



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE March 15, 2016
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Issaquah School Measure Earns REALTOR® Endorsement

BELLEVUE, Wash. (March 15, 2016) – REALTORS® are adding their endorsement to a \$533.5 million construction and maintenance bond measure for the Issaquah School District. The measure (Proposition No. 1) is intended to fund essential facilities to accommodate its growing enrollment.

As part its unanimous vote to support the proposition, members of the Seattle King County REALTORS® pledged assistance for a “get-out-the-vote” campaign for the April 26 election. The request, which requires 60 percent approval to pass, would maintain the total tax rate at the 2015 level.

If authorized, the bond would fund construction of four new schools, the acquisition of property for school sites, reconstruction of a 42-year-old middle school, and expansion/modernization of six existing elementary schools. Proponents say residents can expect no increase in the current tax rate of \$4.14 per thousand dollars of assessed property value.

“Real estate professionals understand the importance of strong, high-performing schools,” stated Realtor Joan Probala, who lives and works in Issaquah. “The caliber of schools is a high priority for buyers – in fact it’s often the first thing they ask about,” noted Probala, a managing broker at RE/MAX Integrity and a past president of Seattle King County Realtors. She also noted savvy buyers know that quality schools will be a factor in the sales price when it’s time to sell.

In considering endorsement requests, Realtors looked beyond statements of need, according to David Crowell, SKCR’s director of governmental and public affairs. Track records on academics and fiscal matters are also reviewed, he reported.

“Realtors wholeheartedly support the creation and maintenance of top-notch schools,” reported Crowell. “Our members believe the community-based group that evaluated the feasibility and developed recommendations for this bond measure did a commendable job in balancing critical educational needs with fiscal accountability. We agree this funding request deserves our support.”

Probala, a longtime volunteer with various business and civic groups in Issaquah, said a strong case was made to address the district’s growing enrollment and outdated facilities. “These capital projects are critical to the success of Issaquah students, as well for the city’s future and the quality of life we cherish.”

Citing district reports, Probala noted enrollment in the Issaquah School District has grown by 2,000 students in the past four years, and it conservatively expects to add another 1,500 to 2,000 students in the next five years. “To accommodate this growth, we need to invest now in constructing, expanding and modernizing schools,” she commented.

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Despite the challenges of growing enrollment and some sub-standard buildings, Probala said Realtors concluded the district has been good stewards of taxpayer dollars. “It’s noteworthy that Issaquah’s current bonds are, on average, paid off in nine years instead of the 20-year payback that’s allowed. This shorter duration saves taxpayers money,” she noted, adding, “We were also impressed with the district’s long history of “clean audits” and its Aaa rating by Moody’s, a distinction earned by only 0.45 percent of school districts nationwide.”

Crowell said Realtors have been actively engaged in education policy and school financing issues for several years.

“VIS leaders ([Volunteers for Issaquah Schools](#)) are well organized and obviously recognized the importance of engaging our members in their campaign for critical funding,” Crowell reported. He said representatives from the campaign initiated contact with SKCR, submitted a formal application, and arranged for Superintendent Ron Thiele and School Board President Suzanne Weaver to attend a meeting with the association’s government affairs committee. “We commend them for their passion and commitment to school children, and we are encouraging our members to support this campaign.”

About the [Seattle King County REALTORS®](#)

The Seattle King County Realtors® is a nonprofit professional trade association whose goals include promoting ethical business practices and supporting policies that preserve and expand real property rights and housing affordability. Based in Bellevue, SKCR has around 6,000 members and is a local board of the National Association of Realtors®. The term Realtor® is a registered collective membership mark that identifies a real estate professional who is a member of the National Association of Realtors® and subscribes to its strict Code of Ethics.

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