

Respondent Name
Kent School District
Complainant Name
Joseph Michael Riley
Complaint Description
<u>Joe Riley</u> reported via the portal Wed, 9 Sep 2026 at 10:11 PM In June, the Kent School District sent a survey to the community with questions that included: a) <i>"The Kent School District is considering several levy funding options beginning in 2028. Which option would you be most likely to support?"</i> and b) <i>"If the Kent School District Educational Programs and Operations Levy were on the ballot today, how likely would you be to support it?"</i> You can see survey results attached [2] and a YouTube stream of the presentation [3]. In the YouTube video, at timestamp 2:49:06, you can see a conversation where the district confirms that the survey targeted "likely" voters and not a pure random sampling of households in the district. According to PDC guidance [1], under the "Surveys and Research" section, the PDC states that districts <i>"shall not conduct surveys to determine what taxation level the public would support."</i> Under the same section, the PDC states that districts <i>"shall not target registered voters or other specific subgroups of district residents in conducting their election-related surveys."</i> Kent school district violated both of these by asking what specific rates would be supported, whether voters would support a levy at all, and targeting "likely" voters for the survey. Additionally, I've attached another record [4] showing analysis of a survey targeted at non-parents. It's unclear whether this was a separate survey or not, but the top of the document states that <i>"since this survey was targeted to non-parents, all respondents selected "No" to the parent question."</i> This analysis also makes many claims that indicate the district's desire to support the passage of the levy, including a <i>"focus on moving "somewhat support" voters into the strong-support category and persuading undecided or moderately opposed voters."</i>
Sections of the law violated

RCW 29B.45.010

What impact does the alleged violation(s) have on the public?

KSD used public resources to support a ballot measure by running a survey targeted at "likely" voters that asked what taxation level the public would support and whether or not they would outright support the levy today.

List of attached evidence or contact information where evidence can be found

[1] - PDC guidance to school districts - <https://www.pdc.wa.gov/rules-enforcement/guidelines-restrictions/guidelines-school-districts-election-campaigns>

[2] - 2026 EPO Levy Proposal PowerPoint 06 24 2026.pdf (Attached) - Slide deck showing survey results (pages 20-25)

[3] - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phxrGEIucvU> - Board meeting where survey results were discussed (timestamp 2:23:05)

[4] - Analysis_of_NonParent_Levy_Survey.docx - Public record from KSD showing analysis of survey results targeted at non-parents

List potential witnesses with contact information to reach them

1. Wade Barringer - Deputy Superintendent of KSD - wade.barringer@kent.k12.wa.us

Certification (Complainant)

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that information provided with this complaint is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Analyzed the **609 responses** in the *NonParent Survey Results* file. Since this survey was targeted to non-parents, all respondents selected **"No"** to the parent question.

Survey Overview

- Total respondents: **609**
- Completed responses varied by question, with approximately 357–434 respondents answering individual questions.
- A substantial number of respondents skipped some questions, particularly those related to levy rates and support.

Question 2: Awareness of School Funding Challenges

Q2 – Aware of Underfunding?

Response	Count	Percent
Yes	173	39.9%
No	261	60.1%
Total Responses	434	100%

Analysis

- Nearly **6 in 10 non-parent respondents are not aware** of school funding challenges.
- Only **40% indicate awareness**, suggesting there is significant opportunity for community education.
- Before asking voters to support additional funding, the district may need to focus on explaining:
 - How schools are funded
 - What the state does and does not fund
 - The impact of enrollment declines
 - Why local levies remain necessary

Key takeaway: Awareness is relatively low and represents a communications challenge and opportunity.

Question 3: Preferred Levy Rate

Q3 – Preferred Levy Rate

Levy Rate	Count	Percent
\$0.00	196	51.4%
\$1.76	70	18.4%
\$1.95	56	14.7%
\$2.09	59	15.5%
Total Responses	381	100%

Analysis

- A majority (**51.4%**) selected **\$0.00**, indicating no support for a levy increase among these respondents.
- Among those willing to support a levy:
 - Support is relatively evenly distributed across the three levy-rate options.
 - The lowest proposed rate (\$1.76) received the highest support among levy supporters.

