



**HIGHLINE**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# HIGHLINE EDUCATION LEVY

RENEWAL FOR  
**Educational Programs  
and Operation Levy**

## **NSPRA Gold Medallion Entry Bond/Finance Campaign**

**Tove Tupper, APR**  
Chief Communications Officer  
Communications Team of 6  
PK12 Public School District | 17,500 students

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# SYNOPSIS

## THE 2025 LEVY WAS A MULTILINGUAL, FACT-BASED INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN THAT PASSED WITH 63.37% COMMUNITY SUPPORT

In November 2025, Highline Public Schools asked voters to renew local funding for educational programs, services and staff. This replacement levy accounts for 15% of the district's budget and helps close the gap between what the state provides and the actual cost of essential educational services. The levy passed with strong support at 63.37%.

### COMPLIANCE GUARDRAILS

Compliance guardrails shaped the plan from the start, as Highline received a citation from the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) in 2023. The team followed state guidance, used a non-advocacy tone, and emphasized that the levy renewed current funding with stable tax rates. We also planned for additional review steps, tighter language standards, and stricter constraints on creative choices, including photos, quotes and story-based content.

After an election conference in early September 2025, we understood the compliance environment was becoming even more restrictive than we originally anticipated. Midway through campaign planning, we recalibrated further. Guidance emphasized that language that could be interpreted as promotional or emotionally persuasive may be considered advocacy, and that enforcement and costs were increasing.

Strategies included a multilingual approach, consistent messaging across digital and print channels, and direct engagement with school and community groups. Staff and family newsletters offered regular updates.

Failure to pass this measure would have resulted in the loss of substantial revenue, significant layoffs, and the elimination of many activities and programs students depend on.

### YEAR-ROUND COMMUNICATIONS AS THE FOUNDATION

This campaign reinforced an important communications lesson. Election-season rules limit many strategies that help information reach and connect with audiences. This reality increased the value of year-round strategic storytelling and communications about students, staff and programs. This foundation helped the community make sense of neutral, fact-based levy information and understand what was at stake.

## ABOUT HIGHLINE



34  
schools



17,500  
students



61% of students  
qualify for  
free/reduced-  
priced meals



15% of students  
qualify for special  
education services



31% of students  
speak a first  
language other  
than English



89 languages  
spoken



5 unique  
municipalities  
represented

# RESEARCH

## REGISTERED VOTER AND ELECTION RESULTS ANALYSIS

We reviewed district demographics, registered voter data, turnout patterns and past election results to understand who votes, when turnout drops and where support is strongest. Turnout varies widely by election type. Recent districtwide turnout ranged from 23.8% in the 2025 special election to 57% in 2022 and 73.2% in the 2024 general election. This analysis informed our timing to place the levy on the November ballot as well as our distribution plan.

## LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE LANDSCAPE

Our research focused on Washington's rules for school elections and lessons from Highline's recent experience.

In spring 2023, after a bond campaign, the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) investigated Highline for noncompliance with RCW 42.17A.555, citing repeated use of emotional quotes and photos tied to the measure.

Updated practice and training reinforced the constraint: common storytelling tools can be viewed as advocacy in an election.

- **Outcome:** We used plain, neutral, fact-based language and added review steps with tighter standards for visuals, quotes and timing.

could be considered emotional appeals that are promotional in nature. PDC staff have noted that content provided by public agencies regarding a ballot measure that includes students should be closely scrutinized in future election-related communication related to a possibility of its emotional appeal.

## FALL ELECTION CONFERENCE

Team members attended the Fall 2025 School Election Conference hosted by attorneys who specialize in school funding measures and campaign rules. Takeaways reinforced the need to inform without persuading and avoid campaign-like language, visuals and timing—shaping our tone, review process and communication cadence.

[View conference materials](#)

Excerpt from the election conference material highlighting how storytelling was receiving a critical eye.

## COMMUNITY SENTIMENT AND INFORMATION HABITS

Highline conducts an annual poll to understand residents' priorities, perceptions and information needs. Because the poll includes both families and residents, it reflects a broad cross-section of the community.

### WHAT WE LEARNED

**Overall sentiment is steady and positive.** Nearly twice as many residents view Highline favorably as those who do not. About 70% say their priorities align with Highline's strategic priorities.

- **Outcome:** We increased proactive communication about Highline's strategic priorities through a separate, non-election campaign, because the data showed this lifts favorability.

**Residents recognize a funding gap.** 60% of residents say the district needs additional funding and the state does not provide enough resources. This confirms many residents understand the funding issue and want factual information about what local funding supports.

- **Outcome:** We leaned into clear, plain-language explanations of how school funding works in Washington and what local funding supports.

**Residents are tax-sensitive — and still see a clear purpose for levies.** A majority say local property taxes are "too high" (55% in 2025). At the same time, most residents (55%) say education levies fill the gap between state funding and the real cost of basic programs, services and staff — about twice as many as those who view levies as supplemental or unnecessary (27% combined).

- **Outcome:** We built levy messages around real costs and the funding gap, using neutral, fact-based language.

**Top funding priorities were clear.** Residents rated inclusive classrooms (71% high priority), mental health supports (69%), competitive pay for staff (66%), career and college readiness (73%), technology and cybersecurity (66%), and basic operating costs (67%) as high priorities.

- **Outcome:** We grounded levy messaging in the priorities residents said mattered most, reinforcing alignment between community values and what local funding supports.

# PLANNING

**GOAL: Highline voters are informed about the district's funding needs, and the 2025 Educational Programs and Operations Levy is approved by voters.**

## OBJECTIVES

**By Nov. 4, 2025 (Election Day), Highline Public Schools will achieve at least 60% approval for the levy.\***

**By Nov. 26, 2025 (election certification), Highline Public Schools will complete the levy information campaign with zero Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) findings or investigations.**

**By Nov. 4, 2025, the Levy Toolkit will receive at least 200 views, indicating strong use by Highline's 98 school and department leaders.**

*\*Note: While only a simple majority is needed to pass, we wanted to see if we had the ability to reach a supermajority approval because it could indicate future success of a bond measure, which requires 60% approval.*

## TARGET AUDIENCES

### Staff

Staff are influential among parents and the community, so they were targeted to ensure they have information and the key messages about the levy. Our public poll found that 22% of respondents get information from staff members. Staff received consistent, accessible updates through the tools they already use.

