



Rochester School District

Capital Levy to Replace the Water System

Election Date - April 28, 2026

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. **Why does the water system need to be replaced?** *The current water system has reached the end of its life. The water system has been well maintained throughout its life of almost 40 years but now costly repairs are needed on a regular basis. The system has become unreliable. We need a way to get the quality water to our buildings. The updated system will also bring us up to code for fire suppression protecting our buildings.*
2. **What happens if the current water system fails?** *Water is needed to open our school buildings. If we do not have water in our buildings we will need to cancel school until water is again accessible in the buildings.*
3. **Is the water quality good?** *Yes, the water quality is good. The RHS/GMES/RPS campus actually sits on two wells. **The water quality is tested monthly.***
4. **How much will the levy cost?** *The levy is a TWO YEAR levy that will cost the **owner of a home with a tax assessed value of \$400,000** approximately \$400 a year or \$33 dollars a month for TWO YEARS, \$1 per thousand.*
5. **What will the capital levy funds be used for?** *The levy funds will be used to replace the current water system with an updated water system that will last 50+ years. The funds from the capital levy can **ONLY** be used to replace the water system.*
6. **I hear our current reservoir does not have enough capacity for fire suppression? How will the new system change this?** *The new water system will include a fire retention reservoir with a capacity of over 300,000 gallons. That will house enough water to protect our building structures if a fire occurs.*
7. **Will the new water system connect to the new high school or other buildings when they are added to the campus.** *Yes, the system will be designed to connect to new schools on the RHS/GMES/RPS campus.*
8. **What other options were considered?** *Two options were reviewed. 1) Connect to Grand Mound Water operated by Thurston County or 2) Replace the current water system that has reached the end of its life with a new water system.*

9. **Why not connect to the Thurston County Grand Mound Water system?** *We worked with Thurston County, who manage Grand Mound Water, to determine the costs to connect to the Grand Mound Water system. The decision was made that connecting to Grand Mound Water was not the best option for a number of reasons.*
- a. **First**, the annual cost for potable water is \$89,000. That cost estimate does not include water for irrigation. If we used Grand Mound Water, Thurston County would take control of one or both of our wells. If they only took control of one well water from the second well could be used for irrigation. If they took control of both wells we would need to add the irrigation water costs to the projected water costs. That could almost double the annual cost for water.
 - b. **Second**, the completion date for connecting to Grand Mound Water is early 2029. The projected completion date to install a new water system is early 2028. Our current water system continually needs costly repairs for it to continue to operate. The longevity of our current system is unknown.
 - c. **Third**, when including the projected cost to connect to Grand Mound Water and compare it to the cost of putting in a new RSD water system the fiscally sound decision is to replace the current system.
10. **When will the new system be complete/functional?** *If the Capital Levy passes on April 28, 2026, a new water system should be in place and operational by early 2028.*
11. **Is a square reservoir OK?** *Our existing reservoir is square. A square reservoir was often designed and built 40 years ago but a great deal has been learned. It is not uncommon for square reservoirs to fail. Square reservoirs are more likely to crack and are difficult to clean.*
12. **Was the water system part of the bond?** *Yes, the water system was part of the Bond that was on the February 2024 ballot. Replacing the water system now will mean it will not be included in future bonds for buildings on the RHS/GMES/RPS campus. The water system is being designed to meet the needs of current future buildings on the campus.*