Key takeaway: Cost sensitivity is high. Messaging should emphasize value, fiscal responsibility, and the consequences of not investing in schools.

Question 4: Likelihood to Support a Levy

Assuming the scale was:

1. Strongly Support
2. Somewhat Support
3. Somewhat Oppose
4. Strongly Oppose

Response	Count	Percent
Strongly Support	146	39.8%
Somewhat Support	64	17.4%
Somewhat Oppose	34	9.3%
Strongly Oppose	123	33.5%
Total Responses	367	100%

Analysis

Combined Support

- 210 respondents
- **57.2% Support**

Combined Opposition

- 157 respondents
- **42.8% Oppose**

What This Means

- Support is above the 50% threshold needed for passage.
- However, support is not overwhelming.
- The most striking finding is polarization:
 - Nearly 40% strongly support.
 - Nearly 34% strongly oppose.

There appears to be a relatively small persuadable middle group.

Key takeaway: Campaign efforts should focus on moving "somewhat support" voters into the strong-support category and persuading undecided or moderately opposed voters.

Question 5: Community Sentiment Toward the District

Assuming the scale was:

1. Very Favorable
2. Somewhat Favorable
3. Somewhat Unfavorable
4. Very Unfavorable

Response	Count	Percent
Very Favorable	150	42.0%
Somewhat Favorable	92	25.8%
Somewhat Unfavorable	50	14.0%
Very Unfavorable	65	18.2%
Total Responses	357	100%

Analysis

Positive Sentiment

- 242 respondents
- **67.8% Favorable**

Negative Sentiment

- 115 respondents
- **32.2% Unfavorable**

What This Means

- The district's overall reputation among non-parents appears positive.
- Two-thirds of respondents hold a favorable opinion of the district.
- Favorability (67.8%) is notably higher than levy support (57.2%).

This suggests there may be residents who like the district but are hesitant to support additional taxes.

Key takeaway: A positive reputation exists to build upon, but the connection between district performance and funding needs may not be fully understood.

Executive Summary

Strengths

- ✓ 67.8% favorable community sentiment
- ✓ 57.2% levy support among respondents who answered
- ✓ Strong base of supporters

Challenges

- ⚠ 60.1% unaware of school funding challenges
- ⚠ 51.4% selected a \$0 levy rate
- ⚠ Strong opposition bloc (33.5% strongly oppose)

Communications Recommendations

1. Increase awareness of funding realities

- Explain how schools are funded.
- Clarify what state funding does and does not cover.
- Show impacts of declining enrollment.

2. Lead with fiscal responsibility

- Demonstrate stewardship of taxpayer dollars.
- Highlight cost-saving measures already implemented.

3. Connect funding to student outcomes

- Career & Technical Education
- STEM programs
- Safety and security
- Student mental health supports
- Technology and facility maintenance

4. Leverage positive district sentiment

- Use stories that reinforce trust.

- Highlight student success and community partnerships.
- Show tangible results from previous investments.

Based on these results, the district appears to have a favorable reputation and a path to majority support, but additional voter education around school funding will likely be necessary to strengthen support and reduce opposition.



Educational Programs and Operations Levy



Building Bridges



*Every Student
Every Voice
Every Day*



November 3, 2026

How is KSD funded?

— GENERAL FUNDS —



77% STATE
15% LEVIES
8% FEDERAL & OTHER

**Estimated total*

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Source: OSPI F196 2024-25

Why is a levy needed?

State funding received by the Kent School District is
\$132.6 million
below what it costs to serve our students.

Source: OSPI F195 2026-27 and 2026-27 Budget Development
Presentation 4 of 4

Note: \$132.6 million includes underfunding in prototypical
funding model, MSOC, Inclusive Education, Transportation,
Multilingual Education, Dual Language, and Highly Capable
funding

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Why is a levy needed?

