



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

Select Committee on Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise Levy

Agenda

Thursday, May 29, 2025

9:30 AM

Council Chamber, City Hall
600 4th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Maritza Rivera, Chair
Alexis Mercedes Rinck, Vice-Chair
Joy Hollingsworth, Member
Robert Kettle, Member
Cathy Moore, Member
Sara Nelson, Member
Rob Saka, Member
Mark Solomon, Member
Dan Strauss, Member

Chair Info: 206-684-8804; Maritza.Rivera@seattle.gov

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Preschool, and Promise Levy**
Agenda
May 29, 2025 - 9:30 AM

Meeting Location:

Council Chamber, City Hall, 600 4th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104

Committee Website:

<https://seattle.gov/council/committees/fepp-levy>

This meeting also constitutes a meeting of the City Council, provided that the meeting shall be conducted as a committee meeting under the Council Rules and Procedures, and Council action shall be limited to committee business.

Members of the public may register for remote or in-person Public Comment to address the Council. Details on how to provide Public Comment are listed below:

Remote Public Comment - Register online to speak during the Public Comment period at the meeting at

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Please submit written comments to all Councilmembers four hours prior to the meeting at Council@seattle.gov or at Seattle City Hall, Attn: Council Public Comment, 600 4th Ave., Floor 2, Seattle, WA 98104.

Please Note: Times listed are estimated

A. Call To Order

B. Approval of the Agenda

C. Public Comment

D. Items of Business

1. [CB 120981](#) **AN ORDINANCE relating to regular property taxes; requesting that a special election be held concurrent with the November 4, 2025 general election for submission to the qualified electors of the City, a proposition to lift the limit on regular property taxes under chapter 84.55 RCW and to authorize the City to levy additional taxes for up to six years for the purpose of providing education support services designed to improve access to early learning, including childcare and preschool; academic, health, and safety supports for K-12 students; and college and career pathways for Seattle students; applying the exemption for low income seniors, disabled veterans, and others authorized by RCW 84.36.381; authorizing a creation of a designated fund; directing the application of levy proceeds; establishing eligibility requirements for partners; establishing accountability and reporting structures; requiring a forthcoming Implementation and Evaluation Plan; proposing a ballot title; authorizing the implementation of agreements for this levy lid lift which will be commonly known as the Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise Levy; and ratifying and confirming certain prior acts.**

*Supporting
Documents:*

[Summary and Fiscal Note](#)

[Summary Att 1 - FEPP Levy Projected Expenditures and Revenues](#)

[Summary Att 2 - Levy Rate and Annual Cost to Homeowner](#)

Briefing and Discussion

Presenter: Jasmine Marwaha, Council Central Staff

E. Adjournment



Legislation Text

File #: CB 120981, **Version:** 1

CITY OF SEATTLE

ORDINANCE _____

COUNCIL BILL _____

AN ORDINANCE relating to regular property taxes; requesting that a special election be held concurrent with the November 4, 2025 general election for submission to the qualified electors of the City, a proposition to lift the limit on regular property taxes under chapter 84.55 RCW and to authorize the City to levy additional taxes for up to six years for the purpose of providing education support services designed to improve access to early learning, including childcare and preschool; academic, health, and safety supports for K-12 students; and college and career pathways for Seattle students; applying the exemption for low income seniors, disabled veterans, and others authorized by RCW 84.36.381; authorizing a creation of a designated fund; directing the application of levy proceeds; establishing eligibility requirements for partners; establishing accountability and reporting structures; requiring a forthcoming Implementation and Evaluation Plan; proposing a ballot title; authorizing the implementation of agreements for this levy lid lift which will be commonly known as the Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise Levy; and ratifying and confirming certain prior acts.

WHEREAS, The City of Seattle (City) envisions a community where every child has access to the resources to be ready to start kindergarten, ready to learn, and ready to launch into a career, and where students are healthy and safe; and

WHEREAS, affordability is a concern for many Seattle families with children; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning currently administers the Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise (FEPP) Levy and is responsible for developing the City's education policy and investment strategy for levy funds to help children and youth succeed through increased access to affordable childcare and preschool; academic, health, and safety supports for K-12 students; and college and career pathways; and

WHEREAS, Seattle voters previously approved four separate seven-year property tax lid lifts, each known as the Families and Education Levy, in 1990, 1997, 2004, and 2011; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, Seattle voters approved a four-year Seattle Preschool Levy to provide Seattle children with accessible preschool services designed to improve their readiness for school and to support their subsequent academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, Seattle voters approved a seven-year property tax lid lift, known as the FEPP Levy, to invest in Seattle children, students, and families to increase access to opportunities across the education continuum; and

