**Seattle Public Schools – November 2 Levy – Basic Talk Points**

* SPS has a $48.2 M, 3-year operations levy on the Nov. 2 ballot.
* The levy will directly **support students, teachers and classrooms**. Specifically, levy funds will:
  + Reduce the number and severity of the cuts we will need to make to instructional programs and services over the next several years. ($25.8 M)
  + Help fund the new contract with our teachers, which helps us retain, develop and recruit excellent teachers for every classroom ($16.8 M of total cost of $19 M)
  + Fund textbooks and materials that will be in classrooms next fall. ($5.9 M)
* **State cuts in funding to K-12 education have been dr**amatic - more than $32 M over the past two years for Seattle; and we have an estimated $28 M budget gap for 2011-2012. **That is why the legislature gave districts across the state the ability to raise additional funds through increasing the amount that can be asked of voters**. In the case of SPS, that amount is $48.2 M over three years.
* The cost **of this levy** is 12 cents per $1,000 of assessed value, or $48 per year for a household that owns a home valued at $400,000.
* **If the levy is not approved, deep cuts to instructional programs and services will be unavoidable.** That is because over the past several years, the district has:
  + Dramatically reduced the costs of central office.
  + Used one-time funds to help close budget gaps – such as using savings from hiring freeze in 2009-2010 to help fund 2010-2011.

In answer to specific questions/objections:

**Audit –** The board and the district have accepted responsibility for the findings, are committed to being good stewards of public resources, and they have developed a detailed and rigorous plan to correct all issues.

* SIX of the SEVEN findings in the May Financial & Federal audit are CORRECTED.
* TWO of the FIVE findings in the July Accountability audit are CORRECTED; two are PARTIALLY CORRECTED and in PROCESS.
* Detailed information is available on the district’s website.

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