Washington Gov. Bob Ferguson said state agencies should prepare for difficult budget decisions as his administration begins crafting the next state spending plan. He warned that the state's fiscal situation is "dire..."

Source: [KOMO 4 News, June 9, 2026](#)

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EP&O Levy

Proposition 1

Four-Year Levy

Funds student
athletics, music,
and arts

Nearly 15% of Total
Operating Resources



ALL Employee Groups
Supported Partially
Through Levy Funds





Student Support

Teachers

- 89% funded by the state
- 11% funded by the EP&O Levy

Building Administrator & Support Staff

- 60% funded by the state
- 40% funded by the EP&O Levy

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Building Support

Central Office Administration Staff

- 87% funded by the state
- 13% funded by the EP&O Levy

Other Support Staff

- 76% funded by the state
- 24% funded by the EP&O Levy

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Operating Resources

Materials, Supplies and Operating Costs

- 78% funded by the state
- 22% funded by the EP&O Levy

Building Maintenance Staff

- 74% funded by the state
- 26% funded by the EP&O Levy

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Activities, Athletics and Enrichment

- Advanced coursework (AP/IB)
- Dual Language Program
- Sports, extracurricular activities
- Music and art
- Safety & security at athletic events

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Levy Scenarios for Consideration



- Level Rate: \$1.76/\$1,000 *AV will support underfunding from the state in 2028 by **\$94.5 million**
- Projected Rate: \$1.95/\$1,000 *AV will support underfunding from the state in 2028 by **\$104.7 million**
- Maximum Projected Levy Lid Rate: \$1.98/\$1,000 *AV will support underfunding from the state in 2028 by **\$106.5 million**

***Assessed value growth:**

8-year average – 7.29%
 5-year average – 4.97%
 2026: 3.33% Actual
 2027 and later – 7.00%

Level Rate: \$1.76/\$1,000 AV

Year	Rate per \$1,000 AV	Amount
2028	\$1.76	\$94.5 million
2029	\$1.76	\$101.2 million
2030	\$1.76	\$108.2 million
2031	\$1.76	\$115.8 million
Total		\$419.7 million

Projected Rate: \$1.95/\$1,000 AV

Year	Rate per \$1,000 AV	Amount
2028	\$1.95	\$104.7 million
2029	\$1.93	\$111.1 million
2030	\$1.88	\$115.7 million
2031	\$1.84	\$121.4 million
Total		\$452.9 million

Maximum Projected Levy Lid

Year	Rate per \$1,000 AV	Amount
2028	\$1.98	\$106.5 million
2029	\$1.93	\$111.1 million
2030	\$1.88	\$115.7 million
2031	\$1.84	\$121.4 million
Total		\$454.7 million



