

# 2018 NSPRA Gold Medallion Entry BOND/FINANCE CAMPAIGN

*Strong Schools, Strong Communities Ballot Proposal*



SUBMITTED MARCH 2018 BY:

Ron Koehler

*Assistant Superintendent of Organizational and Community Initiatives and Legislative Affairs*  
616.365.2292 | [ronkoehler@kentisd.org](mailto:ronkoehler@kentisd.org)

Kent ISD

2930 Knapp NE, Grand Rapids MI 49525  
[Kentisd.org](http://Kentisd.org)

Communication team: 3.5

Organization type: Education Service Agency/Intermediate School District

## Kent ISD Gold Medallion Entry Strong Schools, Strong Communities Ballot Proposal

### SYNOPSIS

Michigan's schools are funded through a formula that braids local property taxes, plus state sales and income taxes into a single revenue stream while prohibiting individual districts from seeking additional operating revenue.

[Michigan is unique](#) because the only way individual school districts can increase operating revenues is by joining together under their educational service agency, called intermediate school districts (ISDs) in Michigan, to ask voters to increase property taxes across the entire region through a ballot proposal. If approved, these tax revenues are collected by the ISD and distributed on a per-pupil basis to all districts within the ISD boundaries.

The "enhancement millage," as it is called in Michigan, is so rare as to have been passed in only five of 56 ISDs in the nearly 25 years since Michigan adopted the funding formula (passed by voters as [Proposal A](#)) in 1994.

In 2016, after years of sagging state revenues and cuts to schools (or increases that failed to match inflation), the [20 member districts of Kent ISD](#) asked us to conduct research to test voter appetite for a tax increase to boost district operating revenues.

With promising research in hand, Kent ISD embarked on the Strong Schools, Strong Communities campaign for additional revenues, with a vote in May, 2017. It would be an uphill battle. Not only would it be difficult to find an election date palatable to all 20 districts and ensure support from 20 school boards, but three funding requests for the local community college (serving the same voters) had been turned down.

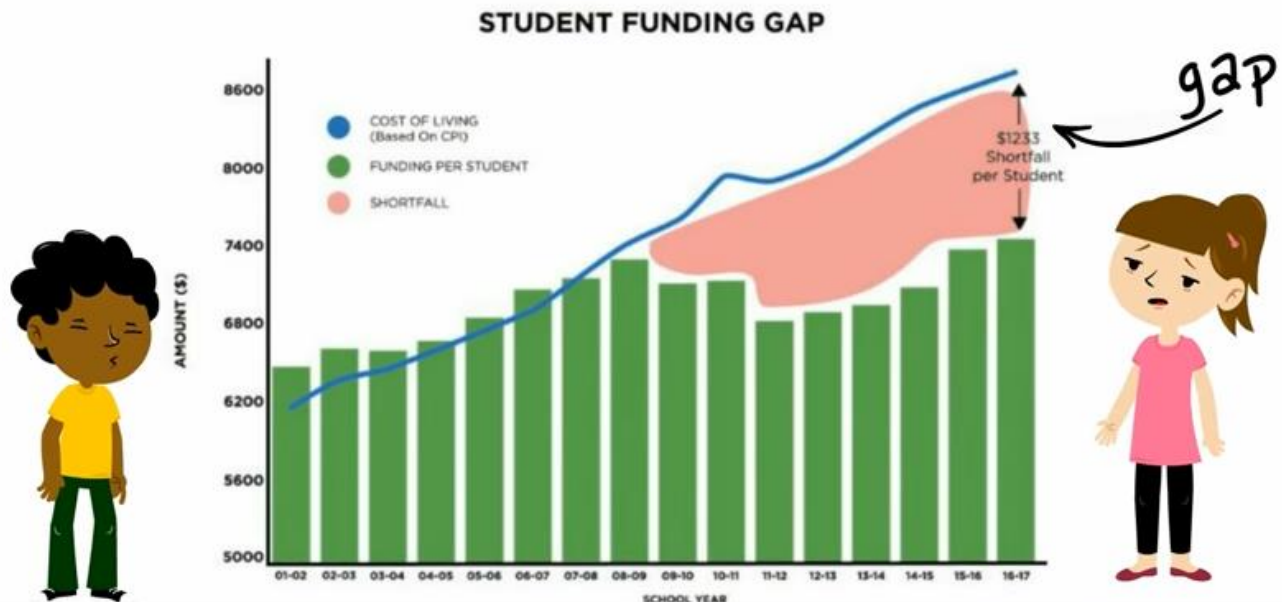
Fortunately, a well-orchestrated [campaign](#) resulted in a [victory](#) of [54 percent to 46 percent](#), despite opposition and a type of tax request area voters had not seen before. As a result, our schools now have a badly-needed new revenue source.

