



Legislation Text

File #: Res 31860, Version: 1

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION supporting the Seattle Public Schools' Proposition 1 and Proposition 2 and urging Seattle voters to vote "Yes" on Proposition 1 and Proposition 2 on the February 12, 2019, special election ballot.

WHEREAS, as of October 2017, there were approximately 53,775 students enrolled in Seattle School District No. 1 (SPS) in 103 school buildings across the City of Seattle; and

WHEREAS, the students enrolled at SPS are increasingly diverse and come to the classroom with varying needs. For example, SPS-enrolled students speak 154 languages and/or dialects; 33.9 percent of SPS students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals; 21.7 percent of SPS students speak a home language other than English; 4,280 SPS students are currently experiencing housing instability and/or homelessness; and 6,748 special education students are enrolled at SPS; and

WHEREAS, investing in public education and strengthening equitable access to high-quality education helps students and their families optimize their potential. Equitable access to high-quality education will prepare and build future leaders to participate in our workforce while strengthening community and civic life; and

WHEREAS, the opportunity and academic achievement gap persists for SPS students and disproportionately impacts students of color, students who are experiencing housing instability and/or homelessness, students needing special education, and students who are English Language Learners (ELL). For example, in the 2016-2017 school year, the adjusted four-year cohort graduation rate for all students was 79 percent, yet for Alaska Native/Native American students it was 50 percent, for Black and Latinx

students it was 71.4 percent and 64 percent, respectively. Students needing special education had a 54 percent graduation rate, ELL students had a 55.7 percent graduation rate, and students experiencing homelessness and/or housing instability had a graduation rate of 47.5 percent; and

WHEREAS, Article IX, Section 1 of the Washington State Constitution states that “it is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders, without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste, or sex”; and

WHEREAS, a funding gap between what the State of Washington allocates for public education and what Seattle’s public-school students need persists even after the resolution of *McCleary, et al., et al. v. State of Washington*, No. 84362-7 (*McCleary Decision*); and

WHEREAS, as the largest school district in the state, SPS has asked voters to approve levies to close these historic and ongoing funding gaps to support school district operations and to fund capital projects, improvements, major maintenance and repairs through operations levies and capital levies; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the Washington State Legislature authorized school districts to seek voter approval of special levies to raise funding for maintenance and operation support (RCW 84.52.053), allowing SPS to seek additional levy funding for district-wide capital, maintenance, and operation needs; and

WHEREAS, the SPS Board of Directors voted unanimously on October 30, 2018, to place a three-year operations levy and a six-year capital levy before Seattle voters on the February 12, 2019, special election ballot; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 1 will bridge the funding gap for day-to-day operations important to building student success and health by, for example, funding the following basic education needs of SPS students: special education services for 7,000 students; essential educational costs such as staff salaries, nurses, librarians, counselors, family support workers, and instructional and curriculum materials; additional Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education; and evidence-based strategies to close the opportunity gap; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 2 will fund significant capital construction and renovations to address capacity challenges for a growing school district by adding a total of 1,908 classroom seats to the school district; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 2 is essential to replacing and/or modernizing Rainier Beach High School, Mercer International Middle School, Alki Elementary, Kimball Elementary, Montlake Elementary, Northgate Elementary, John Rogers Elementary, and Viewlands Elementary School. Additionally, if approved by voters, Proposition 2 funding will be utilized to replace aging portables at West Seattle Elementary with new classrooms; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 2 will improve safety and security of SPS students at every school by funding secure entrances, earthquake safety improvements, and upgraded fire alarm systems; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 2 will fund classroom technology and supports for student learning as well as improve district systems and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 2 will fund the design phase and planning of future projects, including Aki Kurose Middle School and Sacajawea Elementary, to meet the needs of a growing public-school student population in the City of Seattle; and

WHEREAS, Propositions 1 and 2 complement the City of Seattle's Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise Levy (FEPP Levy) (Ordinance 125604 and Resolution 31821), which was approved by voters in the November 2018, general election; and

WHEREAS, The City of Seattle has a long history of partnering with SPS and its Board of Directors to ensure that FEPP Levy investments complement instructional seat-time and initiatives led by SPS for the educational benefit of Seattle students and their families; and

WHEREAS, The City of Seattle recognizes that an ongoing partnership with SPS and its Board of Directors is an important partnership that yields meaningful investments in the children and young adults enrolled at SPS; and

WHEREAS, after notice in accordance with RCW 42.17A.555 and Seattle Municipal Code Section 2.04.300, persons in favor of Propositions 1 and 2 and those opposed to it have been given an equal opportunity to share their views in an open public meeting; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE MAYOR CONCURRING, THAT:

Section 1. The Mayor and Seattle City Council urge Seattle voters to vote “Yes” on Seattle Public Schools’ Proposition 1 and Proposition 2 in the February 12, 2019, special election.

Adopted by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2019, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of _____, 2019.

President _____ of the City Council

The Mayor concurred the _____ day of _____, 2019.

Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2019.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)