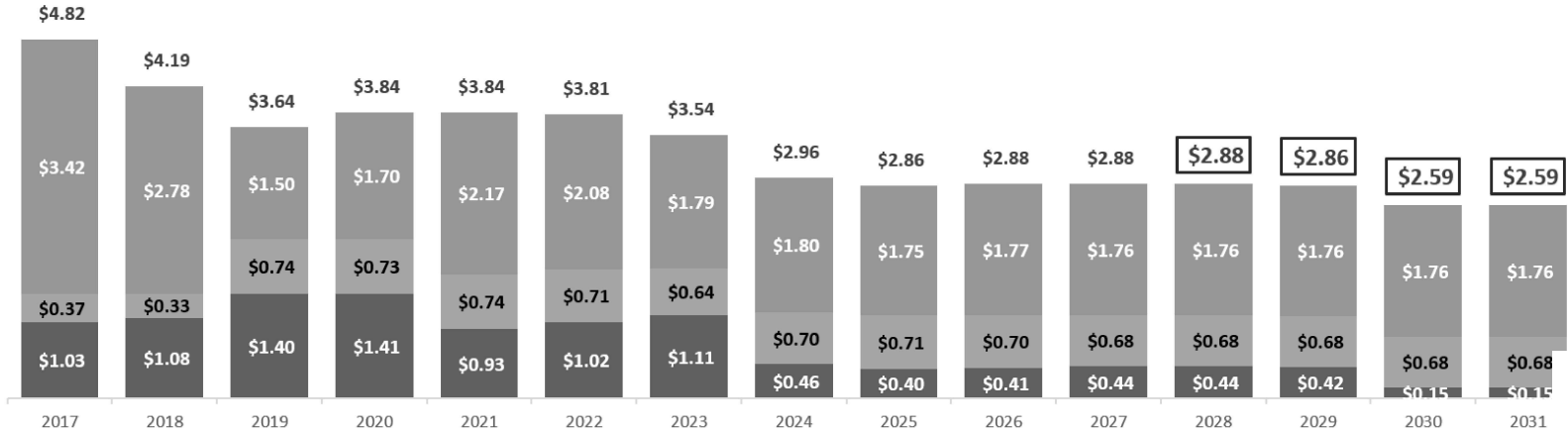
EP&O Tax Rate

\$1.76/\$1,000



Historic and Projected Property Tax Rates
EP&O Levy @\$1.76 per \$1,000

■ Existing Bonds ■ Capital/Tech Levy ■ Operating Levy





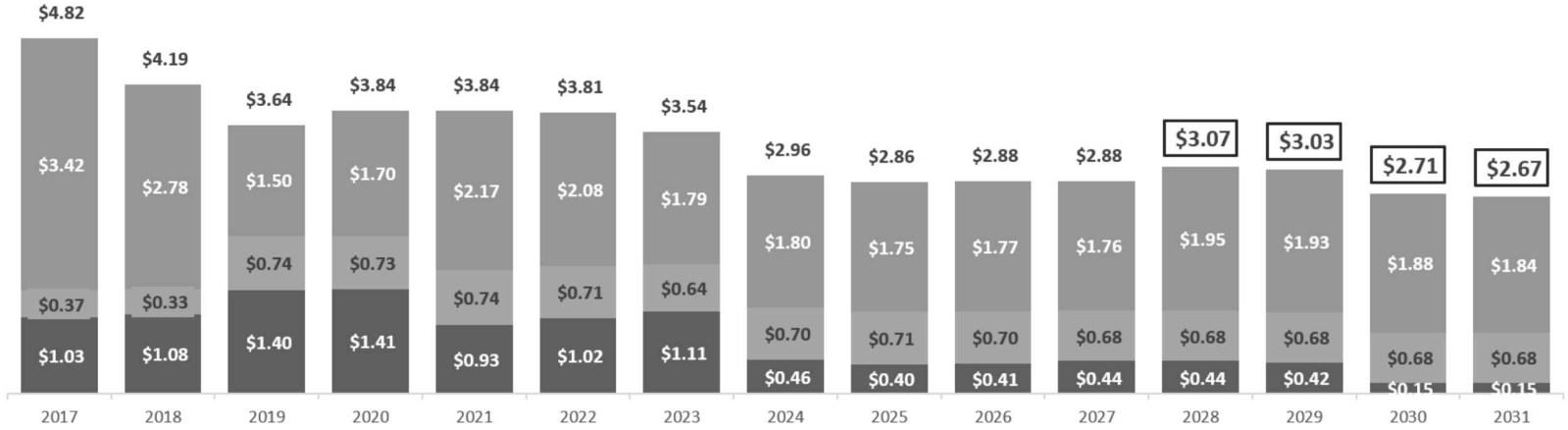
EP&O Tax Rate

\$1.95/\$1,000



Historic and Projected Property Tax Rates
EP&O Levy @\$1.95 per \$1,000

■ Existing Bonds ■ Capital/Tech Levy ■ Operating Levy



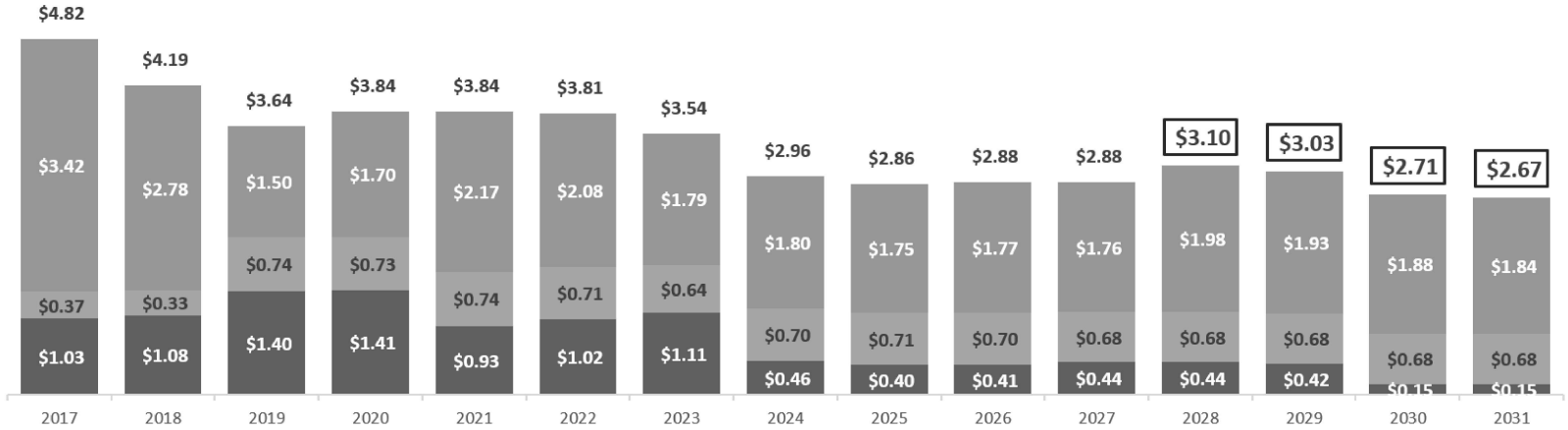


EP&O Tax Rate Maximum



Historic and Projected Property Tax Rates
EP&O @Maximum Levy per Pupil

■ Existing Bonds ■ Capital/Tech Levy ■ Operating Levy



Property Tax Rate Comparison



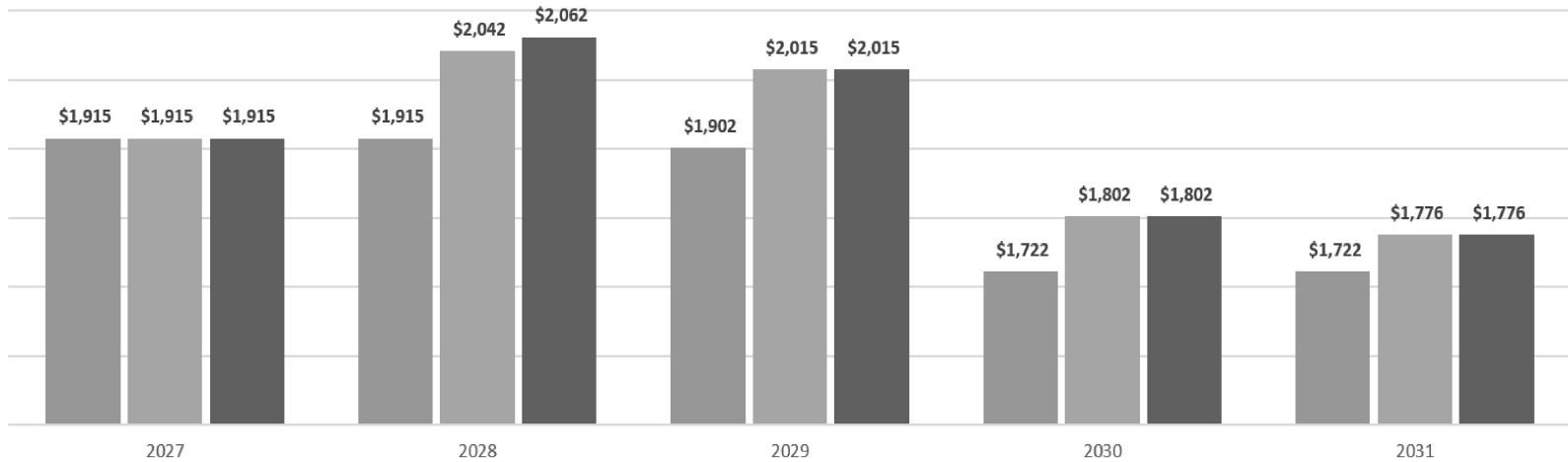
Tax Bill Example

\$665,000 Home

Median home price Redfin, April 2026

Estimated Annual Property Tax Bill Example \$665,000 Home

■ @\$1.76 ■ @1.95 ■ @Max Levy



Property Taxes

April Data 2021-2026



Source: Median home price Redfin, April Data from 2021-2026

Year	Median Value	Property Tax
2021	\$525,000	\$2,016