WHEREAS, for a family in King County, the median cost for childcare in a childcare center ranges from four percent to 25 percent of median family income, depending on the type of center. The cost of care for infants, toddlers and preschoolers often exceeds the seven percent of household income threshold recommended by the federal Administration for Children and Families, within the Department of Health and Human Services; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle Preschool Program has earned a CityHealth Gold Medal in High-Quality, Accessible Pre-K for the last three years (2022-2024). This recognition is given to preschool programs that meet at least nine of ten National Institute for Early Education Research quality benchmarks around teacher qualifications, class size, staff trainings and supports, quality improvement systems, and health screenings; and

WHEREAS, K-12 students continue to struggle, both academically and socially, from loss of learning and mental health challenges associated with the global COVID-19 pandemic, and need academic and comprehensive support services to aid in academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, students can readily get their medical and mental health care needs met when access to that care is provided at their school; and

WHEREAS, safe school environments improve academic performance and health behaviors; and

WHEREAS, proceeds from the FEPP Levy are supplemental to the basic education financed by the State of Washington and the Seattle School District levies, and do not displace, or reduce, state or School

District funding for the Seattle School District; and

WHEREAS, since its inception in 2018, the Seattle Promise program has exceeded its enrollment projection, and according to the most recent available data, the program's graduation rate exceeded the national average; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, the Washington Student Achievement Council projected that by 2031, 72 percent of all job applicants will need to have a post-secondary degree and 33 percent of all job vacancies in Washington State will require an associate's degree or trade certificate; and

WHEREAS, to maintain its competitiveness, retain existing employers, and attract new industries with family-wage jobs, Seattle needs to provide a well-educated, well-trained workforce with the advanced skills and abilities needed to compete in the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, in addition to socioeconomic disparities, other factors, such as a lack of access to quality early childhood and K-12 education, patterns of residential and school segregation, and state policies could also have a negative impact on student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the public school system alone cannot address all barriers to student success, and because Seattle residents support the economic, social, and civic well-being of the City, supplemental funding provided through the FEPP Levy serves a legitimate City purpose; and

WHEREAS, the collection of taxes from the current FEPP Levy will end in 2025, and services funded by the levy will end unless a new levy is authorized; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor recommends the City place on the November 4, 2025 ballot a measure to replace the expiring FEPP Levy, and replace it with a new six-year FEPP Levy; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Findings and declarations. The City Council finds and declares:

A. Seattle's children are its future, and the quality of that future depends on providing children and their families with equitable and consistent access to educational services and supports.

B. Seattle needs an educated population that is actively engaged in its civic life and contributes to the economic and social well-being of the City.

C. Research findings have underscored the importance of quality early childhood education by identifying critical periods when a child's brain development facilitates the acquisition of certain skills, such as language and the need to capitalize on learning opportunities and social experiences. Children acquire a larger vocabulary and stronger language skills if exposed to adults with larger vocabularies.

D. The Child Care Assistance Program supports families not served by existing state and county subsidy programs. In 2024, this program supported 684 children below 94 percent state median income (SMI). The Seattle Preschool Program (SPP) served 2,182 students in the 2023-24 school year, 69 percent of whom qualified for a full subsidy with household income below 94 percent SMI. SPP is on track to serve 2,500 children in the final year of the expiring levy (2025-26 school year).

E. Participation in quality public preschool has positive effects on children's school experiences by reducing the demand for grade repetition, special education placement, mental health services, judicial system involvement, and unemployment support. Quality preschool focuses on comprehensive social, emotional, and cognitive skill development; health and nutrition support; and partnerships with families and elementary schools. Researchers have calculated a seven-to-ten percent return on investment for high-quality preschool.

F. In 2024, external evaluators found positive impacts of SPP participation on elementary school academic performance: SPP participants performed between 18 and 29 percentile points higher on kindergarten readiness and third grade math and reading assessments than demographically similar children who attended state-funded preschools.

G. The 2018 FEPP Levy funded K-12 academic, health, and comprehensive support services for 19,450 students citywide in the 2023-24 school year. More than 76 percent of youth served by community-based programs self-reported growth in skills such as leadership, collaboration, communications, and social emotional skills.

H. Research shows that school-based health centers (SBHCs) improve student health and emotional wellbeing and that these in turn aid academic performance by increasing school attendance rates and student grade point averages over time. Furthermore, adolescents are 21 times more likely to access mental health services at SBHCs than community-based clinics.

I. K-12 SBHCs served 17,762 students at 29 schools in the 2023-24 school year, providing access to free comprehensive medical services such as immunizations, physicals, treatment for acute and chronic illness, reproductive health care, and mental health counseling and referral.

J. In the fall of 2023, 892 Seattle public high school students enrolled in the Seattle Promise Program. As of 2023, there have been more than 900 Seattle Promise graduates. According to the most recent available data, the program's graduation rate exceeded the national average.

