

# Ballot Issue 4A Explanation



## Ballot Issue 4A

WITHOUT INCREASING TAXES, SHALL ELIZABETH SCHOOL DISTRICT BE AUTHORIZED TO EXTEND ITS EXISTING TAX FOR BONDED DEBT, AND SHALL THE DISTRICT BE AUTHORIZED TO CONTINUE TO COLLECT UP TO \$1,590,000 IN PROPERTY TAX REVENUE IN 2019 AND ANNUALLY THEREAFTER, WHICH MONIES SHALL BE DEPOSITED INTO THE GENERAL FUND OF THE DISTRICT AND USED TO:

- ATTRACT AND RETAIN TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF BY OFFERING COMPENSATION THAT IS COMPETITIVE WITH SURROUNDING SCHOOL DISTRICTS;
- EXPAND SAFETY AND SECURITY MEASURES THROUGH EQUIPMENT, TRAINING, AND PREPAREDNESS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE ADDITION OF A SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS;
- PROVIDE ALL STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY THAT FACILITATES LEARNING AND POST-GRADUATE SUCCESS;

PROVIDED THAT IN 2019 A PORTION OF THE \$1,590,000 WILL BE USED TO MAKE THE FINAL PAYMENTS ON THE DISTRICT'S GENERAL OBLIGATION DEBT;

AND, BASED ON STUDENT COUNT, SHALL THE DISTRICT BE AUTHORIZED TO ALLOCATE A PORTION OF THE REVENUE RAISED TO LEGACY ACADEMY, AS REQUIRED BY LAW, TO USE FOR THE PURPOSES SET FORTH HEREIN;

AND SHALL THE DISTRICT BE AUTHORIZED TO COLLECT, RETAIN, AND SPEND ALL REVENUES FROM SUCH TAXES AND THE EARNINGS FROM THE INVESTMENT OF SUCH REVENUES AS A VOTER APPROVED REVENUE CHANGE?

Accountability for the use of the mill levy override proceeds will be monitored by the District Accountability Committee (DAC).

House Bill 17-1375, passed in 2017, requires school districts to share a portion of override revenues with charter schools.

This ballot measure won't raise taxes because the mill levy override (MLO) replaces the district's existing bond that retires in 2019. In fact, the MLO is a flat amount and as the community grows the \$1.59 million will be spread across additional taxpayers and each taxpayer will contribute less.

The MLO addresses fundamental and enduring district needs. Since a significant portion of the money is earmarked for ongoing expenses, the MLO does not sunset, as that would create a financial cliff that would require cuts at the time of the sunset.

The majority of the total MLO revenue - 86% - would go toward increasing compensation for teachers and support staff to enable Elizabeth Schools to be more competitive with neighboring school districts. The minimum increase for teaching staff would be 10%. The minimum increase for support staff would be 7.5%.

To see additional information regarding staff within the district who would be impacted, visit <http://bit.ly/2PopHfn>.

Approximately 8 to 9% of the proceeds from the MLO would go toward a School Resource Officer (SRO) employed by the Elizabeth Police Department. The SRO would be assigned to split their time between Elizabeth High School and Elizabeth Middle School. The school district would pay for nine months of compensation for this position. For an overview of the SRO's role, visit <http://bit.ly/SROdetail>.

Additionally, facility safety improvements would be made at all district schools, not just the middle and high schools.

Funds would also be allocated to staff training, assemblies, guest speakers, safety experts, threat assessments, and other resources to improve social and emotional support for all students.

About 5 to 6% of the funds from the MLO would be used to increase the availability of technology in the classroom, including additional tablets and student laptops, increased software tools for students, and more STEM resources like robotics, simulators, drones and 3D printers.

The district's existing bond that was used to build Elizabeth High School will be paid off in 2019. If voters pass the mill levy override, a portion of the \$1.59 million will be used to make the final payments on the bond in 2019.

## What is a mill levy override?

A mill levy is the "tax rate" that is applied to the assessed value of a property. An override is when voters approve a property tax beyond the state minimum. A school district mill levy override (MLO) provides additional operating monies for specific local needs. An MLO can be used for expenses such as compensation, equipment, staffing and programs.

## What will a \$1.59 million MLO be used for?

Attract and retain teachers and support staff

- Offer compensation that is competitive with surrounding school districts

Health and safety

- Expand safety and security measures through equipment, training, and preparedness, including but not limited to the addition of a school resource officer and social-emotional support for students

Technology

- Provide all students with additional access to technology that facilitates learning and post-graduate success

Legacy Academy (the only charter school in the district) would receive a portion of the revenue raised based on student count, as legally required.

