

Loveland City Schools: March 17 Operating Levy

The Loveland City School District has a continuing 6.95-mill operating levy on the March 17 ballot after failing a combined operating/permanent improvement levy and bond issue in November 2019. The levy is necessary to sustain the academic progress made since the last operating levy, which was passed by voters in 2014 and promised to last four years. The 2014 levy allowed the district to expand services and programs to students and improve the overall student experience. The results of this investment are evidenced in excelled student achievement data, staff retention data, increased services and numerous awards and accolades over the past several years. Even with the investment of the 2014 levy, Loveland's per-pupil spending remains at the state average. The district sends the majority of its budget – 72% – directly to the classroom, where it will benefit students the most.

The outcome of the election last year prompted the Board of Education to present \$2.7 million in expense reductions along with the new levy request. The cuts are being made regardless of the outcome of the election and will not be reinstated if the operating levy passes in March. If the March levy fails, the district has a fiscal responsibility to enter into the new school year with additional, significant adjustments to the budget due to uncertain funding, and these cuts will affect programs, class size, and services to students. If the district fails to pass an operating levy in 2020, it will have to make approximately \$3 million of additional cuts in 2021. Some of these cuts will happen before the start of the 2020-21 school year and include the reduction of a minimum of 25 staff members. High school busing, including non-public routes, will be eliminated, pay-to-participate fees will increase further, and reductions and reorganizations of programs will affect music, physical education, media centers/libraries and gifted services for students.

As part of addressing affordability as it relates to local funding of the schools, the Loveland City Schools Board of Education has committed to limiting annual expenditure growth of the district's general fund to an average annualized 2.64% for fiscal years '21 through '24, according to the new baseline of projected expenditures for fiscal year '20. This commitment, in combination with the levy request, will put the district on a trajectory of being able to reduce expenditures while still protecting the recent progress made. Urging residents to be part of the solution, the Board is implementing a community-based Planning Commission, which will assist in investigating opportunities to increase income that does not raise local property taxes, and effective practices in reducing expenditures.

The district is a member of the Alliance for High Quality Education, which works with school districts to influence educational policy for public schools. It also urges residents to take action in favor of a solution that provides equitable funding for public schools in Ohio that have robust property values, but lack a solid base of commercial property by contacting their local legislator.

Links to levy information:

<https://www.lovelandschools.org/March2020Levy.aspx>

[LEVY FAQ](#)

[RESOURCES](#)

[Details - \\$2.7. million in expense reductions](#)