K. There is a demonstrable need to continue the City's investment in affordable childcare and preschool; academic, health and safety supports for K-12 students; and college and career pathways, funded by regular property taxes. This need requires submission of a proposition authorizing a six-year regular property tax levy in excess of the levy limitations in chapter 84.55 RCW. The proposition should be submitted to the qualified electors of The City of Seattle at a special election to be held in conjunction with the general election on November 4, 2025.

Section 2. Statement of policy. It is the paramount duty of the State "to make ample provision for the education of all students." Education institutions, including the Seattle School District, are directly responsible for providing a quality education for all students. To further support student academic achievement, government, business, community members, and families must also work together to advance the success of Seattle students.

A. Priorities for levy funding

1. Invest in Seattle's children, youth, and families to increase affordability of and access to childcare and preschool; academic, health, and safety supports for K-12 students, including expanded learning

opportunities; comprehensive support services; and college and career pathways.

2. Establish agreements with childcare and early learning providers, the Seattle School District, Public Health-Seattle & King County, Seattle Colleges, community-based organizations, and other institutional partners to implement services and ensure investment oversight and evaluation toward goals and outcomes.

3. Implement evidence-based strategies and best practices to improve the quality of service and/or maintain high-quality services.

4. Provide training and coaching opportunities to continuously improve service delivery and program instruction, quality, and operations.

B. Implementation principles

1. Prioritize investments to reach children, youth, and families and increase access to services and achieve levy outcomes.

2. Partner with community, cultural, and language-based organizations to provide academic and/or comprehensive support services.

3. Ensure levy proceeds are supplemental and complementary to existing non-City public funding structures and services; funding is never to be used to supplant state-mandated services.

4. Implement competitive processes to identify qualified organizations to partner with the City to deliver services to children, youth, and families.

5. Implement accountability structures based on student outcomes, performance-based agreements, performance-based awards, and practice continuous quality improvement.

6. Report annually on investments, access to services, and progress toward achieving levy outcomes and meeting contractual obligations, such as sharing of performance metrics and data.

Section 3. Definitions. As used in this ordinance:

A. "Access" means ability to obtain or apply for an available service or program despite geographical, financial, structural, social, or cultural barriers.

B. “Childcare” means the care and education of a child while the child’s parent or guardian is in school, or at or pursuing work.

C. “City” means The City of Seattle.

D. “College and career pathways” means education and/or job training beyond K-12 schooling including apprenticeships, trades, certificate programs, and post-secondary degrees.

E. “Community-based organization” means a public or private organization with demonstrated ability that is representative of a community or significant segments of a community and provides educational or related services to individuals in the community.

F. “Comprehensive support services” means non-academic supports to youth and families for basic needs, safe learning environments, and child and youth development.

G. “Education-support services” means the programs and activities referred to in Section 6 of this ordinance.

H. “Education-support services funding” means not less than \$1.2542 billion of the increased levy amount over six years, resulting from this ordinance’s passage.

I. “Expanded learning opportunities” means before-school, after-school, summer, and school break programs that create access to year-round learning, and youth development programs that foster college and career readiness through activities such as tutoring, mentoring, social and emotional learning, project-based learning, science, technology, engineering, arts, and math, family engagement, and culturally responsive supports.

J. “Kindergarten ready” means children who are equipped with the knowledge and skills deemed to be essential for success in kindergarten, as measured by the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS).

K. “Post-secondary” means education beyond K-12 schooling, including apprenticeships, trade certificates, or an associate’s or four-year college degree.

L. “Preschool” means an organized education program provided to children below the age and grade level at which the State provides free public education for all.

M. “Proceeds” means that portion of regular property taxes levied and collected as authorized by voter approval pursuant to this ordinance that are above the limits on levies provided for in RCW 84.55.010, and all interest and other earnings derived from that portion of the levy.

N. “Public Health-Seattle & King County” means the government agency that oversees public health for the King County Metro area in the State of Washington.

O. “Qualified,” when used outside the term “qualified electors,” means officially recognized as being trained to perform a particular job, or certified.

P. “School-based health centers” means school-based facilities that offer, comprehensive medical and physical health, mental health, oral health, and health promotion services provided by qualified health care professionals before, during, and after school.

Q. “Seattle Colleges” means the Seattle Colleges District, a multi-college district that includes South Seattle College, Seattle Central College, and North Seattle College.

