

# Q&A

## SPECIAL EDUCATION MILLAGE Fast Facts

*On Tuesday, May 5, voters in the Kalamazoo RESA service area will be asked to vote on a six-year, 1.5 mill property tax to help fund the costs of special education in our local schools.*

**Q: Why is a special education millage being proposed?**

A: Special education services in our county are substantially underfunded. This underfunding means local school districts are forced to use general education funds for special education services that are mandated by state and federal law.

**Q: Why do special education costs impact general education budgets?**

A: Local school districts are mandated by law to provide special education services. When current millage dollars do not cover special education costs, local school districts must use their general education funds to pay for these services. In the Kalamazoo RESA service area, local school districts are paying \$11 million for unreimbursed special education costs out of their general education funds, almost \$500,000 this year in Vicksburg alone. That means there are fewer dollars to support programs for all students in our local schools.

**Q: Why has special education funding dropped so much?**

A: The shortfall in special education funding comes from several sources, most notably the drop in local property values.

**Q: What is being proposed?**

A: The proposal is for 1.5 mills for six years. If approved, this millage will be used by Kalamazoo RESA to substantially or fully reimburse local school districts for the existing shortage in special education funding.

**Q: How much would this request cost taxpayers?**

A: Homeowners would pay the following based on the taxable value of their home, which is typically about half of the market value:

**Example**

Market Value	\$100,000
Taxable Value	\$50,000
<b>Annual Cost</b>	<b>\$75.00</b>

**Q: Who can vote in this election?**

A: Any registered voter who resides in a school district within the Kalamazoo RESA service area can vote. This includes Climax-Scotts, Comstock, Galesburg-Augusta, Gull Lake, Kalamazoo, Parchment, Portage, Schoolcraft and Vicksburg schools.

**Q: When is the last day to register to vote?**

A: The last day to register to vote in this election is April 6, 2015.

**Q: How can I find out where I vote?**

A: Find out where you vote by contacting your city or township clerk's office.

**Q: Can I vote by absentee ballot?**

A: A person can vote by absentee ballot if he or she:

- Expects to be absent from the community in which he or she is registered for the entire time that polls are open on Election Day.
- Is physically unable to attend the polls without the assistance of another.
- Cannot attend the polls because of the tenets of his or her religion.
- Has been appointed as an election precinct inspector in a precinct other than the precinct in which he or she resides.
- Is 60 years of age or older.
- Is confined to jail awaiting arraignment or trial

Absentee ballots must be requested from the city or township clerk where you reside.

**Kalamazoo  
RESA**

**VCS**  
Vicksburg Community Schools  
*Traditions In Excellence*