2022	\$700,000	\$2,667
2023	\$596,000	\$2,110
2024	\$645,000	\$1,909
2025	\$660,000	\$1,888
2026	\$665,000	\$1,915

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Budget Forecast

No Reductions

Description	Operating Budget 2025-26	Proposed Budget 2026-27	Projected Budget 2027-28	Projected Budget 2028-29	Projected Budget 2029-30
Revenues	\$541.2	\$565.1	\$575.2	\$584.0	\$599.2
Less: Expenditures	564.0	569.0	584.8	600.0	615.7
= Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$22.8)	(\$3.9)	(\$9.6)	(\$15.9)	(\$16.5)
Add: Beginning Balance	58.8	35.9	32.1	22.5	6.5
= Ending Fund Balance	\$35.9	\$32.1	\$22.5	\$6.5	(\$10.0)
Less: Designations	5.3	3.9	2.8	2.8	2.8
= Unassigned Ending Fund Balance (\$)	\$30.7	\$28.2	\$19.7	\$3.7	(\$12.8)
= Unassigned Ending Fund Balance (%)	5.7%	5.0%	3.5%	0.6%	(2.1%)

Board Policy 6022 requires minimum unassigned ending fund balance of 5% of the previous year's actual General Fund expenditures, which are determined at the close of the fiscal year.