R. “Seattle School District” means Seattle School District No. 1.

Section 4. Levy of regular property taxes - Submittal. The City submits to the qualified electors of the City a proposition as authorized by RCW 84.55.050 to exceed the levy limitation on regular property taxes contained in RCW 84.55.010, for property taxes levied in 2025 through 2030 for collection in 2026 through 2031, respectively. The proposition shall be limited so that the City shall not levy more than a total tax rate of \$3.01 per \$1,000 of assessed value in the first year, representing an additional tax rate of \$0.71 per \$1,000 of assessed value in the first year. The proposition is expected to raise approximately \$1.2542 billion in aggregate over six years for education-support services funding used to provide education-support services for Seattle children, youth, and families. The levy amount in the first year shall be used to determine subsequent years’ allowable regular levy limit in accordance with chapter 84.55 RCW. Amounts collected in excess of the

education-support services funding amount are available for other City purposes for which the City's regular levy may be applied. In accordance with RCW 84.36.381 and RCW 84.55.050, the City will exempt seniors, veterans with disabilities, or other persons with disabilities who qualify under RCW 84.36.381 from the increased levy amount resulting from the proposition's passage. Pursuant to RCW 84.55.050(4), the maximum regular property taxes that may be levied in 2031 for collection in 2032 and in later years shall be computed as if the levy lid in RCW 84.55.010 had not been lifted under this ordinance.

Section 5. Application of proceeds. Unless otherwise directed by ordinance, proceeds shall be deposited in a hereafter established fund, the 2025 Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise Fund. The City's Director of Finance shall administer the Fund. Proceeds may be temporarily deposited or invested in such a manner as may be lawful for the investment of City money, and interest and other earnings shall be used for the same purposes as the proceeds.

The City is authorized to reallocate within a budget year unexpended and unencumbered funds from one core strategy to another by making operating budget transfers consistent with Section 3.14.220 of the Seattle Municipal Code. If outside funds become available to help support one or more of these core strategies, or if outside funds are revoked, then funds may be reallocated to other core strategies.

Section 6. Education-support services. Services funded by proceeds are intended to increase access and delivery of childcare and preschool; academic, health, and safety supports for K-12 students; college and career pathways; and comprehensive support services. Levy investments shall be guided by the Statement of Policy, Priorities for Levy Funding, and Implementation Principles set out in Section 2 of this ordinance. Initially, these core strategies will be pursued through education-support services that include:

A. Early childhood. Major program elements are intended to increase access to affordable childcare and preschool for Seattle children and their families, with services that may include, but are not limited to: financial support for families, childcare and preschool operating costs, facilities grants, and financial supports for early childhood workers such as, training, coaching, education, and employment incentives, and early childhood

health and development services such as home-visiting programs. Services may also include home nurse programs that offer prenatal support.

B. K-12 student supports. Major program elements are intended to increase Seattle student college and career readiness, with services that may include, but are not limited to: expanded learning opportunities including year-round, out-of-school time activities; academic tutoring, mentoring, and case management; social, emotional, and behavioral skill building; culturally-responsive programming and family engagement activities; college and job readiness activities and college admissions supports; job exploration activities; and advising and guidance related to college and career.

C. K-12 health and safety. Major program elements are intended to increase Seattle student physical and mental wellness, with services that may include, but are not limited to: comprehensive primary medical care, mental health care, oral health care, health education, care coordination, facilities grants, connection and referral to community supports, violence prevention, and outreach.

D. College and career supports. Major program elements are intended to increase Seattle student completion of post-secondary degree and/or career pathway opportunities, including the trades, with services that may include, but are not limited to: academic preparation and application, retention, transfer supports, and financial assistance.

In the annual City budget or by separate ordinance, the City shall determine from year-to-year the education-support services and funding allocations that will most effectively achieve levy priorities and outcomes.

Section 7. Implementation and evaluation plan. An Implementation and Evaluation Plan (“Plan”) shall be approved by ordinance. The Plan may also be amended by ordinance. The Plan shall set forth the following: priority criteria, including type of educational support; methodology, and process by which these levy-funded strategies will be selected; and the procedure for regularly monitoring and evaluating overall impacts and

outcomes of each of the individual investments.

The Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) shall create the Plan in collaboration with the Executive and the City Council. DEEL will partner with associated stakeholders including, but not limited to, City departments, the Seattle School District, Seattle Colleges, Public Health-Seattle & King County, students, families, educators, community-based organizations, cultural- and language-based organizations, other governmental entities, and other educational institutions. The plan shall include a summary of stakeholders consulted.

The Plan shall be submitted to the City Council for its approval. Funds collected by levy shall be spent in accordance with the terms of the Implementation and Evaluation Plan. Until the new Implementation and Evaluation Plan is approved by the City Council, the criteria, guidelines, and requirements contained in the most-recently approved plan shall remain in effect, unless otherwise provided by ordinance.

Section 8. Accountability and reporting. Upon voter approval of the ballot proposition submitted by this ordinance, there is established an Oversight Committee (Committee) to advise and make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on levy-supported programs and activities and to monitor for transparency and accountability.

A. The Committee shall review an annual report of levy outcomes and indicators, monitor program implementation and evaluation of progress in meeting levy-intended priorities and goals, and advise on proposed course corrections.

B. The Committee shall consist of 17 members whose composition will include the Mayor, the chair of the City Council's committee with oversight of education programs, the Superintendent of the Seattle School District, a member of the Seattle School Board, the Chancellor of Seattle Colleges, and 12 appointed members with a nexus to Seattle. The Mayor and the City Council shall each appoint six of the committee members. All members appointed by the Mayor shall be confirmed by the City Council.

