

Special Education Millage Proposal Frequently Asked Questions

1. When is the election?

The election is on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, with polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Absentee ballots will be available starting Thursday, March 27, 2025, and can be mailed or delivered to election boxes until Election Day.

2. What's the purpose of this millage proposal?

State and federal funding only covers around 42% of the funds needed for mandatory special education services. In order to maintain programming at current levels, the remainder of costs must be funded through a special education millage, or local public school districts and academies must cover the gap by diverting funds from general education programs and services. This millage proposal would help cover the gap caused by underfunding at the state and federal levels, currently leaving Ottawa Area ISD districts underfunded by, on average, \$14.5 million, annually.

3. What's on the ballot?

Voters will consider a 20-year Special Education Millage Proposal, including an **18-year renewal** of the 1.2425 mills approved by voters in 2007 and **20-year restoration** of 0.5000 mills which have been reduced over time due to Headlee rollbacks. For a \$100,000 home (taxable value \$50,000), this would increase annual taxes from \$62.13 currently to \$87.13, or \$25.00 per year from what is currently collected.

4. Who benefits?

All students. Local school districts and academies in the Ottawa Area ISD would benefit from restored special education funding, freeing up general education funds expected to be used to support programs and services for all students.

5. Why is Ottawa Area ISD holding this election?

In Michigan, state law mandates that only intermediate school districts can place a special education millage proposal on the ballot and OAISD is doing so on behalf of, and in cooperation with, the local school districts. OAISD provides direct services to local districts, including speech, occupational therapy, Autism Spectrum Disorder programs, transportation, adaptive technology and more, and distributes funds to local districts through the Special Education Funding system.

6. What special education programs and services are provided for students throughout the region?

Michigan law mandates that school districts provide special education services for individuals with disabilities from birth to age 26, or until they graduate from high school. Students may qualify for services under one or more of 13 disability categories:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Autism | • Emotional Impairment | • Speech and Language Impairment |
| • Cognitive Impairment | • Otherwise Health Impairment | • Traumatic Brain Injury |
| • Deaf-Blindness | • Physical Impairment | • Visual Impairment |
| • Deaf and Hard of Hearing | • Severe Multiple Impairment | |
| • Early Childhood Development Delay | • Specific Learning Disability | |

7. How many students receive special education services in Ottawa Area ISD, and who is eligible?

Ottawa Area ISD, in partnership with local school districts, supports the academic and functional development of over 7,000 students with disabilities, representing nearly 13% of the total student population in the OAISD service area.

Students eligible for special education services come from diverse backgrounds. Some are born with disabilities, while others may become eligible due to accidents, illness, or other unexpected life events. Regardless of how they come to need support, our commitment is to provide them with the resources and opportunities they need to thrive and succeed.

8. Do private school students benefit from a special education millage?

The public school district where a private school is located is responsible for providing special education services to eligible private school students. Public schools are also required by federal law (IDEA Part B) to allocate a portion of the federal dollars it receives equitably, which includes special education and related services for eligible private school students.

9. What special education services can private school students receive from public schools?

Private school students with disabilities may receive the following services from the local public school district under the equitable services provision of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):

- Speech Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Specialized Academic Instruction
- Assistive Technology Support
- Behavioral Support and Interventions
- Counseling or Psychological Services
- Consultation Services
- Parent Support

10. How is revenue distributed?

Revenue distribution follows a formula approved by local superintendents and the Michigan Department of Education, based on special education needs in each district. The amount of revenue that local public school districts and academies receive is based on the cost of educating the number of special education students residing in the district.

11. What's the cost to homeowners?

For a \$100,000 home (taxable value \$50,000), the cost would be \$87.13 annually, or \$7.26 per month, which is an increase of \$25.00 annually or \$2.08 per month from what's currently collected. Multiply your home's taxable value by 0.0017425 to calculate your specific annual cost.

Examples:

| Home Value | Taxable Value | Current Monthly/Annual Millage Amount | Expected Monthly/Annual Amount | A Monthly/Annual Increase of |
|------------|---------------|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| \$200,000 | \$100,000 | \$10.35 / \$124.25 | \$14.52 / \$174.25 | \$4.17 / \$50.00 |
| \$300,000 | \$150,000 | \$15.53 / \$186.38 | \$21.78 / \$261.38 | \$6.25 / \$75.00 |
| \$400,000 | \$200,000 | \$20.71 / \$248.50 | \$29.04 / \$348.50 | \$8.33 / \$100.00 |
| \$500,000 | \$250,000 | \$25.89 / \$310.63 | \$36.30 / \$435.63 | \$10.42 / \$125.00 |