



Questions and Answers About the Ruidoso Schools' SB-9 Capital Improvements Mill Levy

Q: When is the two-mill levy election for Ruidoso Municipal Schools (RMS)?

A: Mail-in ballots are due on Tuesday, February 5, 2019. You can expect the mail-in ballots to arrive in your mailbox during the second week of January 2019.

Q: Why is it called SB-9?

A: SB-9 is the short title for Senate Bill 9, which is the authorization legislation for the levy.

Q: How much money will the two-mill levy generate for RMS?

A: Approximately \$1.3 million/year.

Q: What exactly is levy money used for?

A: The funding provided by the two-mill levy allows the District to keep its facilities and buildings in good repair. The District uses the funds to fix things when they break, like the air conditioning, plumbing, electrical systems, etc. The funds are also used for technology upgrades.

Q: How do I know my levy money is being used wisely?

A: The District has accomplished numerous projects with SB-9 funds over the years. The following is a list of recent accomplishments.

- 1.) Restrooms and Concession Stand Construction at Ruidoso Middle School Field
- 2.) Purchase of 320 Google Chromebooks for student/classroom use
- 3.) Front fence replacement at White Mountain Elementary
- 4.) Front landscaping of White Mountain Elementary
- 5.) Library remodel and renovation at White Mountain Elementary
- 6.) Outdoor and Indoor Lighting Replacement Project at White Mountain Elementary
- 7.) Sidewalk Replacement Project and Landscaping Enhancements at Ruidoso High School
- 8.) New Indoor Track Floor at Ruidoso High School
- 9.) Ruidoso High School Cafeteria Furniture Replacement
- 10.) Additional Parking Lot and Entry Lighting at Ruidoso High School
- 11.) Annual Classroom Carpet/Flooring Replacement Rotation
- 12.) New Lights at Horton Stadium
- 13.) Classroom Academic Software for Students

Q: Can't buildings be maintained with my regular tax dollars?

A: Yes, but every dollar that is used for maintenance and repairs is deducted from money allocated to classrooms. The levy gives the District funding to maintain facilities without impacting instructional materials, transportation, and personnel.

Q: Are RMS buildings currently in disrepair?

A: No. Thanks in part to the passing of the 2013 two-mill levy, our buildings are maintained and functional. But like all facilities, buildings that are not adequately maintained quickly fall into disrepair, and as every homeowner knows, the cost of fixing something is far more expensive than the cost of keeping it in good operational condition.

Q: Isn't school building maintenance the state's responsibility?

A: No. It is the responsibility of the local district. However, the state does provide matching funds to districts whose voters support the two-mill levy. While not a one-to-one match, it is a considerable amount of money. For example, in 2017-18 RMS received an additional \$47,000 in match revenue to support maintenance and technology.

Q: Will my tax rates go up if the two-mill levy is passed?

A: No. Passage re-authorizes and continues the existing mill levy that is already in effect. Ruidoso voters originally passed the mill levy in 1990 (or before) and the rate has stayed the same since then. The District is required every six years to ask the voters to renew the mill levy.

Q: I don't have children in RMS schools. Why is building maintenance important to me?

A: Quality, well-maintained schools attract families and businesses to Ruidoso. In fact during the 2018-2019 school year the District appears to have broken the decade long trend of decreasing enrollment. As real estate agents will attest, those families looking to relocate to Ruidoso are looking for safe, clean, functional facilities. The quality of RMS's facilities also supports economic development and brings visitors – and their dollars – to the Village.

Q: What is the difference between the two-mill levy and SB-9 money?

A: Nothing. They are different terms for the same source. On your ballot, it will be identified as "Public School Capital Improvements Act Tax Question".

Q: How much does this cost me on my property taxes?

A: The two-mill levy, as the name implies, generates \$2 per \$1,000 of a property's taxable value. Taxable value is 1/3 of the assessed value of the property. For example, if you have a \$150,000 home, the taxable value would be \$50,000, so the levy would come to \$100 per year. The levy amount appears on your tax bill as "SCH CAPT".

Q: Is the two-mill levy the same as a bond issue?

A: No. They are two different things. Bonds are used to finance big projects, like building the new Sierra Vista Primary addition to relocate Nob Hill, or classroom additions and major renovations to existing buildings. The bonds, like a loan, are paid back with interest over a period of several years. The mill levy, on the other hand, provides an ongoing revenue stream to pay for everyday maintenance and repairs. The funds can be used for small building projects. The Ruidoso Middle School Restroom and Concession project is a prime example.

Q: What happens if the 2019 two-mill levy fails to pass?

A: Crucial building maintenance would either not be performed or would have to be paid for by taking operational money out of the classroom. Over time, schools would become more run-down and less effective as learning environments. In addition, the District would lose the valuable matching funds provided by the state.

Q: Who may vote in the mill levy election?

A: Any registered voter residing in the Ruidoso Municipal School District may cast a ballot. To find out if you are a registered RMS voter, contact the Lincoln County Clerk's Office at (575)648-2394 ext 6. You can also log on to NMvote.org and click on "Find my Registration."

Q: Where and when can I vote?

A: Due to recent legislative changes in the local election act, the mill levy is required to be conducted as a special mail-in ballot. In years past, voters were required to vote at established polling locations. This year, the mail-in ballot will be mailed to you. The ballot is due February 5, 2019.

Q: Do I have to pay for postage to mail in my ballot?

A: No. Ballot postage is paid as a part of the election process.

Q: I'm not registered to vote. How can I register?

A: The State of New Mexico has an online registration portal where any eligible citizen may register to vote. The deadline to register to vote is January 8, 2019, at 5pm. You may register to vote at NMvote.org. You can also call the Lincoln County Clerk's Office at (575)648-2394 ext. 6 or walk in 300 Central Ave, Carrizozo, NM 88301.