## Will the MLO increase my taxes?

The mill levy override would result in **no tax increase** because the district's existing bond will be retired in 2019 (the last bond was passed in 1998 and was used to build Elizabeth High School).

In fact, **over time the tax rate for the MLO should decrease**. The MLO is a flat amount - \$1.59 million. Therefore, as more businesses are established and more properties are built within district boundaries, the \$1.59 million will be spread across additional taxpayers and each taxpayer would contribute less to reach the \$1.59 million MLO amount.

## If an MLO passes will it sunset?

No, there is no sunset on the MLO because a significant portion of the money is earmarked for ongoing expenses. A sunset would create a financial cliff that would require cuts at the time of the sunset.

## Have cost efficiencies been maximized across the district?

During years of state funding cuts and subsequent minimal increases, Elizabeth Schools has kept budget cuts away from classrooms as much as possible. Since 2010, the district's funding has been cut over \$21.5 million cumulatively. Even though the economy is growing, limited state funding increases don't cover the cost of inflation and rising costs of special education services, healthcare, competitive salaries, and higher cost of nearly everything.

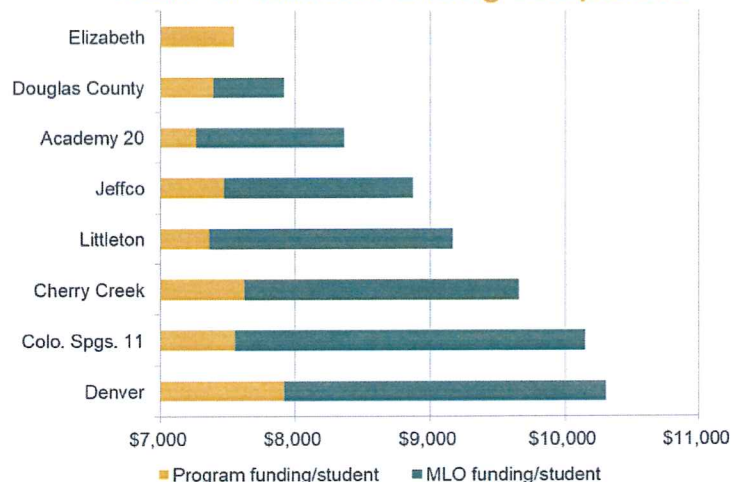
## Will all teachers' salaries be increased if the MLO is approved?

Yes, and compensation for classified staff (support staff) will too. Elizabeth Schools has not been able to maintain competitive wages for employees compared to school districts and other employers in the Denver and Colorado Springs markets.

## Do other districts have MLOs to support their local needs?

Yes, most school districts in Colorado have MLO taxes to support their operational expenses. Over the past several years, voters have approved mill levy overrides for Cherry Creek, Denver, Littleton, Colorado Springs 11, Academy 20 and several other school districts.

### Total Per-Student Funding Comparison



## How can I learn more?

Additional information is available on the Elizabeth Schools website:

[www.elizabethschooldistrict.org/2018fundinginitiatives](http://www.elizabethschooldistrict.org/2018fundinginitiatives).

## SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

November 15, 2018

Dear Staff,

Last week, the Elizabeth community demonstrated overwhelming support for our schools, our staff and our students. The mil levy override (MLO) is the first ballot measure to pass in 20 years. At 63% approval, it passed with a greater margin than 33 other school ballot questions around the state.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success, directly or indirectly.

We are planning to finalize decisions on the allocation of the MLO funds by the end of January each year, including this year.

The actual use of the MLO funds will begin with the 2019-20 school year. This is the earliest possible time for two reasons.

First, as stated in the ballot question, the district needs to make a final payment on the outstanding bond. This payment is due in December of 2019 and is approximately \$1,000,000. In order to make the improvements promised in the ballot question, the district must use reserves equal to the remaining bond payments in order to fund the first-year implementation. This was understood and supported by the Board of Education when they decided to put the MLO on the ballot.

Second, the district does not have enough reserve funds to also begin funding the MLO during the existing school year.

We are eager to learn people's views about the campaign and welcome your feedback. Click on this link to provide feedback on a short survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/measure4A>

Use this link to access documents that provide additional information about how the MLO proceeds will be used, including initial information on improvements to compensation:

Don't be shy about expressing your gratitude to community members for their backing of 4A specifically, and the schools more generally. Very few communities around the state showed this level of enthusiastic support for their schools.

Best regards,  
Douglas

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## Elizabeth Schools | 4A ballot question details

4 messages

Douglas Bissonette <dbissonette@esdk12.org>

Wed, Oct 24, 2018 at 12:46 PM

Reply-To: Douglas Bissonette <dbissonette@esdk12.org>

To: Elizabeth School District Recipients <recipients@elizabethschooldistrict.parentlink.net>

Elizabeth School District | 4A ballot question details



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Dear Elizabeth Schools Families and Community Members,

Elizabeth School District has a question on the ballot this year, issue 4A. The district's mill levy override (MLO) question, issue 4A, extends an existing tax and does not raise taxes.

