

Cowlitz County Elections

April 25, 2023 Special Election

Official Local Voters' Pamphlet and Instructions

Dates and deadlines

Voting Center

Open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday - Friday beginning April 7, 2023 until 8 p.m. Election Night on April 25, 2023.

207 N 4th Ave, Rm 205
Kelso, WA 98626

April 17 - Online and mailed voter registrations must be received by 5 p.m.

April 18 - 25 - Voters can register or update their addresses in person at the Cowlitz County Elections office by 8 p.m. Election Day.

Register and obtain a ballot

To register to vote, you must be:

- A citizen of the United States.
- A legal resident of Washington State.
- At least 18 years old by Election Day.
- Not disqualified from voting due to a court order.
- Not currently serving a sentence of total confinement under the jurisdiction of the department of corrections for a Washington felony conviction.
- Not currently incarcerated for a federal or out-of-state felony conviction.

How to register, update your address, and/or obtain a ballot:

- Online - VoteWA.gov
- By mail - Call us at (360) 577-3005 or email us at elections@cowlitzwa.gov, and we will assist you.
- In person - 207 N 4th Ave, Rm 205
Kelso, WA 98626

Participating Jurisdictions: Woodland School District No. 404

Need assistance?

Accessible voting machines are available every election at our voting center.

These machines provide privacy and accessibility to voters with a disability or condition that makes it difficult to mark a ballot in the usual way.

Be an informed voter

Log in at VoteWA.gov to track your ballot status and view the online voters' guide.

Questions?

- Phone - (360) 577 - 3005
- Email - elections@cowlitzwa.gov
- In person - 207 N 4th Ave, Rm 205
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Returning your ballot

In a ballot drop box

- Kalama - N 1st St, beside the Kalama Post Office Boxes
- Kelso - Bridge Market Ln between LJ's Furnace Drug and the Allen St bridge
- Kelso - 207 N 4th Ave, Admin Building North Entrance Parking Lot
- Broadway (Longview) - Broadway St, east of the post office boxes
- Civic Circle (Longview) - Civic Center Circle, near the Longview Post Office boxes
- Woodland - Davidson and 2nd St, near the City's Utility Payment drop box

*The Castle Rock and Ryderwood ballot drop boxes will not be open this election. Ballots must be deposited in a drop box by 8 p.m. Election Night in order to be counted.

In Person

207 N 4th Ave, Rm 205
Kelso, WA 98626

By Mail

No stamp is needed. Ballots must be postmarked on or before April 25 in order to be counted.

Ballot drop boxes

Ballot drop boxes are open 24 hours a day, starting April 7, 2023, and close promptly at 8 p.m. on Election Night, April 25, 2023.

Voter eligibility

If you have any questions or concerns about your eligibility to vote, contact Cowlitz County Elections.

Committee For Ballot Measure

Matt Donald
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Committee Against Ballot Measure

Donna Butler
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Proposition 1

Replacement School Support Levy for Educational Programs and Operations

The Board of Directors of Woodland School District No. 404 adopted Resolution No. 23-01 concerning the replacement of an expiring school support levy. This proposition provides funding for educational programs and operations not funded by the State. If approved, Proposition 1 will authorize the District to levy the following excess taxes, on all taxable property within the District, all as provided in Resolution No. 23-01:

Collection Years	Approximate Levy Rate/\$1,000 Assessed Value	Levy Amount
2024	\$1.91	\$5,900,000
2025	\$1.91	\$6,250,000
2026	\$1.91	\$6,625,000

Should this proposition be approved?

Yes

No

Explanatory Statement

Passage of Proposition 1 authorizes the District to renew an expiring levy for educational programs and operations by levying \$5,900,000 for collection in 2024, \$6,250,000 for collection in 2025, and \$6,625,000 for collection in 2026. In accordance with Resolution No. 23-01 approving this proposition, these taxes would be deposited into the District's General Fund to pay for educational programs and operations of the District not funded by the State. These include teachers and staff, school supplies, facility improvements and maintenance, learning technology, arts and athletics, and specialized educational programs.

