreary legislation was passed to fund basic education and reduce levies. Levy money is for “enhancements” above basic education. Unfortunately, pay and benefits now consume 82 percent of the 85 percent that the district receives from the state.

Adding in utilities, the district uses up all of the money from the state via salaries. So, 15 percent of the budget that is the local levy must now pay for mostly necessary items versus “enhancements.” The 20 percent-plus pay raises a few years ago and now 3-percent pay raises for all employees negotiated this year during the pandemic while the rest of us tighten our belts continue to be budget busters.

Passing the levy does not fix the problem. Soon, district pay and benefits (without more state money or more students — keep in mind enrollment is down again this year in SKSD) will exceed the entire state allocation which is supposed to pay for the education of our students.

As community members, we have done our part to support education and our schools. But a district unable to budget and say “no” to union hiring and pay raises has not supported our students. Urge your board member to reduce the levy, tell the district “no more,” and start using taxpayer money to repair our schools instead of rising payroll costs.

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