- *School leader messages:* Principals and supervisors shared aligned talking points using a School Leaders Toolkit (posted in staff intranet and reinforced through in-person support).
- *Staff newsletter:* Levy updates ran in the all-staff email newsletter, Highline Insider, to reach staff in a familiar, districtwide channel.
- *Staff Intranet:* Resources and information were shared on the site regularly.
- *Leadership Forum:* A slide deck modeled how leaders were expected to share information with families.
- *Office manager channel:* Weekly blurbs in the weekly email newsletter Office Manager FYI (OMFYI) helped reach every building through front office teams.

### Parents and Families

Analytics showed that parents were our most likely supporters so the plan targeted parents to get out and vote. A multi-platform approach ensured families received consistent and accessible updates.

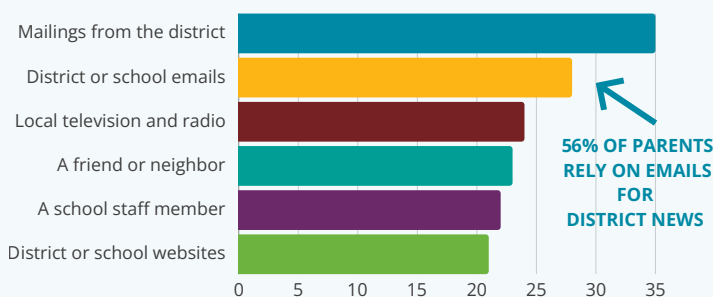
- *Mailer:* Community-wide print mailer to households.
- *ParentSquare:* Notifications via text, email and posts.
- *Social media:* District channels shared regular updates and reminders.
- *District website:* Levy page updates and supporting content.
- *School communications:* Information shared through school channels and events.
- *FAQ webpage:* Central place for questions and updates.
- *In-school posters:* Posters displayed at schools and events.

### Registered Voters

Research showed that the proposal has support across all demographic groups, so targeting all voters was important.

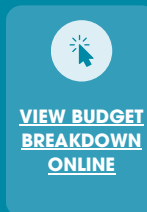
- *Website and print communications:* Web updates and print materials for broad reach.
- *Digital ads:* Paid outreach with targeted digital placements.
- *Mailer:* Direct mail to all households.
- *Quarterly mailer:* Levy information included in scheduled district mailings.
- *Community events:* Information shared at public events, including new school grand openings and back-to-school events.
- *Media outreach:* Direct reach to local media contacts.

We planned to communicate based on how residents get information. Based on our poll, our community at large relies on mailings and emails. Parents rely on emails more than the general public.



## BUDGET AND RESOURCES

Total campaign costs were ~\$71,000, covering printing, mailing, video, digital ads, design, and contracted support. A six-person comms team planned and carried out the work.



# PLANNING

## KEY MESSAGES

Below are some of the key messages from the campaign.

*The levy on the November 2025 ballot is a renewal levy that funds educational programs, services and staff — filling the gap between what the state provides and Highline's operating costs.*

*Levy dollars pay for services, programs and staff, such as:*

- *Student Learning: The levy funds programs and resources for students of all abilities and needs.*
- *Student Support: The levy pays for Health Services staff including counselors, psychologists and social workers.*
- *College and Career readiness: The levy funds College & Career Readiness programs like career fairs, job shadowing, internships, and college planning.*
- *Staffing and Compensation: The levy funds the difference for negotiated staff salaries.*
- *Operational Costs: The levy helps cover operating costs including materials, supplies, utilities, insurance and facility maintenance.*
- *Technology and Cybersecurity: The levy pays for classroom technology, software and cybersecurity systems.*
- *This is not a new tax. It renews an expiring local levy. This proposal renews the existing levy that is set to expire at the end of 2026.*

*Highline is underfunded in special education by approximately \$19 million this school year. In the past, we used levy dollars to fill that gap for students receiving special education services. Special education services include speech therapy, classroom aides, modified curriculum and behavioral support.*

*Because a new state rule does not allow us to use local levy funds for special education, we are now covering these costs out of our basic education budget. The proposed 2025 levy will now fill the underfunding gap across all areas.*



## A CRITICAL EYE ON COPY

Given recent enforcement history and updated PDC practice, we planned for added scrutiny and built compliance guardrails into every step. Our plan focused on neutral, factual communications that stayed aligned with official election materials.

We treated compliance as a core strategy. We planned for a strictly informational approach during the levy window, knowing that best-practice storytelling tools (testimonials, emotional language, student photos) could be interpreted as advocacy.

After the election conference, we reviewed and made additional edits after learning about evolving enforcement and considerations.

## TELLING THE SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING STORY

Highline's special education costs exceeded state funding by about \$19 million. In prior years, Washington districts often used levy dollars to help cover that gap. A new state rule limits that option, so basic education dollars now cover those costs—reducing what's available for other day-to-day needs.

Because special education is top of mind in our community, we used plain language to explain the levy's limits and the budget impact—without implying levy funding for special education.

Our message planning focused on two things:

1. Named the special education funding gap and rising costs.
2. Explained, clearly, what levy dollars can and cannot fund—and why that constraint affects the entire operating budget



[VIEW COMPLETE KEY MESSAGES ONLINE](#)

# PLANNING

## STRATEGIES

- Empower leaders to be “levy ambassadors” who can share clear, factual information with their communities.
- Use a channel mix that matches how residents and families get information, with a strong focus on direct mail and district email.
- Inform about voting and ballot return process.
- Keep messages consistent by using approved key messages.
- Maintain legal compliance by using neutral, fact-based language and a formal review step for all public materials.
- Explain the state rule change that limits levy use for special education, and clarify how that shifts pressure to the general fund.
- Ensure community access with multilingual materials, translated print pieces, and language-specific videos, using plain language throughout.
- Use repetition and cadence (weekly newsletters, scheduled social posts, timed mail drops) to improve recall without increasing complexity.