Budget Forecast With Reductions

Description	Operating Budget 2025-26	Proposed Budget 2026-27	Projected Budget 2027-28	Projected Budget 2028-29	Projected Budget 2029-30
Revenues	\$541.2	\$565.1	\$575.2	\$584.0	\$599.2
Less: Expenditures	564.0	569.0	584.8	600.0	615.7
<i>Budget Cuts (2027-28)</i>			(\$9.0)	(\$9.0)	(\$9.0)
<i>Budget Cuts (2028-29)</i>				(\$8.0)	(\$8.0)
Total Expenditures	564.0	569.0	575.8	583.0	598.7
= Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$22.8)	(\$3.9)	(\$0.6)	\$1.1	\$0.5
Add: Beginning Balance	58.8	35.9	32.1	31.5	32.5
= Ending Fund Balance	\$35.9	\$32.1	\$31.5	\$32.5	\$33.0
Less: Designations	5.3	3.9	2.8	2.8	2.8
= Unassigned Ending Fund Balance (\$)	\$30.7	\$28.2	\$28.7	\$29.7	30.2
= Unassigned Ending Fund Balance (%)	5.7%	5.0%	5.0%	5.2%	5.2%

Board Policy 6022 requires minimum unassigned ending fund balance of 5% of the previous year's actual General Fund expenditures, which are determined at the close of the fiscal year.

