

May 4 Levy FAQ • Issue 11

On Tuesday, May 4, 2021, the Rocky River City School District will have a 4.9 mill levy on the ballot.

What is on the May 4 ballot?

A 4.9 mill property tax levy will be on the ballot. At this time, a 1.0 mill levy will be expiring, making the actual cost to homeowners 3.9 mill.

When will it show on my tax bill?

January 2022.

What is a mill?

Property tax rates are computed in "millage," with one mill costing a tax payer \$1.00 for every \$1,000 of taxable value.

How much will the May 4 Levy generate?

This levy is projected to generate about \$4,700,000 annually for operating expenses and \$250,000 for permanent improvements.

Why a 4.9 mill?

The 4.9 mill levy is based on the district's forecast to ensure the levy balances the budget for at least four more years. The last levy was passed in 2017.

How much will this levy cost taxpayers?

The levy will cost the owner of a \$100,000 home approximately \$14.29/month. However, a 1.0 mill levy is currently expiring, making the actual cost to a homeowner \$11.74/month per \$100,000 in home value.

4.9 mill levy:
\$14.29/month

—

1.0 mill expiring:
\$2.55/month

=

\$11.74/month
per \$100,000
in home value.

How will the new funds be utilized?

The new funding will allow Rocky River City Schools to fund the day-to-day operations required to maintain a high-quality education and programs for our students. .25 mill of the 4.9 mill will be dedicated to Permanent Improvement.

What happens if the levy is successful?

- A continuity of essential services such as faculty and staff required to maintain class sizes, extended tutoring and summer programming, expanded K-5 nutrition services for students, technology refresh program, school resource officer program and a nurse in each school will be ensured.
- The funding from this levy will also provide operational monies to keep up with facility and transportation management and allow the district to replace key items such as boilers, buses, roofs, parking lots, etc. without the need for a bond issue.

What happens if the levy fails?

- A reduction plan will be implemented to reduce technology refresh, reduce facilities maintenance and repairs, suspend or reduce support service programs and reduce personnel, which will impact our class sizes, as well as negatively affect the quality of education our students receive.
- The expansion of the K-5 hot lunch program would be eliminated.



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Has the district engaged in any cost saving measures prior to this levy appearing on the ballot?

Yes. The district has worked hard to aggressively contain costs in a number of ways and has implemented several cost-saving measures.

What are they?

- A retirement incentive in 2019-20 that yielded four additional teacher retirements projected to save over \$600,000 over a five-year period.
- An energy conservation capital project completed in 2019 (new lighting, HVAC controls) projected to provide energy savings of \$171,000 per year.
- Participation in the consortium/group purchasing for healthcare, utilities, food, equipment and materials.
- Partnership with the City of Rocky River, which includes funding for the artificial turf field, gasoline purchasing and facility usage (ice rink, tennis courts).
- Refinancing outstanding bonds, which will provide a reduction of 1 mill of debt service property tax millage starting in January of 2022.
- Managing and investing district funds to provide a return on investment within the confines of state law and board policy.

What is the predicted length of this levy cycle?

With prudent financial planning, if this levy passes on May 4, 2021, the Rocky River City Schools should not have another operating levy until 2025.

How does the passage of the levy benefit me if I don't have children in the district?

Having a high-quality school system keeps property values high and will keep Rocky River a community of choice for families. Additionally, social and emotional health services for students are imperative this year more than ever. It is in our community's best interest to continue services such as these for our students.

Why do schools need to increase taxes every few years?

House Bill 920 restricts growth in school revenue despite increased property valuation. As property values rise, the voted millage used to fund schools is rolled back by a like amount. Therefore, growth in school income is severely limited even though school operating costs (electricity, fuel, technology, books, insurance, staffing, etc.) continue to increase. This forces school districts to return to the voters periodically in order to keep up with inflation, increases in student enrollment, unfunded state and federal mandates and other operating increases.

Despite efforts to reform school funding, the major source of income for Ohio school districts continues to be property taxes. In fact, over 82% of our school district's revenues are generated from local sources.

Where can I find voting information, including timelines, registration information, absentee ballot information, etc.?

To become a registered voter, please visit <https://olvr.ohiosos.gov/>. To register to vote by mail, please visit <https://boe.cuyahogacounty.gov/>