# IMPLEMENTATION

## TIMELINE

### APRIL | Research Kickoff

- Kickoff public opinion poll planning meeting
- Demographic & election analysis completed

### MAY | Research Continues

- Public opinion poll fielding (timing window)
- Share poll results with the board
- Draft communications plan + video plan
- Visual planning (photo needs list, select/organize photos)

### JUNE | Message Development + Web Foundation

- Develop messaging based on research
- Prepare the levy webpage/landing pages to launch immediately if a positive board vote
- June 18 Board meeting to introduce levy resolution
- Add homepage banner to website

### JULY | Board Vote + Engagement Planning

- On July 2, the Highline School Board unanimously voted to place a local funding measure on the November 2025 ballot
- District website article and press release announcing board action
- Share School Board election “dos and don’ts” guidance + Leadership Forum “dos and don’ts” message
- Finalize engagement plan: roadshow, community/PTA meetings
- Develop a school leaders toolkit

### AUGUST | Filing + Materials Production

- Start booking PTA and community organization presentations
- Create levy social media calendar
- Add levy messaging to back-to-school materials
- Design informational levy one-pager
- Translate informational materials for schools/events.
- Share levy messaging with leaders at the Leadership Forum event

### SEPTEMBER | Informational Timeline Begins

- Begin family and staff communications
- Attend Election Conference and evaluate copy and strategies based on new information
- Share school leader toolkit
- Start sharing information biweekly
- Share about the levy on social media

### OCTOBER | Paid Media + Levy Mailer

- Launch digital ads on Levy
- Announcements at athletic games (share information during announcements)
- Distribute electronic PeachJar levy flyer
- District mailer mailed by Oct. 10 to arrive close to a ballot arrival around Oct. 16–18
- Ballot drop boxes open 10/16
- Remember to vote messaging
- Create an election night communications plan
- Draft Election Night messaging (all scenarios)

### NOVEMBER | Election + Evaluation

- Election Day: November 4
- “Thank you, voters” message
  - Website banner
  - Email to staff
  - Email to families
  - Flyer in schools
  - Update all reader boards
- Election certified: November 25

# EVALUATION

## OBJECTIVES

- ✓ By Nov. 4, 2025 (Election Day), achieve at least 60% approval for the levy.
  - **Result: Levy passed at 63.37%. This was the highest approval rate for an educational programs and operation levy in Highline in the past 20 years.**
- ✓ By Nov. 26, 2025 (election certification), Highline Public Schools will complete the levy information campaign with zero Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) findings or investigations.
  - **Result: Zero PDC investigations or complaints against Highline Public Schools**
- ✓ By Nov. 4, 2025, the levy toolkit will receive at least 200 views, indicating strong use by Highline's 98 school and department leaders.
  - **Result: The toolkit surpassed the objective, receiving 410 views during the campaign period.**

## MEASURING IMPACT BEYOND THE VOTE

The levy passed with 63.37% support. Campaign metrics also showed broad reach, including 63,500 mailed informational pieces, more than 1.6 million digital ad impressions, and 410 views of the levy toolkit. While voter approval was the ultimate measure of success, other results will help inform future levy and bond campaigns.

Gaining approval for approximately \$333 million in local funding to support student learning, this informational campaign yielded a positive return on investment. Based on direct communications costs only (\$71,100), the campaign supported approval of about \$333 million—roughly \$214 per \$1 million approved; this does not include other district costs such as election fees or staff time.

Beyond the levy passing, the results matter for what they signal. The vote shows broad community support for Highline students and the people who serve them. We can use that goodwill to reinforce belonging, stability and pride across our schools.

## COMPLIANCE AS STRATEGY

Zero PDC findings represent both legal compliance and institutional learning. After prior enforcement experience, the campaign incorporated tighter language standards, additional review steps and mid-campaign calibration following additional learning. The results demonstrate that clear, factual communication can be both compliant and effective.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The levy toolkit improved leader confidence and message consistency. This model is now replicable for future ballot measures.

## NOTES FOR NEXT TIME

The team identified improvements for future efforts:

- Some translated materials were completed later in the timeline, limiting schools' ability to share fully translated materials early in the informational window. Future efforts will prioritize earlier development and translation so leaders have complete, ready-to-share materials from the outset.
- The campaign required line-by-line language review across multiple formats. Developing pre-approved, compliance-aligned templates in advance will increase efficiency and consistency in future ballot measures.

## MID CAMPAIGN PIVOT

Updated election guidance underscored a more restrictive compliance environment. In response, the team conducted a second-level review of language, visuals and timing across all materials, tightening phrasing and strengthening internal protocols. This recalibration sharpened standards and reinforced readiness for future ballot measures.

## TRUST IS BUILT YEAR-ROUND.

Legal restrictions shaped our levy communications, but not our year-round storytelling about students and programs. That ongoing strategic communications work built a baseline understanding, so when we shifted to neutral, fact-based levy communications, our community still had context. A strong year-round communications plan gave the community context before the levy information campaign began.

# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS



## HIGHLINE EDUCATION LEVY

RENEWAL FOR  
**Educational Programs  
and Operation Levy**

### ABOUT PROPOSITION 1

The Highline levy renews local funding to fill the gap between what the state provides and what is needed to fund basic educational programs, services and staff. **This is not a new tax.**

### WHY A LEVY?

State funding doesn't fully cover the cost of basic education. **The local levy fills that gap—accounting for about 15% of Highline's operating budget.**



### What the Levy Funds



#### Support for All Learners

Staff and resources so all students—regardless of ability—are fully included and welcome.



#### College and Career Readiness

Staff and programs like career fairs, job shadowing, apprenticeships, and college planning.



#### Student Well-Being

Staff and programs that support students' mental and emotional health, including counselors, nurses and social workers.



#### Operational Costs

Materials, supplies, utilities, insurance and facility maintenance.



#### Staffing and Compensation

Competitive wages for teachers, paraeducators and support staff.



#### Technology and Cybersecurity

Classroom technology, software, and systems to support learning and protect data.

### Did You Know?

The levy will fund  
**100% of programs and staff**  
who support college and career readiness.



Posters were developed and printed in **English, Spanish** and **Vietnamese** and were hung up districtwide in schools and buildings.

These posters, along with the handouts and postcards, were produced early in the campaign, before the election conference, and reflect messaging that was later refined for consistency across the mailer and website.



**TAKE A CLOSER LOOK  
AT POSTERS ONLINE**

[gethps.info/levymedallion](https://gethps.info/levymedallion)

# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

## TACTIC SPOTLIGHT HANDOUTS

**HIGHLINE EDUCATION LEVY**

RENEWAL FOR Educational Programs and Operation Levy

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**What the Levy Funds**

- Support for All Learners**  
Staff and resources so all students—regardless of ability—are fully included and welcome.
- College and Career Readiness**  
Staff and programs like career fairs, job shadowing, apprenticeships, and college planning.
- Operational Costs**  
Materials, supplies, utilities, insurance and facility maintenance.
- Staffing and Compensation**  
Competitive wages for teachers, paraeducators and support staff.