C. The appointed members shall be appointed to staggered two-year terms, with the option of an

additional term subject to reappointment. Upon the resignation, retirement, death, incapacity, or removal of a Committee member, the authority appointing of such member may appoint a replacement for the balance of the term. The appointing authority may remove any member for good cause, such as unexcused absences from two or more consecutive meetings.

D. The appointed members should have professional, personal, or research experience associated with the growth and development of children, including student academic achievement and post-secondary and job opportunities. The City may develop specified positions that establish the desired areas of expertise for each appointed citizen committee member, split evenly between the Mayor and City Council, in the Plan referenced in Section 7 of this ordinance. The City will also seek candidates to serve on the Committee who understand, have experience working with, and represent historically underserved groups including African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Pacific Islanders, underserved Asian populations, other students of color, refugee and immigrant, homeless, and LGBTQIA+ students.

E. At all times no more than five Committee members shall be an officer, director, board member, trustee, partner, or employee of an entity that receives or competes for funding under this ordinance; or be an immediate family member of, or an individual residing with, an officer, director, board member, trustee, partner, or employee of an entity that receives or competes for funding under this ordinance; or be a person seeking or having an arrangement concerning future employment with an entity that receives or competes for funding under this ordinance. For the purposes of this ordinance an individual's "immediate family" means an individual's spouse or domestic partner, child, child of a spouse or domestic partner, sibling, sibling of a domestic partner, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, parent, parent of a spouse or domestic partner, a person for whom the individual is a legal guardian, or a person claimed as a dependent on the individual's most recently filed federal income tax return. Subject to the preceding sentence and applicable law, an individual serving as an officer, director, board member, trustee, partner or employee of an entity that receives or competes for funding under this ordinance, or who has an interest in such an entity, shall not thereby be disqualified from

serving on the Committee, but shall fully disclose any such relationships and shall not vote on any matter that directly involves the interests of such entity. For purposes of this section, “entity” does not include a City department or office. The provisions of this section are in addition to the requirements of Chapter 4.16 of the Seattle Municipal Code.

F. The Mayor and the chair of the City Council’s committee with oversight of education programs, or their respective designees, will co-chair the Committee. The Oversight Committee may adopt rules for its own procedures, covering topics such as quorum requirements, and the frequency of meetings.

G. Meetings of the Oversight Committee will be open to the public consistent with the Open Public Meetings Act, chapter 42.30 RCW. The Committee will convene beginning January 2026. DEEL shall provide staff and logistical support for the Committee. The appointed members may be eligible for some reimbursement costs pertaining to in-person participation, such as parking, at the discretion of the Director of Education. Members shall serve without pay, with respect to duties as assigned by the Committee. The Committee shall continue in existence through December 31, 2032.

H. Any committees created by expired levies covering the same subject matter as the levy created by this ordinance are terminated.

Section 9. Agreements with public agencies. The Director of Education is authorized to enter agreements for education-support services with the Seattle Public School District, Seattle Colleges, Public Health-Seattle & King County, and the State of Washington. The Director of Education is also authorized to enter agreements with non-public entities for the education-support services using an advertised process, such as a request for proposals or qualifications, except in case of emergency as determined by the Executive or when the Director of Education determines that a process is not feasible because the services are only available from one source or are impracticable to solicit.

All City agreements for education-support services shall cover items including, but not limited to, the specific service provided, standards for delivery of services, intended outcomes, performance metrics and data

sharing requirements on an annual basis to determine program evaluations and course corrections. These City agreements will also require the contracting entities to comply with all then applicable requirements for non-discrimination in employment in federal, state, and City laws and regulations. All City agreements funded by the proceeds will stipulate that no assurances are made of continuation beyond the 2026-32 school years after the levy lid lift authorized by the voters has expired.

Section 10. Election - Ballot title. The City Council directs the City Clerk to file this ordinance with the Director of Elections of King County, Washington, as ex officio supervisor of elections, requesting the Director of Elections to call and conduct a special election in the City in conjunction with the state general election to be held on November 4, 2025, for the purpose of submitting to the qualified electors of the City the proposition set forth in this ordinance. The City Clerk is directed to certify to the King County Director of Elections the ballot title approved by the City Attorney in accordance with their responsibilities under RCW 29A.36.071. The following ballot title is submitted to the City Attorney for consideration:

THE CITY OF SEATTLE

PROPOSITION NO. 1

Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise Levy

The Seattle City Council adopted Ordinance No. XXXXX concerning replacing an expiring levy to fund education support services.

The City of Seattle's Proposition 1 would replace an expiring levy, funding childcare and preschool; academic, health, and safety supports for K-12 students; college and job readiness; and other supports, as provided in Ordinance XXXXX.

