

February 22, 2017

Dear EGRPS Families,

On behalf of the East Grand Rapids Public Schools Board of Education, I would like to inform you of an enhancement millage proposal that has the potential to benefit all 20 Kent County school districts. The enhancement millage proposal is referred to as [Strong Schools, Strong Communities](#) and is being proposed as a way to establish a local, stable, reliable source of funding for 10 years for Kent County school districts. The enhancement millage proposal will be on the May 2, 2017, election ballot and voters will be asked to decide on a 0.9 millage.

As shared in the annual [EGRPS Community Budget Guide](#), school districts have two primary sources of funding, operational and capital. Capital revenues such as the 2014 construction bond approved by EGR voters for building construction, expansion, and repairs are funded through local bond issues, and these revenues cannot be used for operating purposes. Operating revenues come primarily from the state through the “foundation grant” allocated to each district on a per-pupil basis and are meant for day-to-day operations. These state revenues include your local contribution through the 6-mill state education tax and the 18-mill non-homestead tax levied on local businesses and second homes. The proposed enhancement millage would be an additional local contribution to EGRPS operating revenues which would support instructional programs and services.

School districts across West Michigan, including EGRPS, have had budget challenges for several years; and districts have worked hard to find efficiencies, cut costs, reduce staff, and consolidate services. Over the past seven years EGRPS has cut \$4.4 million in expenses and, despite these efforts, we and too many other local school districts continue to struggle to maintain the quality teaching and learning environments our students deserve. We believe the additional financial resources provided through the regional enhancement millage are critical for school districts to continue providing our students a quality education.

If voter approved all millage revenues would be distributed equally on a per-pupil basis to each of the 20 local school districts in Kent County. For EGRPS, the approximate \$211 per pupil will generate an additional \$617,000 annually (based on current enrollment) for 10 years. EGRPS will use these additional resources to continue meeting the learning needs of our students. *Again, 100% of the funds from this millage proposal will be spent on instructional programs and services that impact teaching and learning.* Moreover, all spending will be publicly disclosed on our website and independent audits will be performed to ensure transparency and accountability.

Between now and the May 2 election, you will hear more about the [Strong Schools, Strong Communities](#) proposal at PTO meetings and in district communications and building newsletters. We encourage you to review the [EGRPS Frequently Asked Questions](#) and [Strong Schools, Strong Communities](#) for additional detailed information. Thank you for all that you do on behalf of our students, schools, and community, and if you have questions, concerns, or thoughts after reviewing the enhancement millage information please do not hesitate to contact Kevin Philipps, Assistant Superintendent of Business, at kphilipp@egrps.org, or me at sshubel@egrps.org.

Sincerely,



Sara Magaña Shubel, Ph.D.
Superintendent