Budget Forecast With \$1.95 Levy

Description	Operating Budget 2025-26	Proposed Budget 2026-27	Projected Budget 2027-28	Projected Budget 2028-29	Projected Budget 2029-30
Revenues	\$541.2	\$565.1	\$575.2	\$584.0	\$599.2
<i>Additional EP&O Levy 2027-28</i>			8.3	8.3	8.3
<i>Additional EP&O Levy 2028-29</i>				9.3	9.3
<i>Additional EP&O Levy 2029-30</i>					2.3
Total Revenues	\$541.2	\$565.1	\$583.5	\$601.6	\$619.1
Less: Expenditures	564.0	569.0	584.8	600.0	615.7
= Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$22.8)	(\$3.9)	(\$1.2)	\$1.7	\$3.3
Add: Beginning Balance	58.8	35.9	32.1	30.8	32.5
= Ending Fund Balance	\$35.9	\$32.1	\$30.8	\$32.5	\$35.8
Less: Designations	5.3	3.9	2.8	2.8	2.8
= Unassigned Ending Fund Balance (\$)	\$30.7	\$28.2	\$28.0	\$29.7	33.1
= Unassigned Ending Fund Balance (%)	5.7%	5.0%	4.9%	5.1%	5.5%

Board Policy 6022 requires minimum unassigned ending fund balance of 5% of the previous year's actual General Fund expenditures, which are determined at the close of the fiscal year.

With \$1.95 per \$1,000 AV levy

Assuming no change in expenditures

Levy amounts as follows:

- 2026-27: \$84.4M
- 2027-28: from \$87.4M to \$95.7M
- 2028-29: from \$90.4M to \$108.1M
- 2029-30: from \$93.6 to \$113.5M

Survey Questions

Do you currently have a child attending a school in the Kent School District?

Did you know the state underfunds the Kent School District by approximately \$127 million each year, and the current levy helps fill \$84 million of that gap, funding teachers, support staff, safety services, arts, music, athletics, and daily school operations?

The Kent School District is considering several levy funding options beginning in 2028. Which option would you be most likely to support?

- \$2.09 per \$1,000 of assessed property value
- \$1.95 per \$1000 of assessed property value
- \$1.76 per \$1,000 of assessed property value

If the Kent School District Educational Programs and Operations Levy were on the ballot today, how likely would you be to support it?

The Kent School District helps make this area a desirable place for families to live and contributes to a strong community.

Survey Results

Q1: Do you have a child attending KSD?

154
Parents



511 Completed
Surveys



357
Non-Parents

Q2: Did you know the state underfunds the Kent School District by about \$127 million each year, and the current levy helps fill \$84 million of that gap?

Total respondents (511)
Yes: 232 (45.4%)
No: 279 (54.6%)

Parents (154)
Yes: 83 (53.9%)
No: 71 (46.1%)



Non-Parents (357)
Yes: 147 (41.2%)
No: 210 (58.8%)

% are approximate



Q3: Which levy funding option beginning in 2028 would you be most likely to support?

Parents (154)
\$1.76: 27 (17.5%)
\$1.95: 16 (10.4%)
\$2.09: 25 (16.2%)
None: 86 (55.8%)



Total respondents (511)
\$1.76: 94 (18.4%)
\$1.95: 72 (14.1%)
\$2.09: 82 (16.0%)
None: 263 (51.5%)



Non-Parents (357)
\$1.76: 67 (18.8%)
\$1.95: 56 (15.7%)
\$2.09: 57 (15.9%)
None: 177 (49.6%)

% are approximate

Q4: If the Kent School District Educational Programs and Operations Levy were on the ballot today, how likely would you be to support it?

57% Likely – 43% Unlikely

Total respondents (511)	
Very Likely: 201	(39.3%)
Somewhat Likely: 91	(17.8%)
Somewhat Unlikely: 57	(11.2%)
Very Unlikely: 162	(31.7%)

Parents (154)	
Very Likely: 58	(37.7%)
Somewhat Likely: 27	(17.5%)
Somewhat Unlikely: 25	(16.2%)
Very Unlikely: 44	(28.6%)



Non-Parents (357)	
Very Likely: 170	(47.6%)
Somewhat Likely: 46	(12.9%)
Somewhat Unlikely: 27	(7.6%)
Very Unlikely: 114	(31.9%)

Q5: The Kent School District helps make our community a desirable place for families to live and contributes to a strong community.

