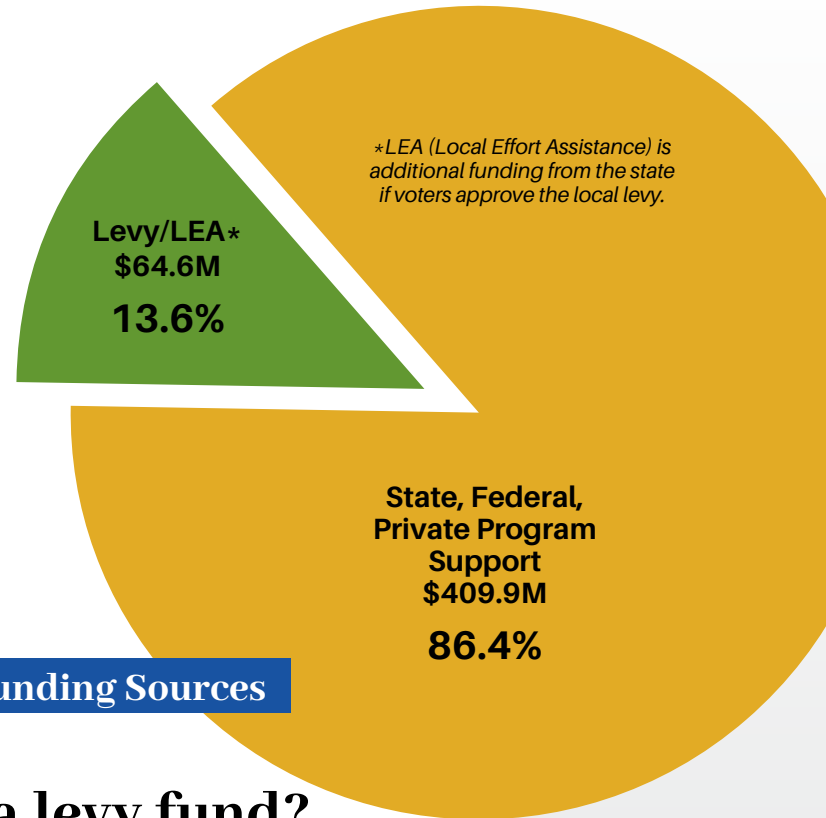


On the Feb. 9 ballot, Spokane voters will be asked to weigh in on a replacement levy for Spokane Public Schools. Learn the facts before you vote!

## What is a school levy?

School levies support essential programs, services, activities and experiences that provide a quality education for our students.

- The 2021 levy replaces the expiring 2018 levy and is not a new tax.
- The levy would support student programs for the next three years: 2022, 2023, 2024.
- The total estimated tax rate for schools will be less than in 2018 and prior years.
- The levy is a way for the Spokane community to provide a well-rounded education for SPS students.



### SPS Budget Funding Sources

A team of nurses is working 7 days a week as SPS contact tracers to help keep our community safe. Learn more inside.

Staff have completed thousands of phone calls, support requests, family meetings, and home visits to support students and families with basic needs, advocacy, and academic assistance.

## What does a levy fund?

Levy funding supports essential programs, people and services, such as:

- **Nurses**
- **Counselors**
  - Behavior specialists
- **Student intervention programs**
  - Special education services
- **Technology support**
- Smaller class sizes
- Advanced Placement courses
- Athletics
- Arts, music, and drama

SPS has checked out around 25,000 laptops to students!

Learn more at [spokaneschools.org/levy](https://spokaneschools.org/levy).



Watch: A Voter's Guide to the 2021 School Replacement Levies Jan 18, at 7:30 p.m. on ch. 7.

# Contact Tracing 101

The goal is simple: Keep people safe.

To reach it, Health Services Director Becky Doughty has amassed a team of super sleuths. Six school nurses volunteered to be contact tracers – putting in long hours, seven days a week, to track down those who need to quarantine to keep COVID out of our schools.

It's a process they've refined over time.

When a staff member feels they have been exposed to COVID or tested positive, they reach out to their supervisor, and their name is added to a list. The contact tracers call the people on the list one by one to help determine who they may have exposed to the virus by being within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more. Then the contact tracers call all of *those* people and interview them.

Student cases are reported by parents to their child's school and the building nurse follows up to get more information and determine if contact tracing is needed.



*Meredith Clarke, SPS school nurse/contact tracer*

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***"It's like solving a mystery, putting all the pieces together."***

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"We've connected with more than 1,600 people since the beginning of September," Doughty said. "It's like solving a mystery, putting all the pieces together."

One case can be open for several days. It's a big job, but essential.

"It's the way we identify who might get COVID and ensure they are not in our schools if that should happen," Doughty said. "We are being very aggressive – in a good way. I'd much rather have people in quarantine than risk more potential exposure."

When you look at the COVID dashboard ([spokaneschools.org/COVIDdashboard](https://spokaneschools.org/COVIDdashboard)), she added, high numbers of people in quarantine means the contact tracers are doing their job well, and keeping people safe.

The best thing people can do to help is to make sure they're keeping 6 feet of physical distance.

"If we all maintained that, we wouldn't have to quarantine anybody," she said. "Our goal is to help our colleagues and students get through this safely. We're all in this together. We will get through it."