If passed, the district would be authorized to continue collecting \$1,590,000 each year from local property owners to supplement state revenues received under the School Finance Act. Based on student count and as required by law, approximately 17% of the total would be allocated to Legacy Academy.

A majority of the total revenue, 86%, would go toward compensation for teachers and support staff. Approximately 8 to 9% would go toward health and safety and about 5 to 6% would be used to increase student access to technology.

### **Teacher and Support Staff Compensation**

The increase in teacher and support staff compensation would be accomplished by revising the existing salary schedules. The minimum increase for teachers would be 10% and the starting salary would be at least \$34,000.

Pay for all support staff positions would be increased by a minimum of 7.5%. Support staff provide a range of services including non-licensed instructional support, office and administrative support, and trades support.

While the total amount of revenue generated from the successful passage of the MLO would allow the district to offer more competitive compensation, it is not sufficient to match or equal compensation levels in neighboring metro area districts.

[Here is more information](#) regarding staff within the district who would be impacted by compensation increases if the MLO passes.

### **Health and Safety**

Proceeds from the MLO would also go toward student health and safety, including a

School Resource Officer (SRO) employed by the Elizabeth Police Department. The SRO would be assigned to split their time between Elizabeth High School and Elizabeth Middle School. The school district would pay for nine months of compensation for this position. [Here is more information](#) on the SRO position.

In addition to an SRO, facility safety improvements would be made at all district schools, not just the middle and high school.

Funds would also be allocated to staff training, assemblies, guest speakers, safety experts, threat assessments, and other resources to improve social and emotional support for all students.

### **Technology**

Funds from the MLO would increase the availability of technology in the classroom, including additional tablets and Chromebooks, increased software tools for students, and more STEM resources like robotics, simulators, drones and 3D printers.

### **Oversight**

If ballot issue 4A passes, accountability for the mill levy override proceeds will be monitored by the District Accountability Committee (DAC). Members of the committee are appointed by the Board of Education.

The MLO does not raise taxes because it replaces the district's existing bond that was used to build Elizabeth High School and will be paid off in 2019. If the MLO measure does not pass, the existing tax will expire.

Mill levy override revenues are added to the general fund to be used for operating expenses, like compensation, safety measures and technology. Bonds are loans that can only be used for capital expenditures, including major repairs, renovations, additions to schools and new schools.

If you have questions about school district funding or the MLO, visit the [2018 Funding Initiatives](#) page on the district website.

Best regards,  
Douglas Bissonette  
Superintendent

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634 S. Elbert St., PO Box 610, Elizabeth CO 80107 | 303-646-1836 |  
[elizabethschooldistrict.org](http://elizabethschooldistrict.org)



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## SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

### Compensation Detail for 4A Mill Levy Override Ballot Measure

If passed by voters, the district would be authorized to continue collecting \$1,590,000 each year from local property owners, to supplement state revenues received under the School Finance Act. Based on student count and as required by law, approximately 17% of the total would be allocated to Legacy Academy.

The majority of the revenue, 86%, would go toward improving compensation for teachers and support staff and would include associated costs like district retirement contributions for employees and Medicare. The increase in compensation would be accomplished by revising existing salary schedules for these groups of employees.

#### Teaching staff compensation

Increases in compensation would affect all licensed teaching staff, including regular teachers, special education teachers, Title I teachers, counselors, and special services providers like audiologists, nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, psychologists, social workers, speech-language pathologists, etc. The minimum increase would be 10%. The starting teacher salary would be increased to at least \$34,000.

#### Support staff compensation

All support staff positions (also called “classified staff”) would receive increased compensation through the mill levy override. Support staff provide a range of services including non-licensed instructional support, office and administrative support, and trades support.

Support staff includes jobs such as coach, preschool teacher, Kids Club staff, paraprofessional, computer technician, bookkeeper, health care technician, library/media assistant, office manager, receptionist, registrar, bus driver, mechanic, cook, custodian, grounds keeper, etc.

Wages are determined using a grid system based on experience levels. Like teachers, compensation would be increased by revising the existing pay schedules for these employees. The minimum increase would be 7.5%.

While the total amount of revenue generated from successful passage of the MLO would allow the district to offer more competitive compensation, it is not sufficient, or even close to sufficient, to match or equal compensation levels in neighboring metro area districts.

The mill levy override does not provide additional compensation for senior-level district staff.