**Projected Levy Rate and Collection**

The proposed tax rate is \$2.07 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in 2027 and rises slightly to account for inflation each year, reaching \$2.11 in 2030.

If approved, the levy could provide up to \$333.9 million over four years for students and schools—supporting needs not fully funded by the state. This estimate is based on high enrollment enroll, we collect less—just as we have in recent years.

**Return Your Ballot by November 4!**

Look for your ballot around October 18. Ballots are due by 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 4, 2025.

**Need to Register?**  
You must be registered to vote to receive a ballot. The deadline to register in person: November 4 by 8:00 p.m. Learn more, register and track your ballot: [VoteWA.gov](http://VoteWA.gov)

**Return by Mail**  
Return your ballot by mail—no stamp needed. Ballots must be postmarked by Tuesday, November 4.

**Vote Using a Drop Box**  
You can also return your ballot at any official drop box by 8:00 p.m. on November 4. [GetHPS.info/ballot-dropbox](http://GetHPS.info/ballot-dropbox)

**Did You Know?**  
The levy will fund **100% of programs and staff** who support college and career readiness.

**LEVY DE EDUCACIÓN DE HIGHLINE**

RENOVACIÓN Programas educativos y operación de 'ACERCA DE PROFUES

El levy de Highline, también conocido como el impuesto de renovación de programas educativos y operación de 'ACERCA DE PROFUES, es un impuesto que reemplaza el impuesto de renovación de programas educativos y operación de 'ACERCA DE PROFUES que se venció el 1 de octubre de 2024. Este es un impuesto nuevo.

**¿Por qué un levy?**  
Los fondos estatales no cubren completamente el costo de la educación básica. El levy local cubre esa diferencia, lo que representa aproximadamente el 15% del presupuesto operativo de Highline.

**¿Saber qué...?**  
El levy financiará **100% de los programas y el personal** que apoyan la enseñanza secundaria y de postsecundaria.

**THUẾ HỖ TRỢ GIÁO DỤC CỦA HIGHLINE**

Thuế hỗ trợ các Chương trình giáo dục và Hoạt động

Thuế giúp duy trì và nâng cao chất lượng giáo dục, bao gồm các chương trình giáo dục và hoạt động của các trường học. Thuế này không phải là thuế mới.

**VI SAO CẦN KHÓAR THUẾ NÀY?**  
Ngân sách từ thuế, hàng không chỉ trả tiền cho các giáo viên và nhân viên. Thuế này giúp duy trì và nâng cao chất lượng giáo dục, bao gồm các chương trình giáo dục và hoạt động của các trường học.

**Quý vị có biết?**  
Thuế này sẽ trả 100% cho các chương trình và nhân viên hỗ trợ giảng dạy và nhân viên hỗ trợ các chương trình giáo dục và hoạt động của trường học.

🖱️  
**TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT  
HANDOUTS ONLINE**  
[gethps.info/levymedallion](http://gethps.info/levymedallion)

*These handouts were produced early in the campaign and reflect messaging that was later refined.*

# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

## POSTCARDS



### HIGHLINE EDUCATION LEVY

#### Renewing Support for Our Schools

The levy renews local funding for educational programs, services and staff — filling the gap between what the state provides and what is needed to fund basic educational programs, services and staff.

#### What the Levy Funds:

The local levy accounts for about 15% of Highline's operating budget.



#### What the Levy Funds



**Support for All Learners**  
Staff and resources so all students—regardless of ability—are fully included and welcome.



**College and Career Readiness**  
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#### Projected Levy Rate and Collection

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For more cost information visit:  
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### TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT POSTCARDS ONLINE

[gethps.info/levymedallion](https://gethps.info/levymedallion)

*These postcards were produced early in the campaign and reflect messaging that was later refined.*

# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

## STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT

### PHRASES WE AVOIDED

During drafting and edits, we removed words that could be read as urging a vote, adding urgency, or using emotional language. That included value-judgment wording like “fostering,” “nurturing,” and calling programs “opportunities.”

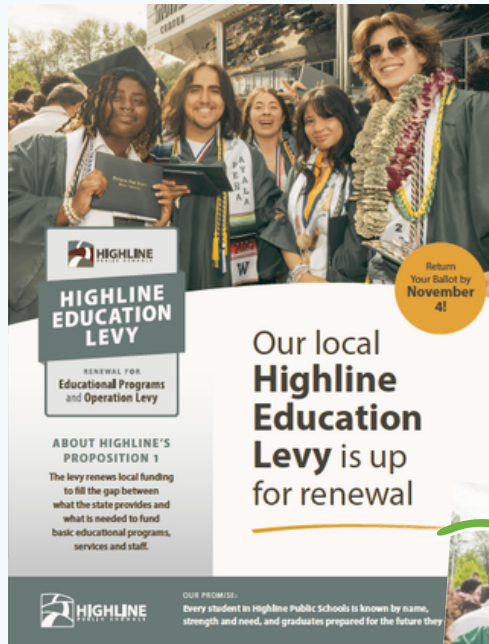
If a term sounded like a slogan or a call to action, we cut it or replaced it with clear, neutral language.

Examples of words we avoided:

- Challenge
- Continues
- Crucial
- Cutting-edge
- Ensures
- Essential
- High-quality
- Important
- Invest
- Lifelong-skills
- Need
- Opportunity
- Renewal
- Safe
- Support
- Significant
- Vital

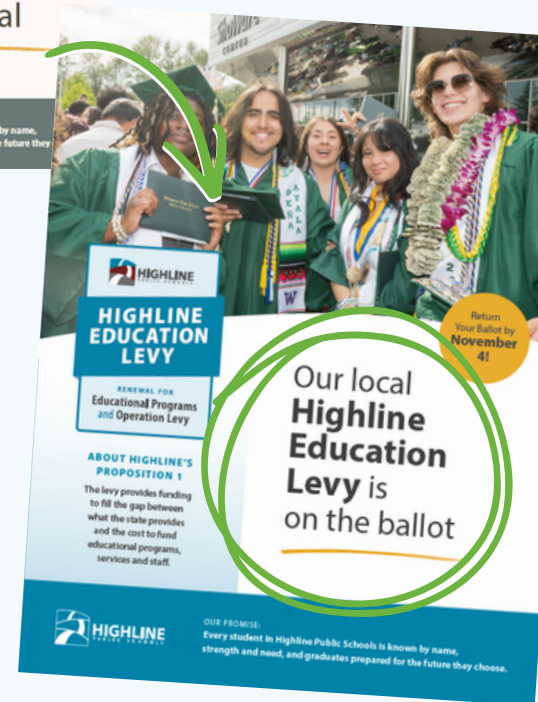
We replaced these with specific, factual descriptions of services, costs, and timelines.

