

**PARKROSE SCHOOL DISTRICT
SURVEY RESEARCH REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
MARCH 5, 2014**

The following survey research report provides some valuable information regarding the public's perception of a five-year local option operating levy. This report should assist the district and citizen representatives in their planning and decision making process in regards to the proposal.

Throughout this executive summary, The Nelson Report identifies “key” demographics for many of the questions. Key demographics are those subgroups that respond at a higher percentage rate than the total sample for any given response. The key demographic groups for any given opinion are not necessarily the only subgroups in the survey who share that opinion. They are, however, the ones that hold that opinion most strongly.

A total of 382 respondents were interviewed between February 25 and March 3, 2014. The margin of error for this survey is +/-5% at the 95% level of confidence.

MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS FACING PARKROSE SCHOOL DISTRICT TODAY

“Lack of funding” was perceived to be the most serious problem facing Parkrose School District today, followed by “overcrowded classes” and “mismanage money.”

Below, the top answers are displayed in more detail. The full responses can be found in the final report. Since this question and other open-ended questions call for multiple responses, the results are displayed in terms of the percentage of respondents who mentioned a particular issue (totaling over 100%) and the percentage of total responses (totals 100%). The top responses are listed below in descending numerical order.

Issues	<u>Percent Of Respondents</u>	<u>Percent Of Responses</u>
LACK OF FUNDING	18	13
OVERCROWDED CLASSES	14	11
MISMANAGE MONEY	6	5
STUDENTS DON'T GET A GOOD EDUCATION	4	3
NEED MORE TEACHERS	4	3
ISN'T RUN SMOOTHLY	4	3
BUS DRIVERS BEING OUTSOURCED	4	3
NEED MORE QUALIFIED STAFF	3	2

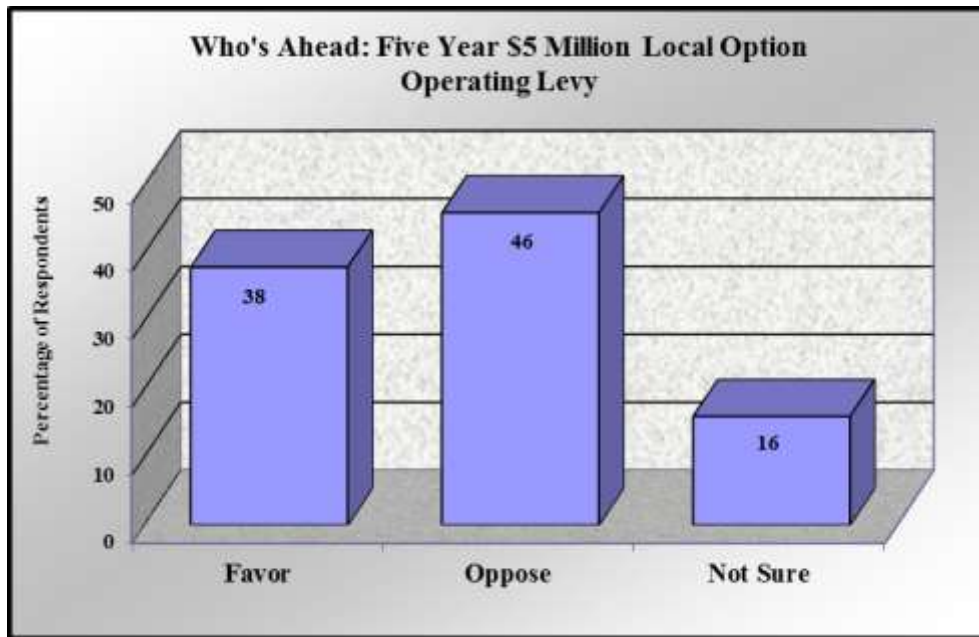
WHO'S AHEAD: FIVE YEAR LOCAL OPTION OPERATING LEVY

Next, respondents were given the following information and question:

“The Parkrose School District is currently considering a five year \$5 million local option operating levy that would allow the district to hire additional teachers, fund outdoor school for students and go to a full calendar school year. This levy would raise \$1 million each year for five years and would cost property taxpayers approximately 85-cents per thousand dollars of assessed value.”