**Find more stories from around the district at [spokaneschools.org/ReadMore](https://spokaneschools.org/ReadMore).**

## COVID Safety

To comply with local, state, and national health department guidance, SPS has implemented several health and safety requirements for staff and students, including several daily health checks, wearing face coverings, social distancing, and frequent hand washing. Learn more about our COVID-19 protocols and how we're responding to potential & confirmed cases at [spokaneschools.org/covidsafety](https://spokaneschools.org/covidsafety).



## District Model Receives National Attention

Despite many new challenges, whether class is in person or online, our dedicated employees are working harder than ever to make this unusual year the best it can be for students. Each week, teachers and students around SPS are joining in hundreds of thousands of class meetings. That's about 45,535,150 minutes a month! Choirs are singing, debate teams are discussing, school clubs are connecting students - all online. Staff are reaching out to make personal connections and provide resources for students and families. We recently reached a milestone - distributing our one millionth meal - and we'll continue offering free 5-day meal kits each week to anyone 18 and younger through the end of the school year.

This is not our ideal situation, but our district model has been highlighted as one of the best in the country.

"Since last spring 2020, as we searched the nation looking for best in class responses to the pandemic, Spokane Public Schools' plan stood out as one of the best," Jean-Claude Brizard, Deputy Director of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "We look forward to unpacking how this plan came together in order to share these lessons with other school districts."

Thank you to all our families, students, volunteers, staff and supporters - we're going to emerge a stronger community because of your efforts.



## Update: School Boundary Changes

A committee of parents, community members and staff is in the process of studying school attendance boundaries and drafting changes that will accommodate the addition of three new SPS middle schools. The committee has done a first pass of middle and high school boundary adjustments, and is now focused on elementary school boundary adjustments. We expect to have options ready to share with the community in March and April of 2021. Learn more at [spokaneschools.org/boundarychange](https://spokaneschools.org/boundarychange).

## Thanks for Your Support!

The SPS Foundation supports Spokane students by offering small grants to teachers and school communities that allow for creative and innovative activities in the classroom. Thank you to sponsors **Jackson Contractor Group, Inc.; Integrus Architecture** and **Morningstar Foundation** for making the grant program possible. Learn more about the SPS Foundation and ways to offer support at [spokaneschoolsfoundation.org](https://spokaneschoolsfoundation.org).

## Message from the Superintendent

*Spokane Public Schools is incredibly grateful for the community's encouragement and support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Though this last year brought unprecedented challenges, the response from educators, parents, and community members has reflected all the best values that make Spokane a special place to call home. There have been no easy answers, but in the midst of hardship, kindness, collaboration, and empathy have projected a light of hope that is guiding us through the moment and setting the stage for the future as we emerge stronger together. Educators are working harder than ever to adapt their instruction and provide intervention supports for students. Distance learning and teaching in person during a pandemic requires a tremendous amount of time and effort to plan for and meet individual needs. As you will find in this edition of School Talk, our district received national recognition for our response. We are deeply appreciative for the ongoing community investment in our district as we work to ensure the success and safety of students and families.*



Dr. Adam Swinyard  
Superintendent

Questions or concerns? 509-354-5900

Spokane Public Schools complies with all federal and state rules and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, marital status, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability, sexual orientation including gender expression or gender identity, or honorably discharged veteran or military status. This holds true for all students who are interested in participating in educational programs and/or extracurricular school activities, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries regarding compliance and/or grievance procedures may be directed to the school district's officers listed on our website at [www.spokaneschools.org/nondiscrimination](http://www.spokaneschools.org/nondiscrimination).

ECRWSS EDDM  
POSTAL CUSTOMER

## You Name It!

Thanks to the community's support of the 2018 bond, Spokane Public Schools is building three new middle schools (located on the northeast, northwest and south sides of SPS), and a new facility for On Track Academy. These construction projects continue to provide hundreds of jobs in our community, helping to support the local economy.



Now we need your help naming these four new schools. This is an opportunity to celebrate and inspire our students and have a lasting impact on our community.

The best candidates will be names that represent one or more of the following:

- A logical association with the new school, such as location or function
- A significant individual or event
- A prominent local geographic feature

We've extended the submission deadline to the end of February 2021. Learn more and share your best school name ideas at [spokaneschools.org/YouNameIt](http://spokaneschools.org/YouNameIt).

## Message from the President

*Serving on the SPS School Board provides so many opportunities for engagement. I am grateful for the times I've connected with students by sharing my story and by listening to their struggles, dreams, and achievements. As our community demographics change, we must ensure that all students have a sense of belonging in our schools. In the last year, the SPS School Board passed a racial equity resolution that will build upon the great work of Spokane teachers and continue to guide us on our path toward providing excellence for everyone. During this pandemic, I have been fortunate to be a part of the community effort that has kept our district strong. I have witnessed free meal distributions, teachers providing new and innovative ways of teaching, and school outreach to families in need. On behalf of the SPS School Board, I would like to thank the City and County for their partnership, and the many community-based organizations that have worked tirelessly to bring stability to our students and community in this time of need. Most importantly, thank you to all SPS families, students and staff. We could not do this without you.*



**Jerrall Haynes, SPS  
School Board President**

**Register to vote!** Visit the Spokane County Elections site at [spokanecounty.org](http://spokanecounty.org) for online and printable voter registration forms. If you have moved recently, be sure to update your address to ensure you receive the correct ballot for the election. Online and mail registrations, and voter updates, must be received by Feb. 1. Register to vote in person during business hours and any time before 8 p.m. on Election Day at the Spokane County Elections Office, 1033 W. Gardner Ave.