

Revised: 8.25.14

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why is the Allegan Area Educational Service Agency (AAESA) Board of Education calling for a Headlee restoration for Special Education?

If the Special Education Headlee Restoration millage were approved it would provide better services to all Allegan County Students. It would fully restore the special education funding originally approved by Allegan County voters. AAESA would be able to put \$1,387,442 back into funding state and federal mandated special education services that impact both AAESA programs and those of our local districts. By restoring these funds, it would free up hundreds of thousands of local districts' general fund dollars that they are now being used to supplement special education costs.

2. How much needs to be restored?

In order to fully restore special education funding to the level approved originally by Allegan County voters, 0.5203 mills are needed. Originally, voters approved 3.050 mills to support special education programs in the schools. Due to the Headlee reduction, AAESA is currently levying less than 2.5 mills. If the special education Headlee restoration were approved it will allow AAESA to levy the full millage previously approved by voters and restore \$1,387,442 to our Special Education budgets.

3. If the restoration is approved, how much would the .5203 restoration cost the average homeowner?

The owner of a \$100,000 home would pay an additional \$26.02 annually. That works out to \$2.17 per month to provide over \$1.3 million in special education services.

4. Why are additional dollars needed for special education?

All qualifying students need and deserve high quality services. In addition, special education programs are mandated at the state and federal level. However, the federal government has failed to meet its funding promise. Also, the state has imposed mandates beyond the requirement of the federal government. There is simply not enough state and federal special education dollars alone for AAESA and the local districts to provide mandated, high quality programs and services. In order to satisfy the mandates, AAESA and our local districts currently are forced to supplement with monies from the general fund to provide these services, taking away potential programs and services from other parts of the districts.

5. How are programs and services funded presently?

Because of inadequate special education funding, local districts must transfer precious resources from their general education fund to cover mandated special education programs and services. In 2012-2013, the amount transferred per district was as follows:

Allegan-\$1,324,786

Fennville-\$327,131

Hopkins-\$416,669

Martin-\$110,146

Otsego-\$611,673

Plainwell-\$870,688

Wayland-\$1,317,441

**Total-\$4,978,534**

6. How much money will be restored to each district?

If the special education Headlee restoration millage were approved, it will provide AAESA with \$1,387,442 in additional funds for special education. If restored, the AAESA Board has agreed to provide local districts with \$1,000,000 of that to ease the strain on their general fund budget contributions. These amounts are based upon the percentage of special education students served:

Allegan-\$197,659

Fennville-\$115,998

Glenn - \$2,177

Hopkins-\$103,139

Martin-\$44,043

Outlook SDA - \$4,319

Otsego-\$155,456

Plainwell-\$171,831

Wayland-\$205,378

**Total-\$1,000,000**

7. How is the current funding process, to cover special education costs, impacting all students?

In the face of declining revenues, our districts have worked hard to reduce the impact on their General Education Funds by creating better intervention programs to respond to individual needs. However, a gap remains which takes away from the districts as a whole as they are faced with escalating costs and limited funding resources. State and federal law prohibits mandated programs like special education

from being reduced. If budget cuts are made, they will impact other programs or services and thus make it exceedingly difficult for districts to add any new programs for students.

8. If the special education millage is fully restored to its original level, how would AAESA's special education millage levy (3.050 mills) compare to the amount levied by neighboring Ottawa ISD, Kent ISD, Van Buren ISD, and Kalamazoo RESA?

Amount of Special Education Millage Levied by Neighboring ISDs:

Ottawa ISD	4.3750
Kent ISD	3.7099
Van Buren	3.3321
Kalamazoo RESA	2.8970