## EDITING EXAMPLES: MAILER



We edited things such as “Our Highline Levy is up for renewal” to “Our local Highline education Levy is on the ballot.”

When the campaign was partly through, we realized we needed to be even more careful with wording. Our mailer had originally used “Up for renewal,” which could read as encouraging a yes vote. “On the ballot” simply states what is happening. This was in response to our local political context.



## EDITING EXAMPLES: DIGITAL ADS



Change headline to: Highline levy funds student programs



We avoided phrases like “continuing funding for Highline students,” which can read as persuasive. We replaced it with plain, factual language — “Highline levy funds student programs” — to describe what the levy pays for without implying urgency or asking for support.

# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

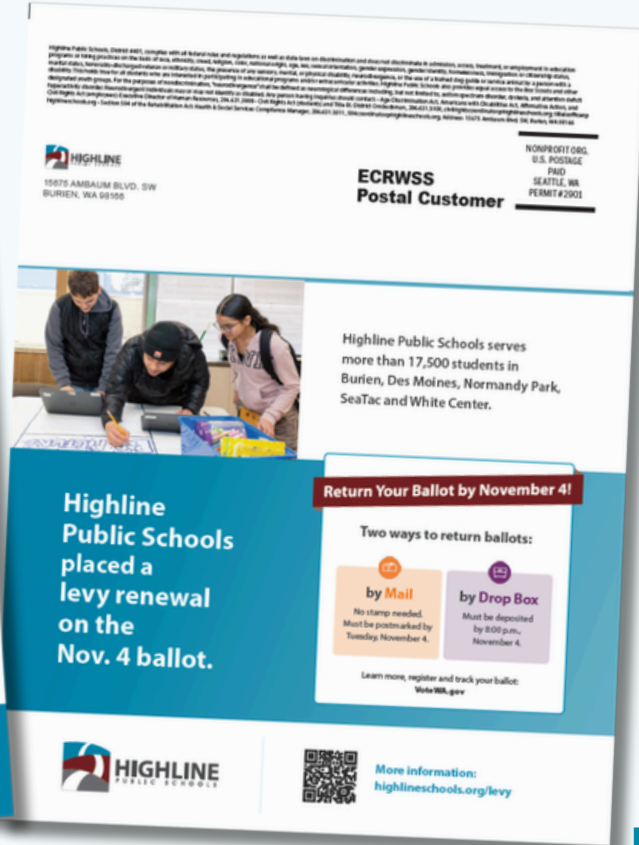
TACTIC SPOTLIGHT

## COMMUNITYWIDE MAILER

Direct mail was sent to all 63,500 residences across the Highline Public Schools service area.



FRONT



BACK

INSIDE

The levy makes up 15% of Highline's budget.

Highline's Prop. 1 is not a new tax. It is a renewal of a local levy voters approved in 2021.

#### LEVY COLLECTION AMOUNTS & TAX RATES

Tax rates are expected to remain stable—with an adjustment each year to keep up with inflation. If approved, these are the maximum amounts Highline is allowed to collect.

These numbers are projections.

Year	Levy Amount	Projected Tax Rate
2027	\$74.5 million	\$2.07
2028	\$80.3 million	\$2.09
2029	\$86.2 million	\$2.10
2030	\$92.8 million	\$2.11

Levy amounts are set using projections that reflect the maximum number of students Highline anticipates.

The actual amount collected is calculated each year based on the number of students. When enrollment is lower, collections are less than the approved amount, just as it has been for several years.



#### Did You Know?

Highline is underfunded in special education by approximately \$19 million this school year. In the past, we used levy dollars to fill that gap for students receiving special education services.

Special education services include speech therapy, classroom aides, modified curriculum and behavioral support. Because a new state rule does not allow us to use local levy funds for special education, we are now covering these costs out of our basic education budget. The proposed 2023 levy will now fill the underfunding gap across all areas.

[highlineschools.org/specialeducation](http://highlineschools.org/specialeducation)

#### What Does the Levy Renewal Fund?

Highline's Proposition 1 levy continues local funding for programs and services not fully funded by the state, such as:

<p><b>Student Learning</b> Programs and resources for students of all abilities and needs.</p>	<p><b>College and Career Readiness</b> 100% of College &amp; Career Readiness programs like career fairs, job shadowing, internships and college planning.</p>	<p><b>Student Support</b> 82 Health Services staff, including counselors, psychologists and social workers.</p>	<p><b>Safety and Security</b> Safety improvements and 42 of 45 safety staff, including bus monitors and Safety and Security department staff.</p>
<p><b>Operational Costs</b> Materials, supplies, utilities, insurance and facility maintenance.</p>	<p><b>Staffing and Compensation</b> Funding to pay the difference for negotiated staff salaries.</p>	<p><b>Technology and Cybersecurity</b> Classroom technology, software and cybersecurity systems.</p>	<p><b>Athletics</b> 100% of athletic programs, including coaches and support staff.</p>



More information: [highlineschools.org/levy](http://highlineschools.org/levy)

# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

## THANK YOU, VOTERS: LEVY HELPS KEEP STUDENTS SAFE — AND SEEN

MORE HEADLINES >

JUN 6 2025



### Trammell's Story

#### A FACE AND HEART BEHIND HIGHLINE'S COMMUNITY SAFETY TEAM

Trammell Woods brings more than experience to her role as Community Safety Manager — she brings a big heart and a passion for service.

A former safety & security officer, juvenile probation officer and mentor, deputy sheriff, chef, published poet, and author of a workbook on trauma, Trammell stepped into school safety because of her desire to help kids. "School may be the only safe place some students have," she says. "We need to make it feel that way."

Trammell's work is funded in part by the 2021 Highline Education Levy, which pays for safety and security staff in schools. But for her, it's not just about protection. It's really about prevention.

