The race for two seats in the 30th district Washington state House of Representatives has entered into the final weeks and fully funding K-12 public schools is every candidate’s priority.  But they disagree on how to pay for it.

When elected, the legislators will be responsible for proposing and enacting public policy, setting a state budget and representing the interest of constituents to state government.

The Legislature is under court order by the Washington Supreme Court to meet the state Constitution by amply funding K-12 education.

Republican candidates say they want districts with strong tax bases, such as Seattle, to pay more property taxes to cover education.  Districts such as the 30th, that collect less property tax, would pay less.  This is known as a levy swap.

Democrats say they want to close tax loopholes and create a strong tax base through economic development. They say a levy swap would not cover the estimated $2 billion price.

State Rep. Linda Kochmar, Republican incumbent, and Mike Pellicciotti, Democrat, face off for position 1.

State Rep. Teri Hickel, Republican incumbent, and Kristin Reeves, Democrat, vie for position 2.

For Position 1, Rep. Kochmar has been the 30th District representative since 2013.

In Federal Way, she was the mayor, deputy mayor, city council member and community council member.

She was the risk manager and program administrator for the Lakehaven Utility District for 33 years.

She said her extensive elected, professional and community experience help her get work done.

“I’ve helped secure $10 million in capital improvements and over $180 million in transportation improvements,” she said.

She said she wants to attract living-wage jobs by bringing in business and industry, minimize low-income housing and reduce traffic.

Pellicciotti has been assistant attorney general of Washington since 2013 and was a law clerk to the associate chief justice of the Washington Supreme Court in 2004.

He said he wants to crack down on predatory lenders, combat health-care fraud, bring in industry and business, and support statewide minimum wage increases.

His ability to serve has been questioned by Rep. Kochmar supporters who say that he hasn’t lived in Federal Way long enough to understand the issues.

Pellicciotti disagrees.

“We can’t keep electing the same politicians and expect improved results on public safety, government waste and education,” he said.  “It’s time for a change.”

He said that, as a King County prosecutor, he returned $30 million back to taxpayers from corporations that would “knowingly commit fraud.”

He said that he will not accept any corporate money contributions to his campaign because he wants to operate in the public interest, not special interest.

On school funding, the candidates are divided on how to pay for it.

“What we do need is a levy swap,” Rep. Kochmar said.  “It will produce $2.7 billion of money that we can share across the state.”

Pellicciotti said that he disagrees.

“The state has obligation to fund basic education,” he said. “And as your legislator, I will agree to terms in which the state funds basic education.  Not using our levy dollars sending it to Olympia and having that money simply come back.”

Rep. Kochmar said that Pellicciotti wants to fund education through a capital gains tax.

“It’s not enough,” she said.  “We need $3 billion and it’s a very unstable source of funding.

“We need to solve the problem, but not on the backs of the people that are providing the jobs,” she said.

On state income tax, both said they oppose.

“I don’t care if you’re democrat, republican or independent,” Rep. Kochmar said.  “We all say no.”

On public safety, Rep. Kochmar said she has always voted yes on funding to support the police department and the Washington State Patrol.

“What we need to do at the state level is provide more slots in the community program for our police officers,” she said.

Pellicciotti said that he has been fighting gangs for over a decade and that it is a developing issue in the 30th district.

He said he wants to re-institute probation and that the Legislature denied the opportunity to re-institute it for a small amount of funding.

“The Legislature has been asleep at the wheel for the last four years,” Pellicciotti said.

For Position 2, Rep. Hickel has been the 30th District representative since 2015 and was executive director at the Advancing Leadership Foundation since 2000.

“As your state representative, I have prioritized four important areas:  fully funding basic education, creating and sustaining jobs; transportation and reduced congestion; and public safety,” she said.

She said that her 27 years in the community helped her hit the ground running when she became representative.

Reeves is currently associate director of the industry sector economic development program at the Washington State Department of Commerce, a partner at the Truman National Security Project, and executive director of the Washington Military Alliance.

“The reason I got into this race is because, as a mom, I’m really concerned about the fact that my kids are going to start school next year and the Legislature was mandated four years ago to figure out how to fully fund education, i.e. K-12,” she said.  “You don’t want to spend thousand and thousands of dollars only to end up in lots of student debt and no job prospects.”

She said she is strongly in favor of improving transportation via light rail in the 30th district by supporting the ST3 ballot measure.

On school funding, Reeves and Rep. Hickel do not agree.

Rep. Hickel said she is in favor of a levy swap because 28 percent of local dollars are being used to fund basic education.

Rep. Hickel said she wants cities with a large business tax base to pay more.

“I am fully in favor of a levy swap,” she said.

“I’d like us to go from $4.33 down to let’s say $3,” she said.  “And Seattle is at $1.31.  I’d like them to come up to $3 to make it even and fair across the state.”

Reeves said that she is primarily concerned with fully funding education by growing the business tax base, using her experience in economic development, in the 30th district.

She said she wants to close tax loopholes that are no longer necessary, or beneficial to corporations.

She said that Rep. Hickel wants to “fund education first,” but at the expense public services such as public safety.

On state income tax, Rep. Hickel and Reeves said they oppose.

On public safety, Rep. Hickel said she often meets with police officers to come up with laws.

Gangs that use the internet and cell-phones as a tool for their operation are becoming an issue in the 30th district, she said.

“We need to be able to access those phones, so police officers can actually arrest some of these kids,” Rep. Hickel said.

Reeves said that she wants to build a strong economic base in order be able to fund police officers and community oriented policing.

The last day to vote is Nov. 8.