“If an election were held today, would you FAVOR or OPPOSE a five year \$5 million local option operating levy at a tax rate of approximately 85-cents per thousand?”

Slightly less than half of respondents, 46%, opposed a five year \$5 million local option operating levy, while 38% favored the proposal. Sixteen percent were not sure.



Key groups who opposed a five year local option operating levy were males (50%), 60+ years old (52%), voters in 3 out of 4 elections (55%), 4 out of 4 elections (48%), and Shaver (50%).

Principal reasons respondents opposed the operating levy were (46% of all respondents):

Taxes are too high	36%
Mismanage money	19%
Asking for too much	19%

Key demographics who favored a five year local option operating levy were females (40%), 25-34 years old (61%), 18-24 years old (60%), 35-44 years old (55%), 45-59 years old (43%), respondents with children in Parkrose schools (43%), voters in 1 out of 4 elections (51%), 2 out of 4 elections (39%), Prescott (42%), and Sacramento (40%).

Main reasons respondents favored the operating levy were (38% of all respondents):

Support education	33%
They need it	20%
Always support schools	10%
Great investment	10%
Need to pay teachers more	10%

PUSH RESULTS

Next, respondents were asked a series of questions designed to gauge the positive or negative impact of certain pieces of information. This methodology was used to ascertain which arguments produced the greatest net movement from the original “who's ahead” question.

The reader should keep in mind the “if you knew. . .” format. Certain arguments may push people “if they knew,” but the nature of the argument may make it impossible to convince someone that it is factual. In addition, the resources required to do the convincing may be too great when compared to other arguments. This series was cross-checked later in the survey by the agree/disagree series. On the following page, the results are ranked in descending positive order. The net gain/loss reflects the push or movement off the original “who's ahead” question.

Question	Favor	Oppose	Not Sure	Net Gain/Loss
Who's Ahead Results: Renewal of Five Year Operating Levy	38	46	16	
If you knew reduced class sizes leads to improved reading and math scores, would you FAVOR or OPPOSE the proposed local option operating levy that would allow the district to hire additional teaching staff?	62	32	6	+24
If you knew hiring additional teachers would reduce class sizes in all grade levels from 32 students per classroom to approximately 28 students per classroom, would you FAVOR or OPPOSE the five year \$5 million local option operating levy?	56	37	7	+18
If you knew local option operating levies are structured so businesses contribute to the cost of providing K-12 education, would you FAVOR or OPPOSE the proposed local option operating levy?	54	34	12	+16
If you knew passage of the proposed levy would allow the school district to add back approximately 20 teaching positions cut in the last 5 years, would you FAVOR or OPPOSE a five year \$5 million local option operating levy?	54	36	10	+16
If you knew passage of the five year \$5 million local option operating levy would enable the district to help support full-week outdoor school for middle school students, would you FAVOR or OPPOSE the proposal?	52	40	8	+14

Question	Favor	Oppose	Not Sure	Net Gain/Loss
Who's Ahead Results: Renewal of Five Year Operating Levy	38	46	16	
If you knew passage of the proposed five year \$5 million local option operating levy would allow the district to maintain a full calendar year for students, would you FAVOR or OPPOSE the proposal?	48	41	11	+10
If you knew passage of the five year \$5 million local option operating levy would cost property taxpayers approximately 85-cents per thousand or \$170 per year for the owner of a home with an assessed value of \$200,000, would you FAVOR or OPPOSE the proposal?	45	44	11	+7

Key observations to this series were as follows:

- The argument that produced the largest increase (+24%) in support for a five year local option operating levy was knowledge that reduced class sizes leads to improved reading and math scores. Key demographics who increased in support were **females** (+28%), **60+ years old** (+30%), **respondents with no children in Parkrose schools** (+25%), **voters in 4 out of 4 elections** (+29%), **Russell** (+27%), and **Shaver** (+26%).
- Knowledge that hiring additional teachers would reduce class sizes in all grade levels from 32 students per classroom to approximately 28 students per classroom also pushed a significant number of respondents to support the proposal (+18%). Key demographics increasing to favor were **females** (+20%), **60+ years old** (+24%), **18-24 years old** (+20%), **respondents with no children in Parkrose schools** (+19%), **voters in 4 out of 4 elections** (+20%), and **Russell** (+20%).
- The fact that local option operating levies are structured so businesses contribute to the cost of providing K-12 education again pushed respondents to favor the proposal (+16%). Key demographics responding to this information were **females** (+17%), **45-59 years old** (+19%), **60+ years old** (+17%), **respondents with children in Parkrose schools** (+18%), **voters in 4 out of 4 elections** (+18%), and **Shaver** (+17%).