### School Construction

- 2022 Bond Projects >
- 2016 Bond Projects >
- Community Participation >
- Get Informed >
- Planning >

### Search School Construction News

SEARCH

English >

## TRANSPARENCY BETWEEN ELECTIONS

For the proposed 2025 levy, we stayed fact-focused.

Separately, we continued our regular practice of reporting back on past voter-approved measures. After the 2021 levy, we published thank-you stories that showed what levy dollars funded, using specific examples of student supports and services.

We also built on existing transparency work funded through school construction bonds. A communications specialist position, partially funded by a previous bond, focuses on reporting back to the community on how community dollars are used.

Together, this work reinforced a consistent message: Highline tracks community-funded dollars and reports how they are used.

“Thanks to Highline’s local education levy — approved by voters in 2021 — student-athletes like Yoselin have access to the coaches, teams and opportunities that build leadership, confidence and life skills. In addition to academic, mental health, community safety and other support staff, the levy helps fund coach stipends and athletic staffing beyond what the state provides.”

## LEVY SUPPORT POWERS YOSELIN'S JOURNEY FROM TENNIS ROOKIE TO 4.0 SCHOLAR-ATHLETE

MORE HEADLINES >

MAY 29 2025



### Yoselin's Story

From never having played a sport to competing in three — and earning a 4.0 GPA along the way — Highline High School senior Yoselin Estrada has discovered strength, strategy and confidence through athletics.

Yoseline credits her student-athlete journey to one unexpected beginning: tennis.

### School Construction

- 2022 Bond Projects >
- 2016 Bond Projects >
- Community Participation >
- Get Informed >
- Planning >

### Search School Construction News

SEARCH

English >

“I had never played sports before high school,” says Yoselin. “I didn’t even know what tennis was. But I lived near the new courts in Sunnydale, and I saw them

# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

During the 2026-27 budget planning communication, we shared the role the levy plays in our budget picture.

## A Message from Superintendent Duran

### 2026-27 BUDGET REDUCTION

Team Highline,

As we move deeper into the school year, I want to thank you. Thank you for your efforts to ensure our students' needs are met and for supporting our larger community during these times of uncertainty. During my visits to schools, I see an urgency to meet the needs of our students and staff supporting each other. You bring stability, care, and belonging every day. That consistency helps students feel welcome, valued, and safe.

Like many school districts across Washington and the nation, we continue to face funding challenges. The state continues to underfund basic education and has not kept pace with rising costs for essentials such as insurance, utilities, and other operating expenses.

Thanks to disciplined decisions over many years, we are financially stable today. That stability allows us to stay focused on students and learning. However, costs continue to rise faster than revenue.

Last year, we were able to avoid budget reductions. The state provided less funding than anticipated, and this year we will need to adjust our plans to maintain our financial stability moving forward. We are also closely monitoring what is happening at the federal level and are preparing for multiple scenarios.

To maintain long-term stability, we will continue making disciplined decisions and anticipate reducing our budget by about \$8 million as we develop the 2026-27 budget. These decisions will be difficult. We will keep you informed along the way.

Our local levy plays a role in our funding picture. It makes up about 15% of our operating budget and covers programs and services that state and federal funding do not. Voters will see a [levy renewal](#) on the November ballot.

I know this message brings uncertainty. What remains constant is our reliability for students and families. Together, we will keep living



“

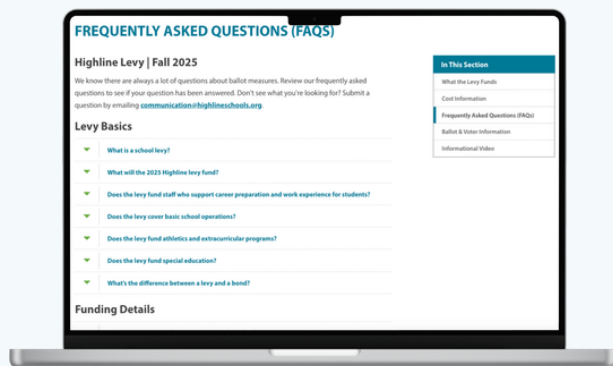
“Our local levy plays a role in our funding picture. It makes up about 15% of our operating budget and covers programs and services that state and federal funding do not. Voters will see a levy renewal on the November ballot.”

”

# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

TACTIC SPOTLIGHT

## PUBLIC WEBSITE



Our levy website was the single public source of facts about the campaign. We linked it in the top navigation of our website and drove to it in every other communication, including a rotating banner and a homepage icon, so families and community members could quickly find the same accurate information. The site housed comprehensive, compliant content in one place, including:

- What the Levy Funds
- Cost Information
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Ballot & Voter Information
- Informational Video

# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

## TACTIC SPOTLIGHT

# LEADER TOOLKIT

We equipped principals and department leaders with a ready-to-use levy toolkit so they could share timely, accurate and compliant levy information. The toolkit included:

- Up-to-date, centralized key messages
- Elections Do's and Don'ts guidance
- A simple timeline and clear action steps for leaders
- Ready-to-use templates and materials for families and staff:
  - Message templates
  - Informational slide deck
  - Short videos
  - Posters, flyers, and postcard-size handouts (English, Spanish, Vietnamese)

To support school-based events and public posting, we delivered printed posters and handouts to every school office, with clear directions for how to use them.

This approach helped schools communicate consistently, respond to questions with confidence and ensure families could access levy information through both print and digital channels.

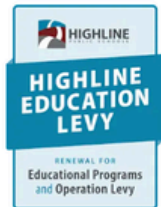
## 2025 Levy Toolkit

[collab 2.0](#)>[Communications](#)>[Comms Support](#)> 2025 Levy Toolkit

### Your Role in Levy Communication

This toolkit is designed to help school leaders and staff communicate clearly and accurately about *Proposition 1: Renewal of Expiring Educational Programs and Operation Levy* on November 4 ballots in Highline. It is your responsibility to:

1. **Inform your school/department community** about the 2025 levy using neutral, factual information provided by the Communications Office.
2. **Follow election guidance** for school district staff.
3. **Inform staff** who you supervise about Prop. 1 and provide them with election guidance.



## Levy Communication Timeline for Leaders

School leaders and office managers play an important role in communicating about the 2025 Highline Education Levy. School leaders should review the Levy Communication Timeline below to know what to do this fall between August 18 and November 4.



