Where do schools get their money?
From four sources:
- About 70% from the state
- About 16% from local school district taxpayers
- About 10% from the federal government
- Other 4% from fees, rentals, donations, etc.

How do schools get “local” money?
Through levy and bond issues. Both are approved by the voters and are based upon local property valuations. Property owners pay a set amount for each $1,000 of their assessed property values. Once approved, levy and bond amounts cannot be increased. When community property values increase, the amount paid per $1,000 decreases. There are exemptions for senior citizens who meet income requirements.

For information on tax exemptions call the Snohomish County Assessor’s office at (425) 388-3540 or (425) 388-3433. King County Dept. of Assessments, (206) 296-7300.

Thank you for your interest!
The Snohomish County Schools Public Information Cooperative developed this brochure in an effort to describe how public schools for grades kindergarten through twelve are financed in Washington state.

If you need further information, we encourage and welcome you to call the public information office at the school district nearest you:

Arlington School District ....................360-618-6200
 www.asd.wednet.edu

Darrington School District ..................360-436-1323
 www.dsd.k12.wa.us

Edmonds School District ...................425-431-7044
 www.edmonds.wednet.edu

Educational Service District 189 ............360-299-4000
 www.esd189.org

Everett Public Schools .......................425-385-4040
 www.everett.k12.wa.us

Granite Falls School District ...............360-691-7717
 www.gfalls.wednet.edu

Lake Stevens School District ...............425-335-1501
 www.lkstevens.wednet.edu

Lakewood School District ...................360-652-4500
 www.lwsd.wednet.edu

Marysville School District .................360-653-0800
 www.msvl.k12.wa.us

Monroe Public Schools .....................360-804-2503
 www.monroe.wednet.edu

Mukilteo School District ....................425-356-1215
 www.mukilteo.wednet.edu

Snohomish School District .................360-563-7263
 www.sno.wednet.edu

Stanwood-Camano School District .........360-629-1200
 www.stanwood.wednet.edu

Sultan School District .......................360-793-9800
 www.sultan.k12.wa.us

Shoreline Public Schools ....................206-361-4412
 www.shorelineschools.org
Why are voters asked to approve maintenance and operations or program levies so often?

By law, M&O or program levies can only be proposed for a maximum of four years. Public school districts may choose to run levy ballots for one, two, three or four years. However, after the allotted number of years, the levy expires, similar to a magazine subscription. Districts must go back to their voters and ask for a continuation, or renewal, of levy dollar support.

Generally, the levy you are voting on simply replaces one that is about to expire.

Can public school districts propose a levy for any amount?

No. Districts are limited and can only ask for a maximum amount of 24% of their state (and some federal) allocated revenues. This is commonly known as the “Levy Lid.”

Exception: 90 of the state’s 295 school districts are “grandfathered” at a higher levy lid rate and are allowed by law to raise between 24% and 34% in local money.

What is the difference between a bond and a levy and what do they pay for?

Levy money and bond money are intended to meet different but important student needs. Below is an outline of what levies and bonds are typically allowed to fund.

**Levies**

By law, school districts can only run program levies for a maximum of four years. Capital levies may run for up to six years. Levies must be approved by 50% plus one vote.

Here’s a sample of programs and services that program levies typically fund:

- Supplemental funding for teachers’ salaries for additional time and planning
- Paraeducators to increase the number of adults helping and assisting children
- Additional funding for textbooks and curriculum
- Additional funding for special education support
- Additional curriculum offerings for students
- Funding of student athletics and co-curricular activities
- Additional funding for school bus transportation
- Additional funding for building and grounds maintenance
- Additional costs of highly capable education
- Funding support for the community use of facilities

**Bonds**

Bonds are financed over a long period of time, generally 12 to 20 years and are comparable to a home mortgage. Bonds must be approved by 60% plus one vote. Upon their sale, bonds provide immediate funds for:

- New school construction
- Acquisition of property
- Capital projects, such as modernization of schools

Bond dollars may not, by law, pay for the day-to-day costs of running a school district.

Levy dollars help keep class size small.

Do all public schools receive state funding?

Yes, but some get more than others. An exception to the formula was allowed and some districts’ teacher salary schedules were “grandfathered” at a higher percentage of the adopted state salary schedule. Today, 13 school districts out of the state’s 295 districts are compensated at a higher salary rate ranging from .65% to 4.96%. Additionally some districts’ Levy Lids are higher, allowing them the ability to collect additional local funding.

The Basic Education Act of 1977 set a formula for sending state funds to school districts. The basic formula gives each district a certain dollar amount for each Full Time Equivalent (FTE) student - each student attending school all day. For each student who needs extra services, such as special education programs, gifted education, or bilingual education, there are state and federal formulas for supplemental support.

Districts that employ teachers with advanced degrees get extra funding for salaries. Districts with fewer than 300 students also receive extra money.

What do federal funds pay for?

The amount and program designation varies from district to district depending on the needs of the students. Typically, federal dollars pay for a percentage of vocational programs, special education, American Indian education, disability programs, food service programs and special grants.