- Information that passage of the proposed levy would allow the school district to add back approximately 20 teaching positions cut in the last 5 years moved respondents to favor a five year local option operating levy by another +16%. Key groups impacted by this information were **females** (+17%), **60+ years old** (+19%), 45-59 years old (+17%), **respondents with no children in Parkrose schools** (+17%), voters in 2 out of 4 elections (+19%), **4 out of 4 elections** (+18%), **Russell** (+22%), and Sacramento (+17%).
- Knowledge that passage of the five year \$5 million local option operating levy would enable the district to help support full-week outdoor school for middle school students moved respondents to support a five year local option operating levy (+14%). Key demographics moved with this information were 18-24 years old (+20%), **60+ years old** (+17%), respondents with children in Parkrose schools (+16%), voters in 2 out of 4 elections (+18%), **Russell** (+20%), and **Shaver** (+16%).

AGREE/DISAGREE

In this series, respondents were presented with a number of potentially prejudicial statements regarding Parkrose School District and its proposed local option operating levy. This format was designed to serve as a cross-check on various closed-ended questions as well as to pick up variations on prejudices not readily apparent in those types of questions. This is an important series of questions, especially when cross-checked with the “if you knew” push questions.

The results are displayed in two different tables. In the first table, the key push arguments have been isolated and set against their corresponding agree/disagree questions. The second table simply displays all of the agree/disagree statements in descending order of agreement.

PUSH I: LEVY WILL REDUCE CLASS SIZES IMPROVE READING/ MATH SCORES

If you knew reduced class sizes leads to improved reading and math scores, would you FAVOR or OPPOSE the proposed local option operating levy that would allow the district to hire additional teaching staff?

Favor 62	Oppose 32	Not Sure 6
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If you knew hiring additional teachers would reduce class sizes in all grade levels from 32 students per classroom to approximately 28 students per classroom, would you FAVOR or OPPOSE the five year \$5 million local option operating levy?

Favor 56

Oppose
37

Not Sure
7

AGREE/DISAGREE

Reduced class sizes leads to improved reading and math scores. I support a five year \$5 million local option operating levy that will allow the district to hire more teachers so we can reduce class sizes.

Agree 54

Disagree
39

Not Sure
7

PUSH II: LEVY WILL ADD BACK TEACHERS

If you knew passage of the proposed levy would allow the school district to add back approximately 20 teaching positions cut in the last 5 years, would you FAVOR or OPPOSE a five year \$5 million local option operating levy?

Favor 54

Oppose
36

Not Sure
10

AGREE/DISAGREE

Our community supported our district's bond measure to construct new school buildings and renovate other school buildings. Now we need to support hiring staff so our students can have the quality of education they deserve. I'm voting yes.

Agree 54

Disagree
38

Not Sure
8

PUSH III: LEVY STRUCTURED SO BUSINESSES CONTRIBUTE TO COST OF K-12 EDUCATION

If you knew local option operating levies are structured so businesses contribute to the cost of providing K-12 education, would you FAVOR or OPPOSE the proposed local option operating levy?

Favor 54

Oppose
34

Not Sure
12

AGREE/DISAGREE

As long as local businesses assist in the payment of the proposed local option operating levy, I'll favor the proposal.

Agree 51

Disagree
39

Not Sure
10

PUSH IV: LEVY WILL ENABLE DISTRICT TO MAINTAIN FULL CALENDER YEAR FOR STUDENTS

If you knew passage of the proposed five year \$5 million local option operating levy would allow the district to maintain a full calendar year for students, would you FAVOR or OPPOSE the proposal?