It authorizes a six-year levy for collection beginning in 2026 of an additional \$0.71/\$1,000 of assessed value, for a maximum total levy rate of \$3.01. 2026's amount will be the base for subsequent levies through 2031. RCW 84.36.381's senior citizens and disabled persons exemption applies.

Should this levy be approved?

Yes

No

Section 11. Ratification. Any act consistent with the authority of this ordinance taken after its passage and prior to its effective date is ratified and confirmed.

Section 12. Severability. The provisions of this ordinance are declared to be separate and severable. The invalidity of any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section, or portion of this ordinance, or the invalidity of its application to any person or circumstance, does not affect the validity of the remainder of this ordinance or the validity of its application to other persons or circumstances.

Section 13. Those portions of this ordinance providing for the submission of a ballot proposition to the voters shall take effect and be in force 30 days after its approval by the Mayor, but if not approved and returned by the Mayor within ten days after presentation, it shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code Sections 1.04.020 and 1.04.070. Those portions of this ordinance that are dependent upon voter approval of said ballot proposition shall take effect in accordance with applicable law.

Passed by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2025, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this _____ day of _____, 2025.

President _____ of the City Council

Approved / returned unsigned / vetoed this ____ day of _____, 2025.

Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2025.

Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

(Seal)

SUMMARY and FISCAL NOTE

Department:	Dept. Contact:	CBO Contact:
DEEL/CBO	Amanda Stoddard	Sarah Burtner

1. BILL SUMMARY

Legislation Title: AN ORDINANCE relating to regular property taxes; requesting that a special election be held concurrent with the November 4, 2025 general election for submission to the qualified electors of the City, a proposition to lift the limit on regular property taxes under chapter 84.55 RCW and to authorize the City to levy additional taxes for up to six years for the purpose of providing education support services designed to improve access to early learning, including childcare and preschool; academic, health, and safety supports for K-12 students; and college and career pathways for Seattle students; applying the exemption for low income seniors, disabled veterans, and others authorized by RCW 84.36.381; authorizing a creation of a designated fund; directing the application of levy proceeds; establishing eligibility requirements for partners; establishing accountability and reporting structures; requiring a forthcoming Implementation and Evaluation Plan; proposing a ballot title; authorizing the implementation of agreements for this levy lid lift which will be commonly known as the Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise Levy; and ratifying and confirming certain prior acts.

Summary and Background of the Legislation:

The proposed ordinance would submit a \$1.2542 billion, six-year Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise (FEPP) Levy to Seattle voters for approval in November 2025. The proposed Levy would be raised under the provisions of RCW 84.55.050, which allows a city to obtain voter approval to exceed the “lid” on regular property taxes for any purposes.

The Mayor’s FEPP Levy proposal is projected to invest \$1.326 billion for six years beginning in 2026. Of that amount, only \$1.2542 billion will be levied as there exists other funding sources which offset costs (Summary Attachment 1). The levy would have an average annual property tax impact of \$0.61 per \$1,000 of assessed value and cost the median assessed valued residence of \$1,079,553 approximately \$654 per year (Summary Attachment 2).

The 2025 FEPP Levy will invest in Seattle’s children, youth, and families to increase affordability of and access to childcare and preschool; academic, health, and safety supports for K-12 students, including expanded learning opportunities; comprehensive support services; and college and career pathways. Signature investments include the Child Care Assistance Program, Seattle Preschool Program, School Based Health Centers, and the Seattle Promise program. Investments in K-12 student academic, out-of-school time, and safety supports are also funded. Together, these investments help ensure every child has the resources to be ready to start, ready to learn, and ready to launch.

This continuum of investments is comprised of four strategies: Early Childhood, K-12 Education Supports, K-12 Health & Safety, and College and Career.

- 1) **Early Childhood.** The proposed FEPP levy invests \$658.2 million to sustain and expand supports for childcare access through the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and kindergarten readiness through the Seattle Preschool Program (SPP). This investment continues the City’s commitment to accelerate early childhood development and readiness to start school strong.
- 2) **K-12 Education Supports:** The proposed FEPP Levy invests \$271.6 million to maintain supports for K-12 students. This investment continues the City’s commitment to accelerate student learning and promote college and career readiness.
- 3) **K-12 Health & Safety:** The City recognizes the importance of accessible healthcare for our students and will invest \$235.1 million to continue and expand services. The K-12 Health & Safety investment area includes funding for School Based Health Centers, strategies to promote positive youth mental health outcomes, and student safety supports.
- 4) **College and Career:** The proposed FEPP Levy invests \$82.4 million to sustain and expand Seattle Promise and career pathway programs. The Seattle Promise investment continues the City’s commitment to postsecondary access and affordability. Career pathways investments include funding for the Path to UW program and programs to increase local qualified educators and skilled trades/technical workers.
- 5) **Leadership & Administration:** The proposed FEPP levy includes \$78.6 million to maintain department administration and operations.