### Staff Guidance During Elections

Know the law when it comes to elections, including funding measures and candidates. Here are the basics:

- District funds and time can be used to provide neutral, factual information about a ballot measure or candidates. Staff may distribute and reuse content created by the Communications Office.
- State law restricts the use of district resources to support or oppose a ballot issue, including referendums, bonds, levies, or candidates for public office.

#### Actions to Take:

- Please read and follow our one-page Staff Guidance related to ballot measures and candidates in upcoming elections.
- Review the list of activities that are permitted or not permitted for specific examples.
- Leaders: Print and post the one-pager in staff common areas, distribute it during a staff meeting and link to it in an email to staff.

Staff Guidance- Elections

# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

TACTIC SPOTLIGHT

## LEVY TOOLKIT FOR LEADERS

Levy Plan and Timeline for Leaders

### Your Levy Communication Plan & Timeline

#### For School or Worksite Leaders & Office Managers

##### August 18 – September 2

- Share guidance on [Election Issues Dos & Don'ts](#) with staff in a meeting and email a reminder with a link to the document.
- Briefly introduce levy renewal information in a staff meeting.
  - o Use [Key Messages for Staff](#) as talking points.
  - o Show and share the Levy website: [highlineschools.org/levy](https://highlineschools.org/levy)
  - o A video, slide deck, handouts and flyers will be added throughout September.

##### September 3 – October 15

- Remind staff in a meeting about [Election Issues Dos & Don'ts](#).
  - o This guidance applies to the levy and any other candidates or ballot initiatives.
  - o Follow up with an email that links to the 1-page guidance.
- Present 2025 Highline Levy Renewal info in a staff meeting.
  - o Use the levy slide deck and video (available in early September)
- Present 2025 Highline Levy Renewal info in a school-wide family meeting.
  - o Use the levy slide deck, video and handouts.
  - o Request district support for presentations as needed – contact [Communications](#).
- Remind high school students about the future voter program and how to register to vote, if/when eligible, if you usually do this every year.
- Post levy information flyers and posters in public areas of your school. (Available in early September.)
- Include levy facts and information in your regular school newsletter and/or send a family message — use wording from [these templates](#).
- School reader board: Post “Levy Info: [highlineschools.org/levy](https://highlineschools.org/levy)” or just “[highlineschools.org/levy](https://highlineschools.org/levy)” September 15 - November 4.

##### October 15 – November 4

- School reader board: Add or change to “Remember to Vote by Nov. 4!” Depending on space available.
- Remind staff and families to return their ballots in the November 4 General Election in your school newsletter or as part of a family message – use wording from [these templates](#).

# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

## TACTIC SPOTLIGHT

# ELECTION DOS AND DON'TS

Election Dos & Don'ts are shared internally with all staff, leadership and board members. They are included in the levy toolkit and shared any time we enter an election window where staff may be communicating about a ballot measure, candidate elections or voting information.

## Election Issues Dos & Don'ts

Staff Guidance | Fall 2025

### Know the rules

State law restricts the use of district resources to support or oppose a ballot issue, including referendums, bonds, levies, or candidates for public office. This applies to school board members, district employees, and other persons acting on behalf of the district. Resources may take many forms such as newsletters, e-mail addresses and employee time.

### What's Allowed?

District funds and time can be used to provide **neutral, factual information** about a ballot measure or candidates. Using district resources to remind people **when** an election will occur or to encourage them to vote is allowed, as long as the messages **do not encourage the public to vote in a specific way**.

**The Communications Office will produce neutral, factual information about ballot measures and election day details.** Your best bet is to distribute and re-use that content, rather than creating your own. Speak with the Communications Office if you would like to share information about the election that hasn't already been distributed by the department.


Ask questions if you're unsure—better safe than sorry.

<b>Don't</b> On Work Time or with Work Tools	<b>You Can</b> On Your Own Time, Using Personal Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote or oppose any candidate or ballot issue.</li><li>• Use district email or phones to share opinions.</li><li>• Print campaign materials using district supplies.</li><li>• Post political signs on school property.</li><li>• Contact families or staff using district records to advocate.</li><li>• Use work hours to campaign.</li><li>• Allow political campaign signs on district and school property.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speak at public events as a private citizen.</li><li>• Use personal email or phone to share your views.</li><li>• Copy or distribute materials with your own equipment.</li><li>• Put signs on your property or car.</li><li>• Contact friends and family with advocacy messages on your own time with your own resources.</li><li>• Volunteer to support or oppose a campaign.</li></ul>

# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

## TACTIC SPOTLIGHT

# LEVY PRESENTATION



### HIGHLINE EDUCATION LEVY

RENEWAL FOR Educational Programs and Operation Levy

## Information About Proposition 1

and Election Information

### Special Education: \$19M State Funding Gap

- Levy used to fill the state funding gap for special education
  - Speech therapy, occupational therapy, classroom aides
- New state rule blocks levy use for special education
- The 2025 levy is filling the underfunding gap across all areas.



### The November 2025 levy renews local funding for educational programs, services and staff — filling the gap between what the state provides and what is needed to fund educational programs, services and staff in Highline.





### Collection Amounts & Tax Rates

Cost Information

These numbers are projections. We collect based on actual enrollment and property values. We are not allowed to collect more than what is approved by voters.

Year	Levy Amount	Projected Tax Rate	Levy Amount	Projected Tax Rate
	High Enrollment Projection		Medium Enrollment Projection	
2026 <small>(part of the 2027 levy)</small>	\$69.9 million	\$2.03	\$67.8 million	\$2.01
2027	\$74.5 million	\$2.07	\$71.8 million	\$1.99
2028	\$80.3 million	\$2.09	\$76.6 million	\$1.99
2029	\$86.2 million	\$2.10	\$81.3 million	\$1.98
2030	\$92.8 million	\$2.11	\$86.6 million	\$1.97
<b>4-Year Total</b>	<b>\$333.9 million</b>		<b>\$316.3 million</b>	




If enrollment is lower than projected—as it has been recently—we collect less than the approved amount.



### Property Values

Cost Information

If property values go up, the tax rate is adjusted downward.  
The school district cannot collect more than the amount approved by voters.  
Increases in property values do not generate more revenue for the school district.

