

Teton School District 401
February 15, 2011

Re: Supplemental Levy review

The State of Idaho does not adequately fund education. Our legislators in Boise seem to find every reason in the book to cut education and fail to look at ways to increase revenue for education. On August 25, 2006, the Idaho Legislature passed the Idaho Property Tax Relief Act. In a one day special session, the Legislature voted to approve property tax relief to homeowners by removing all maintenance and operation costs for school districts from local property tax roles. As a result, your property taxes decreased. Owners of a home assessed at \$200,000 paid \$600 less per year on their property tax. This bill also made funding for education entirely dependent on Idaho sales tax revenue. This is not a stable funding source. Our local community has recognized the inadequate and unreliable funding source for public education, which includes Teton School District 401. On April 10, 2007, Teton Valley citizens approved a supplemental levy for operating expenses for the school district. With this approved supplemental levy, District 401 was put on solid financial ground. This money was used for general operations within the school district. On May 12, 2009, this supplemental levy was again approved by the voters. As before, this money was used for ongoing and essential expenses for the district. Our school district now asks for a renewal of that levy on **Tuesday, March 8, 2011.**

Funding from the State of Idaho simply has not kept pace with the increasing financial demands of a quality education. Financial data from the Idaho Department of Education shows more school districts across the state have been relying on supplemental levies approved by local voters to help meet the expenses of school districts. Statewide, 73% of Idaho's public school districts (84 of 115 districts) are using money from local supplemental levies. Teton County School District 401 is no different than the other 84 districts in the state. In order for the District to continue to provide a quality education, the decision that was made in 2007 to support education with local tax dollars will need to be renewed again this year. The District recognizes that the economic recession has created fiscal hardships for valley citizens; however, lack of leadership at the state level by not adequately funding education need not be repeated at the local level. School District 401 has and will continue to spend your dollars wisely, always making the best interest of students the priority.

Hopefully, you have attended a school board meeting or one of the community meetings held in Teton, Driggs, or Victor. If you were unable to attend or want additional information, please contact the school district office:

445 North Main

Driggs, ID 83422

208-354-2207

mrw@d401.k12.id.us

<http://tsd401.org> (link on Levy Renewal Information, to view the levy's historical background, current needs and projected budget.)

Sincerely,

Doug Petersen, School Board Chair
Monte Woolstenhulme, Superintendent/Principal