

LETTERS | Opinion *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

What will best support students in SK?

Jeff Daily, Port Orchard

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The South Kitsap school board at its November 18 meeting will discuss the next levy request. As a board member, I would like to offer some additional information not covered in recent newspaper stories.

The intent of the 2018 McCleary decision was to fully fund basic education by the state and give us levy relief. This resulted in an approximate 50% tax hike and a temporary break on the local levy rate maximum of \$1.50. Our legislators were pressured and switched back to the full \$2.50 rate. The SKSD took the full authorized amount. In 2018, the SKSD spent most of this money, which resulted in 20% plus pay raises for most district personnel.

The SKSD payroll now consumes 96% of the money allotted by the state to the SKSD. Now add in another 3% for pay raises and benefits given to most employees this year (during the pandemic). We will see this figure continue to rise in successive years. Rising payroll costs result in the district's reliance on local levies to finance them. Funds that are supposedly "for educational enhancements."

SKSD employs more than 185 employees in excess of what the state funds. Does this number of additional employees enhance your child's education? Do unending increases in "competitive salaries" improve education outcomes?

We all want to provide our students the best education we can using our limited tax monies. Please contact your board member to let them know how they can best support your desires as the levy comes up for discussion.

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