Background: Seattle voters have approved six levies dating back to 1990, all with consistent focus on early childhood development and K-12 student academic, out-of-school time, and health supports. The 2014 SPP Levy established the City’s preschool program, whereas the 2018 FEPP Levy established the Seattle Promise program and formally expanded DEEL’s scope into postsecondary and career investments.

Prior City of Seattle child and education levies had the following amounts and duration:

- 1990: \$69.2 million (seven-year)
- 1997: \$69.0 million (seven-year)
- 2004: \$116.8 million (seven-year)
- 2011: \$231.5 million (seven-year)
- 2014: \$58 million (four-year)
- 2018: \$619 million (seven-year)

Background on levy lid lifts

Per RCW 84.55.010 the Council may not increase regular property taxes above 1% without a vote of the people. RCW 84.55.050 allows a city to place on the ballot and obtain voter approval to exceed this 1% “lid” on regular property taxes for any purposes and may limit the purpose, amount and duration of any such levy. It further, in accordance with RCW 84.36.381, allows the Council to identify in the authorizing ordinance of a levy lid lift that the levy will be subject to the low-income senior, disabled retiree and disabled veteran property tax exemption.

2. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Does this legislation create, fund, or amend a CIP Project? Yes No

3. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Does this legislation have financial impacts to the City?

No. If the levy is adopted, the passage of the levy will result in an increase in revenues and expenditures for the next six years; these costs are summarized in the Fiscal Note Attachments section below.

Yes No

See Summary Attachment 1 – FEPP Levy Projected Expenditures and Revenues.

3.d. Other Impacts

Does the legislation have other financial impacts to The City of Seattle, including direct or indirect, one-time or ongoing costs, that are not included in Sections 3.a through 3.c? If so, please describe these financial impacts.

No.

If the legislation has costs, but they can be absorbed within existing operations, please describe how those costs can be absorbed. The description should clearly describe if the absorbed costs are achievable because the department had excess resources within their existing budget or if by absorbing these costs the department is deprioritizing other work that would have used these resources.

N/A

Please describe any financial costs or other impacts of *not* implementing the legislation.

If this legislation and ballot measure do not pass, the City will lose its funding source for a number of critical investments: 1) childcare subsidies for low- and medium-income families with children ages 0-12; 2) Seattle Preschool Program access for three- and four-year-olds; 3) School Based Health Centers which provide critical physical, mental, and oral health services; 4) grants to SPS and community-based organizations to provide youth access to academic and out-of-school time supports; and 5) Seattle Promise and educator career investments.

Please describe how this legislation may affect any City departments other than the originating department.

Proposed FEPP Levy proceeds will be administered by DEEL, Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR), and the Human Services Department (HSD) with labor and non-labor impacts to DEEL, HSD, and SPR.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

a. Is a public hearing required for this legislation?

The City Council has established a Select Committee to review the expiring 2018 Families Education Preschool and Promise Levy, investments made and outcomes, and this proposal

for a levy renewal. The committee has scheduled a Public Hearing at 5 p.m. on May 12, 2025.

b. Is publication of notice with The Daily Journal of Commerce and/or The Seattle Times required for this legislation?

No.

c. Does this legislation affect a piece of property?

No.

d. Please describe any perceived implication for the principles of the Race and Social Justice Initiative.

i. How does this legislation impact vulnerable or historically disadvantaged communities? How did you arrive at this conclusion? In your response please consider impacts within City government (employees, internal programs) as well as in the broader community.

The proposed FEPP Levy intends to help ensure every child has the resources to be ready to start, ready to learn, and ready to launch, so that every child can succeed. Future legislation, including the Implementation and Evaluation Plan, will detail strategies to prioritize resources to children, youth, and families in need of support to meet Levy outcomes. Development of new and expanded investment strategies may utilize the Race and Social Justice Initiative Racial Equity Toolkit.

ii. Please attach any Racial Equity Toolkits or other racial equity analyses in the development and/or assessment of the legislation.

DEEL submits an annual report to the FEPP Levy Oversight Committee that monitors progress toward outcomes for the current 2018 FEPP Levy. This report includes disaggregated participant-level data for headline indicators. The FEPP Levy Year 4 (School Year 2022-2023) report was presented to the Libraries, Education, and Neighborhoods Committee on May 23, 2024. This report indicates that among children and youth participating in FEPP-funded services, opportunity gaps persist across all FEPP headline indicators: kindergarten readiness, K-12 academic achievement, and post-secondary completion. DEEL regularly reviews population-wide performance on the key headline indicators to demonstrate need for continued City investment in education support services.

iii. What is the Language Access Plan for any communications to the public?