Based on projected assessed valuation information, the District estimates tax rates of \$1.91 per \$1,000 of assessed value for collection in 2024, 2025 and 2026. These estimated rates are lower than the tax rates of the expiring levy.

Under State law, tax exemptions may be available to homeowners age 61 or older, and disabled persons who meet certain income requirements. For information regarding exemptions, call the Cowlitz County Assessor at (360) 577-3010 or the Clark County Assessor at (564) 397-2391.

See complete resolution text at:
www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/Elections

Argument For

Vote Yes for Woodland's children!

Renewing Woodland Public Schools' Educational Programs and Operations Levy is critical for the quality of education our children receive in Woodland's schools.

The levy is not a new tax.

This levy renews the existing levy expiring in 2023. Without the levy, the district must cut \$3,000,000 from next year's budget followed by additional cuts the following year. The district must make drastic cuts to technology, security improvements, facilities maintenance, athletics, extracurricular clubs, specialized courses, and more.

Such cuts will increase class sizes, decrease learning opportunities, and leave our kids unprepared for the next steps after graduation. Not replacing the levy will profoundly negatively affect the educational experience our children receive.

Levy taxes will be lower in 2024.

To address these difficult economic times, the Board of Directors lowered the taxes the levy will collect in 2024, reducing the taxpayer's burden by nearly 9%. While the amount collected will increase in 2025 and 2026 to address growth in the Woodland community, the tax rate is expected to remain at \$1.91 per thousand of assessed value for all three years.

Vote yes for our kids' futures

Woodland Public Schools' mission is to prepare students for careers, life, and college. A yes vote shows you support this mission. Without the levy, our kids will not have the educational opportunities they deserve. Thank you for your approving Woodland Schools' current EP&O levy and for your yes vote for renewal. For the most accurate information, visit woodlandschools.org/levy

Rebuttal to Argument For

It's not hard. Vote with a clear conscience. January 2012, the Washington State Supreme Court ordered the state to *fully fund* K-12 public schools as required by Article IX of the Washington State Constitution. (McCleary Decision) This levy asks for "excess taxes" beyond the state's full funding. The district needs to make responsible budget cuts without threatening to drastically eliminate programs and the educational opportunities students and parents want. Vote responsibly. Vote no.

Argument Against

Woodland School District is running a special election, a second request for a three year "excess tax" levy to collect a total of \$18,775,000 from property owners in the Woodland School District.. The voters already said *no* by a wide margin, and that was no surprise. This levy amount is 8.8% higher than the previous levy. This election will cost the taxpayers approximately \$60,000, in addition to the \$30,000 expense for the February failed levy.

We are experiencing a 40-year inflation high which is felt at the grocery store, gas pump, rent increases, property taxes and water and sewer rate hikes. Under the prevailing circumstances, many taxpayers of the district are feeling financial pressures like never before. It is not just a matter of the pocketbook. It is equally concerning that student standard outcomes are poor. Woodland ranks #231 in Washington state high schools. Only 50.85% of students meet the English Language Arts standard, 34.7% meet the Math standard, and 45.1% meet the Science standard. These competency numbers are disturbing.

The cost per student is \$16,547, which is 5.4% *higher* than the State average. We are investing *more* money than average in our students, but students are *lower* than the state averages in academics. Clearly, more money is not the answer. These facts are a compelling *no* vote on your ballot.

In closing, Woodland Public Schools removed the comment feature from their social media during the election, limiting the voice of the taxpayers. Your vote is your voice.

Rebuttal to Argument Against

This levy is not new. It renews the expiring levy at a lower rate. It provides what our kids need that the state doesn't fund.

Without it, kids will have outdated technology, less college/career preparation, larger class sizes, no field trips, fewer athletics and extracurriculars, less security, and other cuts.

No family wants to live somewhere without good schools. No businesses want to operate there.

Vote yes for kids. Vote yes for Woodland's future.