

FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Special Education Millage Renewal

On Tuesday, May 4, voters in the Kalamazoo RESA service area will be asked to vote on whether to renew a six-year, 1.5-mill property tax millage to help fund the costs of special education in our local schools.

■ **What is being proposed?**

This proposal asks whether to renew a six-year, 1.5-mill property tax millage that voters originally approved in 2015. If approved, the funds will be used by Kalamazoo RESA to reimburse public school districts (Climax-Scotts, Comstock, Galesburg-Augusta, Gull Lake, Kalamazoo, Parchment, Portage, Schoolcraft, and Vicksburg) and local public school academies for their mandated special education costs.

■ **Why is a special education millage renewal on the ballot?**

Local school districts are mandated by law to provide special education programs and services; however, the federal and state government do not adequately fund special education, placing the burden on local and intermediate school districts. Without additional millage funds, local school districts are forced to use general education funds to pay for special education programs and services.

■ **What is the impact to local districts if this millage is not renewed?**

Before this millage was originally passed in 2015, local school districts were paying approximately 36% of their unreimbursed special education costs out of their general education funds. Without this millage in place, local school districts would lose approximately \$12.5 million in special education funding, resulting in fewer dollars to support programs for all students.

■ **Is this a new millage?**

This is a renewal of the original six-year, 1.5-mill property tax millage that voters approved in May 2015. This is a request whether to renew this millage for another six years. If approved, taxpayers would continue paying the same millage rate they approved in 2015.

■ **How much would this renewal request cost the taxpayer?**

Since the special education millage is a renewal, it would not cause any increase in tax rates. Homeowners would pay based on the taxable value of their home, which is typically about half of the market value. A homeowner with a home with a taxable value of \$75,000 (approximate market value of \$150,000) pays \$112.50/year, which is \$9.38/month.

■ **Will there be a reduction in total KRESA millage rates since the bonds approved by voters in 2007 will be paid off in May, 2021?**

Yes, the 0.2750 debt millage currently being levied will be removed from KRESA millage rates since the bonds will be paid off in May, 2021, resulting in a savings to taxpayers.

■ **What will the ballot actually say?**

KALAMAZOO REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY (KRESA) SPECIAL EDUCATION MILLAGE PROPOSAL: This proposal will allow the intermediate school district (KRESA) to continue to levy special education millage previously approved by the electors and restores millage lost as a result of the reduction required by the Headlee Amendment to the Michigan Constitution of 1963. Shall the limitation on the amount of taxes which may be assessed against all property in Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency, Michigan, to provide funds for the education of students with disabilities for a period of 6 years, 2021 to 2026, inclusive, be increased by 1.5 mills (\$1.50 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) (1.4925 mills of the above is a renewal of millage that expired with the 2020 tax levy and .0075 mill is a restoration of millage lost as a result of the reduction required by the Headlee Amendment to the Michigan Constitution of 1963); the estimate of the revenue the intermediate school district will collect if the millage is approved and levied in 2021 is approximately \$12,533,825 from local property taxes authorized herein?

■ **When may I register to vote?**

The last day to register to vote in any manner other than in-person for this election is Monday, April 19, 2021. However, voters may still register in-person through Election Day, May 4, 2021.

■ **Do I have to register for each election?**

No. Registration is permanent as long as you continue to live in the city or township where you are registered. You may check your registration status at michigan.gov/vote.

■ **How can I vote absentee in this election?**

It is our understanding that absentee voter applications will NOT be sent to all registered voters for this election as they were in 2020. Only voters who are on the state's permanent absentee voter list will automatically receive an absentee voter application, which will be mailed six to eight weeks prior to the election. However, Michigan recently passed "no reason" absentee voting, which means that all eligible and registered voters in Michigan may now request an absentee voter ballot without providing a reason. If you are not on the permanent absentee voter list, your request for an absentee voter ballot must be in writing and can be submitted to your city or township clerk. You must request an absentee voter ballot by mailing an application or a pre-printed application form obtained from your local clerk's office. Requests to have an absentee voter ballot mailed to you must be received by your clerk no later than 5:00 pm the Friday before the election. For more information or assistance in obtaining the address of your city or township clerk, see michigan.gov/vote.

■ **When must absentee ballots be returned to the clerk?**

Absentee voter ballots must be received by city or township clerks no later than the close of the polls (8:00 p.m.) on Election Day. There are instructions included with the ballot regarding how to submit your ballot. Voters are strongly encouraged to place absentee ballots in the mail no later than April 27, 2021 to ensure on-time delivery. Each city or township hall has either a drop box or mail slot for ballots. Check your jurisdiction's website for open hours for in-personal delivery. The status of absentee ballots can be checked at michigan.gov/vote.