In accordance with Executive Order 2017-10, DEEL partners with the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs to ensure equitable access to information regarding department activities and services. Additional details regarding language access will be included in subsequent annual Language Access Plans submitted to OIRA.

e. Climate Change Implications

- i. Emissions: How is this legislation likely to increase or decrease carbon emissions in a material way? Please attach any studies or other materials that were used to inform this response.**

N/A

- ii. Resiliency: Will the action(s) proposed by this legislation increase or decrease Seattle’s resiliency (or ability to adapt) to climate change in a material way? If so, explain. If it is likely to decrease resiliency in a material way, describe what will or could be done to mitigate the effects.**

No.

- f. If this legislation includes a new initiative or a major programmatic expansion: What are the specific long-term and measurable goal(s) of the program? How will this legislation help achieve the program’s desired goal(s)? What mechanisms will be used to measure progress towards meeting those goals?**

The proposed FEPP Levy includes programmatic expansions as well as new investments. Future legislation, including an Implementation and Evaluation Plan, will detail long-term and measurable goals for all investments concurrent with request for budget appropriation.

Does this legislation create a non-utility CIP project that involves a shared financial commitment with a non-City partner agency or organization?

No.

5. ATTACHMENTS

Summary Attachments:

Summary Attachment 1 – FEPP Levy Projected Expenditures and Revenues

Summary Attachment 2 – Levy Rate and Annual Cost to Homeowner

Attachment 1: FEPP Levy Projected Expenditures and Revenues

Projected Expenditures (in \$ millions)

Investment	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	Total
Early Learning	\$56.8	\$98.5	\$103.7	\$109.2	\$114.9	\$120.8	\$54.5	\$658.2
K-12 Education Supports	\$27.1	\$42.4	\$43.7	\$45.1	\$46.4	\$47.9	\$19.0	\$271.6
K-12 Health & Safety	\$23.3	\$34.5	\$37.3	\$38.5	\$39.7	\$40.9	\$20.8	\$235.1
College & Career	\$6.4	\$12.7	\$13.4	\$13.8	\$14.2	\$14.7	\$7.2	\$82.4
Leadership & Administration	\$6.3	\$11.9	\$12.5	\$13.1	\$13.7	\$14.4	\$6.7	\$78.6
Grand Total*	\$119.9	\$200.0	\$210.6	\$219.6	\$229.0	\$238.7	\$108.2	\$1,326.0

*Total spending excludes revenue offsets (see table below).

Projected Revenues (in \$ millions)

Revenue Source	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	Total
Levy Legal Allocation (per Ordinance)	\$209.0	\$209.0	\$209.0	\$209.0	\$209.0	\$209.0		\$1254.2
Estimated Property Taxes*	\$206.3	\$207.8	\$208.1	\$207.9	\$207.9	\$207.9	\$2.8	\$1248.7
Estimated SPP Tuition	\$2.8	\$5.8	\$6.0	\$6.2	\$6.4	\$6.6	\$3.3	\$37.1
Estimated FEPP2018 Underspend	\$0.8	\$1.9	\$2.9	\$2.7	\$3.0	\$3.3	\$1.4	\$15.9
Estimated Investment Earnings**	\$2.3	\$4.9	\$4.4	\$4.4	\$3.7	\$2.8	\$1.7	\$24.3
Total Estimated Revenues	\$212.2	\$220.4	\$221.3	\$221.1	\$221.0	\$220.6	\$9.3	\$1,326.0

*Assumes anticipated cash receipts for 2026-2032

**Annual Investment earning assumptions range from 2.2% to 3.9%

Notes: Because many DEEL programs operate on a school-year basis, levy expenditures continue into 2032 for the 2031-2032 school year. The majority of the revenue is projected to be collected in 2026-2031. Totals shown in tables may not exactly reflect sum of line items due to rounding.

Attachment 2: Levy Rate and Annual Cost to Homeowner

Tax Year	Assessed Value Estimate (Billions)	% Growth from prior year	Annual Levy Amount (millions)	Millage Rate per \$1,000 of Assessed Value	Annual Cost to Owner of Median Assessed Residential Value	Median Assessed Residential Value
2026	\$303.4	2.54%	\$209.0	\$0.69	\$633	\$919,296
2027	\$314.9	3.80%	\$209.0	\$0.66	\$649	\$978,131
2028	\$332.0	5.41%	\$209.0	\$0.63	\$655	\$1,040,731
2029	\$351.1	5.75%	\$209.0	\$0.60	\$659	\$1,107,338
2030	\$371.7	5.89%	\$209.0	\$0.56	\$662	\$1,178,208
2031	\$393.7	5.00%	\$209.0	\$0.53	\$666	\$1,253,613
AVG				\$0.61	\$654	\$1,079,553

Notes: The numbers in this table represent projected values, while the ordinance reflects a maximum millage rate. The maximum millage rate provides administrative flexibility in the event that the actual assessed values differ from what is projected.