

2026 General Fund Operations Levy & Operations, Infrastructure, and Licensing Technology Levy

What You Need to Know

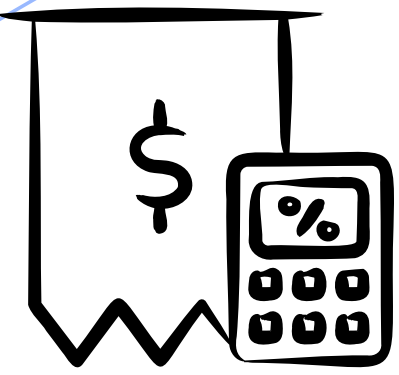
What is a levy?

Local governments and school districts in Montana use mill levies to fund public services, governed by MCA Title 7 and 15. These are authorized by voter ballot questions or governing bodies to raise set amounts of money.

Why levies?

In MT, school funding is a partnership between the state and the local community. While the state provides a “base” level of support, it does not cover the full cost of running a modern school.

Think of the operations or technology levies as the “fuel” for the district’s daily engine. Unlike a bond, which funds the bricks and mortar of a building, a **levy is for learning** and for people.



What is HPS Requesting?

Elementary General Fund Operations Levy

The purpose of increasing the operations mill levy is to help close the 20% gap between state funding and the actual cost of running our schools. These funds will be dedicated to student and staffing needs; primarily supporting curriculum programs, classroom supplies, and the retention and recruitment of teachers and staff.

Ultimately, this local investment ensures we can maintain the standard of academic-excellence that we, and the Helena Community expects for its students.

Elementary and High School Operations, Infrastructure, and Licensing Technology Levies

The purpose of increasing the Operations, Infrastructure, and Licensing technology mill levy for both the elementary and the high school districts is to maintain the district's existing technology infrastructure and secure learning environment. This includes the routine maintenance and scheduled replacement of current devices, renewal of software licenses and cloud-based services used by staff and students, and upkeep of the network and security systems that support daily instruction. The levy is not intended to expand the number of devices in classrooms, but rather to sustain the technology foundation already in place.

Misconceptions

“A substantially large bond was passed this last fall. Can’t you use any of that money?”

Remember, “bonds are for buildings and levies are for learning.” We cannot move money from one fund to another.

These requests are in a completely different category than the bonds. In all, the three proposed voted levies will add roughly \$6 a month onto a \$400,000 house’s tax bill.

Assessed home value	100,000.00	300,000.00	400,000.00	600,000.00
All voted levies (annually)	18.01	54.03	72.77	115.42
All voted levies (monthly)	1.50	4.50	6.06	9.62

“Levy funds can be used for anything the board wants.”

Montana law (and so are we) is very strict about “fund accounting.” Money approved for the General Fund (Operations) cannot be moved to other Funds, and vice versa.

“The operations, infrastructure, and licensing levy will just be used for buying new laptops and iPads”

While some technology funds are used to update existing teacher and student devices when they reach the end of their useful life (School district devices are most often used for 7 or more years before being replaced), this levy would primarily fund the “invisible” infrastructure that keeps the district running. This includes the maintenance and continuation of licensing on our technology throughout the district. It also aims to enhance cybersecurity infrastructure as well as our physical buildings’ safety and security aspects.

“Technology isn’t a basic need for education”

Modern state testing, college applications, and vocational training (like CAD for MT’s trades) are now almost exclusively digital. If the district cannot maintain its tech, students lose access to the basic curriculum and the tools required for the workforce.

We encourage all community members to stay informed and reach out to us with your questions as we approach the May election.

For full details on the approved resolutions and ballot language, please contact helenaschools@helenaschools.org.