



Whitehall District Schools

2025 Operating Millage Information & FAQs

VOTE Tuesday, May 6, 2025
On or Before

On **May 6, 2025**, voters in Whitehall District Schools will be asked to consider an Operating Millage Proposal. The District is asking voters to consider authorizing 20 mills of non-homestead millage for a period of 10 years.

However, Michigan law limits the maximum amount of operating millage that can be levied and collected to 18 mills. If approved, this millage would allow for the school district to receive its full revenue per pupil foundation allowance.

All voters in Whitehall District Schools boundaries are encouraged to learn more and vote on May 6.

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

How does this tax impact a primary residence or family farms?

The operating millage is **not levied on primary residences** (the home in which a homeowner lives) **or most agricultural land. All school districts in Michigan must levy 18 mills on non-homestead property to receive their full revenue per pupil foundation allowance.**

Is the maximum amount the District can levy 18 mills?

Yes, by law, the District can only levy 18 mills. The State funding system known as Proposal A expects the District to levy all 18 mills to get the full revenue per pupil foundation allowance.

Why is the District asking for 20 mills?

Some districts ask for "Headlee Override" millages to ensure that their revenue per pupil foundation allowance is fully funded. When property values in the District grow at a rate greater than statutory growth rate caps, the "Headlee" Amendment reduces the millage. If the millage is lowered below 18 mills, the District would not receive the full revenue per pupil foundation allowance. By asking for 20 mills the District will not need to request additional voter authorization.

What is a Headlee Override?

In 1978, Michigan voters approved an amendment to the Michigan Constitution known as the "Headlee" Amendment, which included provisions related to state and local tax.

The "Headlee" Amendment automatically rolls back millage rates to ensure taxes do not increase more than a statutory rate cap. For example, if a tax base for a local unit increased from \$1 million to \$1.1 million in excess of the cap, and the tax rate was one mill, the millage would have to be reduced from 1.0 mills to 0.909 mills, so that total revenue would be the same, \$1,000, as originally generated.

However, the state-funded portion of a school district's per pupil foundation allowance is calculated presuming a school district is levying a full 18 mills to provide the locally-funded portion of that foundation allowance. When there is "Headlee Override," the state-funded portion of the foundation allowance is not increased to offset that rollback in the local contribution. Because of that, if the operating millage is reduced below 18 mills by the "Headlee" Amendment, and is not restored, the school district does not receive its full foundation allowance.



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Does the 20 mills apply to the taxes on my primary residence?

No. A homeowner's primary residence is exempt from this millage.

How is this money used?

The operating millage generates revenue to support the District's operating budget. **The operating budget funds essential day-to-day expenses including salaries and benefits, utilities, and all costs associated with the District's educational and co-curricular programs.**

How is this different from a Bond Proposal?

Voters should be aware that Bond Proposals authorize a district to borrow funds for capital improvement needs across the district such as furniture in schools, renovations or additions, safety and security updates, technology upgrades, etc. Bond funds cannot be used for staff salaries and benefits, or other essential day-to-day costs, including classroom supplies, textbooks, utilities, or building maintenance.

What happens if the proposal fails?

Because a substantial portion of the district's operating budget comes from this millage, **there could be significant cuts in programming for students.**

Does every Michigan school district need to ask for 18 mills?

Without it, a district would not receive the full revenue per-pupil foundation allowance and would face an immediate loss of revenue. The state assumes that all districts levy 18 mills.

What is the exact ballot language?

WHITEHALL DISTRICT SCHOOLS OPERATING MILLAGE PROPOSAL

This proposal will allow the school district to levy the statutory rate of not to exceed 18 mills on all property, except principal residence and other property exempted by law, required for the school district to receive its revenue per pupil foundation allowance. The remaining 2 mills are only available to be levied to restore millage lost as a reduction required by the "Headlee" amendment to the Michigan Constitution of 1963 and will only be levied to the extent necessary to restore that reduction.

Shall the limitation on the amount of taxes which may be assessed against all property, except principal residence and other property exempted by law, in Whitehall District Schools, Muskegon County, Michigan, be increased by 20 mills (\$20.00 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a period of 10 years, 2026 to 2035, inclusive, to provide funds for operating purposes; the estimate of the revenue the school district will collect if the millage is approved and 18 mills are levied in 2026 is approximately \$4,178,297?

How/when can I vote?

Absentee ballots are available starting Thursday, March 27, 2025 at your City or Township Clerk's Office. Contact your local precinct for hours of operation. Election day, polls are open Tuesday, May 6, 2025 from 7am – 8pm. Polling locations and absentee ballot information are available at [Michigan.gov/vote](https://michigan.gov/vote).

My question wasn't answered, who can I contact?

Please reach out to Superintendent, CJ Van Wieren
Office Phone: 231.893.1010
Email: cjvanwieren@whitehallschools.net