Favor 48

Oppose
41

Not Sure
11

AGREE/DISAGREE

Maintaining a full calendar year for students is crucial to ensure they receive the learning time they need. I favor a \$5 million local option operating levy if it will allow the district to implement a full-calendar school year.

Agree 47

Disagree
46

Not Sure
7

PUSH V: COST OF LEVY TO TAXPAYERS

If you knew passage of the five year \$5 million local option operating levy would cost property taxpayers approximately 85-cents per thousand or \$170 per year for the owner of a home with an assessed value of \$200,000, would you FAVOR or OPPOSE the proposal?

Favor 45

Oppose
44

Not Sure
11

AGREE/DISAGREE

In today’s economy, I just can’t afford an additional 85-cents per thousand in property taxes for school district operations. I’m voting no.

Agree
48

Disagree 43

Not Sure
9

AGREE/DISAGREE STATEMENTS IN DESCENDING ORDER OF AGREEMENT

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
Our community supported our district’s bond measure to construct new school buildings and renovate other school buildings. Now we need to support hiring staff so our students can have the quality of education they deserve. I’m voting yes.	54	38	8
Reduced class sizes leads to improved reading and math scores. I support a five year \$5 million local option operating levy that will allow the district to hire more teachers so we can reduce class sizes.	54	39	7
As long as local businesses assist in the payment of the proposed local option operating levy, I’ll favor the proposal.	51	39	10
In today’s economy, I just can’t afford an additional 85-cents per thousand in property taxes for school district operations. I’m voting no.	48	43	9

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
The district doesn't need an local option operating levy. They need to tighten their belt just like the rest of us and make cuts to their budget. I oppose a levy that will fund district operations.	48	44	8
Maintaining a full calendar year for students is crucial to ensure they receive the learning time they need. I favor a \$5 million local option operating levy if it will allow the district to implement a full-calendar school year.	47	46	7

CONCLUSIONS

1. “Lack of funding” is perceived to be the most serious problem facing Parkrose School District today, followed by “overcrowded classes” and “mismanage money.”
2. Slightly less than half of respondents oppose a five year local option operating levy.
3. Top reasons for opposing a local option levy are “taxes are too high,” “mismanage money” and “asking for too much.”
4. Foremost reasons for favoring the proposal are “support education” and “they need it.”
5. The argument that produces the largest increase in support for a five year local option operating levy is knowledge that reduced class sizes leads to improved reading and math scores. Levy will reduce class sizes/improve student learning in math and reading are **primary** issues for respondents.
6. Knowledge that hiring additional teachers would reduce class sizes in all grade levels from 32 students per classroom to approximately 28 students per classroom also pushes a significant number of respondents to support the proposal. Again reducing class sizes is a **primary** issue, especially when combined with improved student learning.
7. The fact that local option operating levies are structured so businesses contribute to the cost of providing K-12 education again pushes respondents to favor the proposal. This is a **secondary** issue.
8. Information that passage of the proposed levy would allow the school district to add back approximately 20 teaching positions cut in the last 5 years moves respondents to favor a five year local option operating levy. Again, hiring teachers to reduce class sizes is a **primary** issue.
9. Knowledge that passage of the five year \$5 million local option operating levy would enable the district to help support full-week outdoor school for middle school students moves respondents to support a five year local option operating levy. This is a **secondary** issue.

10. While the community recognizes that a lack of funding is a serious problem for Parkrose School District, slightly less than half of respondents initially **oppose** a five year \$5 million local option operating levy. While arguments that the levy would reduce class sizes and smaller class sizes lead to improved math and reading scores increase support for the proposal, respondents appear to be struggling with the cost at 85-cents per thousand as reflected in both the “if you knew” and “agree/disagree” series.

It does not appear a five year \$5 million local option operating levy would be successful at this time. If the district can modify its levy proposal and/or educate its constituents of the “need” for it at a lower cost, they may be able to strike a common balance with the necessary portion of the school district’s constituents to be successful.

Finally, there appears to be an underlying concern by some respondents regarding fiscal accountability and money management that the school district should continue to address.