### Ballot Information

NAME OF BALLOT MEASURE  
Highline School District No. 401, Proposition 1: Renewal of Expiring Educational Programs and Operation Levy


ELECTION DATE  
November 4, 2025

### TAX IMPACT TO SENIOR CITIZENS

### Low-income seniors and people with disabilities may qualify for an exemption.

To apply for this exemption, call the King County Tax Exemptions Office at 206-296-3920 or visit the King County Assessor website.





### We Collect Only What We Need

Levy amounts are based on high enrollment projections to ensure we're authorized to meet student needs—but actual collections depend on how many students enroll.

If enrollment is lower than projected—as it has been recently—we collect less than the approved amount.

Images above show slides from the levy information deck, produced in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. School leaders identified an early opportunity to share this information with families during back-to-school events, and the deck was also shared with the Family Action Committee, Community Partners Roundtable and all school and department staff. District communication leaders introduced levy details during the kickoff leadership forum for all school and department leaders, modeling how to present the information and answer questions.



# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

TACTIC SPOTLIGHT

## VIDEO



ENGLISH



SPANISH

# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

## TACTIC SPOTLIGHT

# DIGITAL ADS

To expand reach beyond our owned channels, we ran a paid digital ad campaign informing about the levy through a 30-second video ad and a full set of static ads across Google, YouTube, and Meta.

### Static Display ads:

- Household reach: 8,712
- Total impressions: 385,662
- Total clicks: 487
- Click-through rate: 0.12%

### Video ad (30 seconds)

- Views: 238,449
- Impressions: 363,609
- Clicks: 150



**Highline levy funds student programs**

**Prop. 1** funds counselors, safety staff, technology, and college & career programs.

**Ballots due Nov. 4**



Paid for by Highline Public Schools.



**Local levy funds Highline programs**


Highline's levy bridges the gap between what the state funds and Highline's operating costs.

- Social workers and counselors
- Safety and security staff
- College and career readiness
- Technology

**Learn more about the HPS levy. Ballots due Nov. 4.**




Paid for by Highline Public Schools.



**Local education levy on the Nov. ballot**

Prop. 1 funds school and classroom staff and student programs.



Paid for by Highline Public Schools.



**Highline levy funds education programs & services**

**Ballots due Nov. 4**



Paid for by Highline Public Schools.



**What the levy funds**

Student academic programs, safety and security staff, classroom technology, and college and career readiness programs.

**The levy is 15% of Highline's budget.**



Paid for by Highline Public Schools.



**Highline levy funds student programs & services**

**Prop. 1 funds safety staff, counselors and learning**



Paid for by Highline Public Schools.

# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

TACTIC SPOTLIGHT

## ELECTION NIGHT COMMS PLANNING

We planned ahead for what we would say and when we would say it, following the election results. We built clear post-election messages and timing for both pass and fail scenarios so we could communicate quickly.

### Election Night Communications Plan

Scenario	Timing	Audience	Action	Staff	Notes
If the levy clearly passes	Tues, 8:20 PM	Cabinet/Board	Send email		
	Tues, 8:30 PM	All staff	Send email		
	Tues, 8:40 PM	Public	Website Article		
	Tues, 8:45 PM	Families	ParentSquare		
	Tues, 8:45 PM	Public	FB, Insta		
If too close to call	Tues, 8:20 PM	Cabinet/Board	Send email		
	Tues, 8:30 PM	Leadership Forum	Send email		
	Tues, 8:40 PM	All staff	Send email		
	Wed, 9:00 AM	Public	Website Article		
	Wed, 4:30 PM	Families	ParentSquare		
If fails	Tues, 8:20 PM	Cabinet/Board	Website Article		
	Wed, 9:00 AM	Leadership Forum	Send Email		
	Wed, 12:00 PM	All staff	Send email		
	Wed, 4:30 PM	Families	Send email		

### If The Levy Clearly PASSES

#### Cabinet/School Board Email

**Subject:** Preliminary Results Show Levy Renewal Passing

# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

TACTIC SPOTLIGHT

## THANK YOU VOTERS - SCHOOL OFFICE FLYER

**THANK  
YOU,  
HIGHLINE  
VOTERS**

**GRACIAS,  
VOTANTES DE  
HIGHLINE**



**+63%!**

### **Highline Levy Passes**

Election results are in! With 63.34% voting in favor, the Highline Education Levy passed thanks to overwhelming community support.

### **El Levy de Highline se aprobó**

¡Ya tenemos los resultados de las elecciones! Con un 63.34% de votos a favor, el Impuesto Educativo de Highline se aprobó gracias al abrumador apoyo de la comunidad.



[gethps.info/levyresults2025](https://gethps.info/levyresults2025)

# SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

## HIGHLINE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



**Tove Tupper, APR**  
*Chief Communications Officer*

Provides strategic communications counsel to the superintendent and cabinet. Led levy communications planning and messaging. Oversaw media relations and issues management during the campaign and guided strategies to strengthen school-family communication and foster community support.



**Mandi LeCompte, APR**  
*Director of Communications*

Develops and carries out districtwide communication plans aligned with the strategic plan. Led research and strategic planning support for the levy campaign and oversaw all levy design and materials. Manages communication systems and programs, oversees district branding, and supports media relations and crisis communications.



**Carolina Moricet**  
*Communications Manager*

Manages and develops social media campaigns. Oversaw levy video production; manages family and staff website; conducts data analytics; supports execution of communication plans.



**Nicole Thompson**  
*Communications Manager*

Manages content on district and school websites; leads social media daily planning; supports execution of communication plans; supports school newsletters; point person on school incident messaging.



**Linda Isguerra**  
*Communications Assistant*

Manages ParentSquare and PeachJar support for staff; supports Spanish translation and other translation needs; coordinates the Weekly Leadership Brief and Office Manager FYI; and provides campaign support, including coordinating message distribution and supporting multilingual materials.



**Rosie Eades**  
*Communications Specialist*

Leads communications for bonds and school construction, including coordinating the Capital Facilities Advisory Committee. Develops content for social media, the website, and email newsletters, and supports execution of the communication plan to promote ongoing trust and transparency with the community.

## CONTRACTORS



**Lesley Rogers, APR**  
*Communications Consultant,  
Progressive Strategies*

Led digital ads for the levy, supported the annual poll, drafted a series of family messages, supported review of collateral and ensured all timelines were met.



**Annemieke Beemster  
Leverenz**  
*Graphic Design Contractor, Radmiral*

Led graphic design production, including branding systems and production of printed and mailed collateral.