Agree 66% - Disagree 34%

Parents (154)

Strongly Agree: 57 (37.0%)
Somewhat Agree: 36 (23.4%)
Somewhat Disagree: 31 (20.1%)
Strongly Disagree: 30 (19.5%)



Total respondents (511)

Strongly Agree: 207 (40.5%)
Somewhat Agree: 128 (25.0%)
Somewhat Disagree: 81 (15.9%)
Strongly Disagree: 95 (18.6%)



Non-Parents (357)

Strongly Agree: 126 (35.3%)
Somewhat Agree: 124 (34.7%)
Somewhat Disagree: 45 (12.6%)
Strongly Disagree: 62 (17.4%)

% are approximate

Election Objectives

- Pass the Replacement Educational Programs and Operations Levy November 3, 2026.
- Complete the levy information campaign in compliance with the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) guidelines and restrictions.
- Ensure school and district leaders provide clear, factual levy information to their communities and teams.
- Increase community understanding and trust by delivering clear, consistent, and accessible levy information that reflects OneKSD values of equity, excellence, and community.

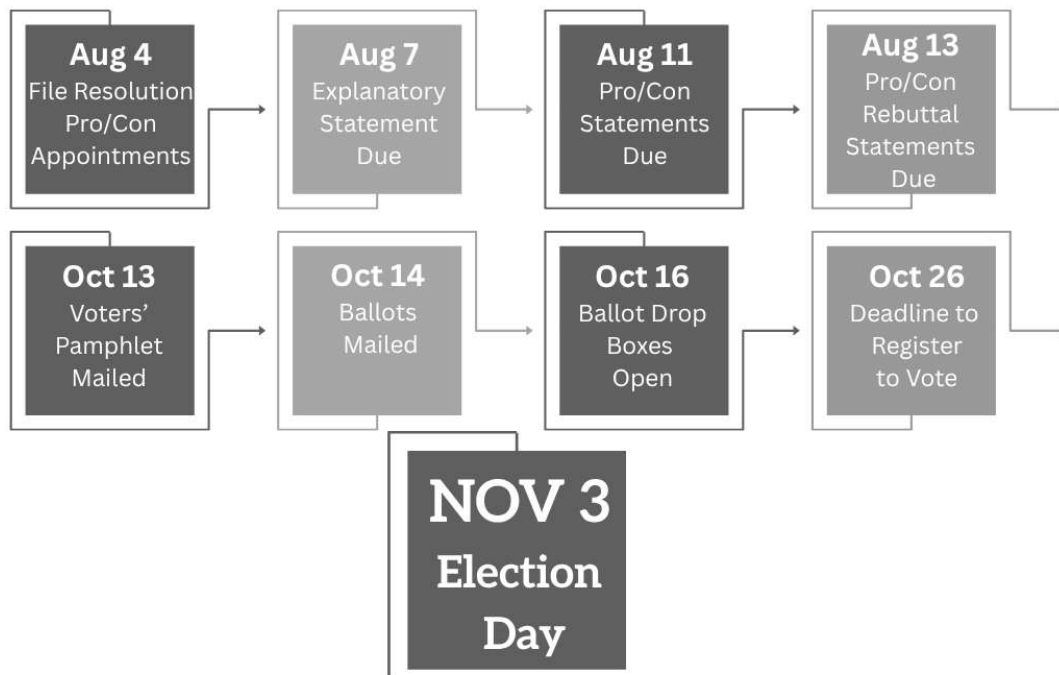


Election Strategies

- Work with KSD staff, labor and community partners to share clear, factual information with their communities.
- Use a mix of methods and platforms to inform our community.
- Provide clear, accessible information about voting and ballot return processes.
- Ensure consistency across communications by using aligned, approved key messages.
- Maintain compliance by using neutral, fact-based language and a review process for materials.
- Deliver multilingual communications using clear, plain language.
- Use current cadence of newsletters, social posts, emails, texts, and push notifications to reinforce key information that is clear, consistent, and easy to follow.



Election Timeline



EP&O Levy

Proposition 1

Four-Year Levy

Next Steps



Building Bridges

Every Student

Every Voice

Every Day



Resolution
June 24, 2026

Questions?





OneKSD



Thank You