## SUMMARY

### Needs Increase as Funding Falls

Michigan's schools are falling behind. School performance has fallen to the bottom quartile of all states. Michigan's inflation-adjusted school funding has fallen by [\\$633 per pupil since 2000](#) while funding elsewhere across the country has grown by \$1,400 per pupil over the same time period.

All funding for Michigan's public schools comes to districts through a unique, per pupil formula that is fixed by the state. No individual school district can ask its voters for additional operating revenues. State law allows just one opportunity for increased operating revenues – the little known and seldom-used “enhancement millage.” These enhancement millages are property taxes levied by Michigan's intermediate school districts (regional education service agencies) and distributed on a per pupil basis among the districts they serve. In more than two decades, just five Michigan ISDs had successfully attempted an enhancement millage election before Kent ISD launched its “[Strong Schools, Strong Communities](#)” campaign in January 2017 for a vote on May 2, 2017.



### Creating a Favorable Environment for a Tax Increase

Despite long odds, Kent ISD was well positioned for a tax increase because we started laying groundwork for some kind of major initiative years earlier. Four years preceding the vote, Kent ISD launched [School News Network](#), a community journalism initiative with professional journalists. They regularly report the compelling stories of student success, teacher devotion and the challenges of educating all students, including the funding and policy issues faced by district leaders. Shortly thereafter, Kent ISD redesigned its legislative advocacy efforts to align with those of the local business community, creating the regional [West Michigan Talent Triangle](#) (WMTT). This initiative was planned partly to reflect and respond to businesses' need for a highly qualified talent supply chain to build the region's economy. Kent ISD hired as its legislative advocate a lobbyist who previously worked for the Republican majority in the Michigan House and the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce.

The focus of Kent ISD's external relations team was to build a stronger relationship with the business community that for years had been critical of the public schools. The reasoning was simple: just 30 percent of the population, on average, have children in the 20 traditional public school districts served by Kent ISD. With the recent surge in the region's economy, however, the business community needs 100 percent of our K-12 graduates. The voices of educators had fallen on deaf ears in the Michigan legislature for years. Our best avenue to success was to build a better relationship with the business community, make our issues *their* issues, and work together to improve student outcomes.

So, during the years leading up to our millage campaign, we were engaging community leaders who could make or break the election. This may seem like a no-brainer for school districts in other states where local tax levies are the primary source of revenue. But in Michigan, where all revenues flow from the state and no district can ask its voters for additional resources, schools and community leaders are often estranged. If the district does not need to build a new school or renew a bond, there is no compelling need to directly engage community leaders on an ongoing basis.

With the exception of parents, many school districts have allowed their relationships with the community at large to atrophy, making it very easy for the larger population to criticize school performance and question districts' needs for revenue.

### **The Complexities of an Enhancement Millage**

There is nothing simple about the enhancement millage. In law, it is described as a process initiated by individual school districts served by an intermediate district. If school districts representing 51 percent or more of the students within an ISD petition the ISD board to hold an election, that ISD board is required to place a proposal on the next general election ballot.

In practice, it would be nearly impossible to win an enhancement millage or any other regional election if just 50 percent of the beneficiaries were in support of the concept. All of the community and media attention would be focused on those who failed to support the proposal, as their NO vote would suggest the new tax revenues are not truly necessary. You really need 100 percent support if you are to have a chance of victory.

In the case of Kent ISD, with 20 member districts and just under 100,000 students, the challenge is one of coordination and timing. About half of the 20 member districts within Kent ISD are growing and another half are suffering declining enrollment. Those that are growing have facility needs fulfilled through regular bond issues or extensions of bond issues every few years. These bond extensions are very important to the districts fortunate enough to use them because they can embed a large portion of their district technology and transportation needs in them. Those districts that suffer declining enrollment, and do not have a good argument for new bond issues or extensions must pay for their technology and transportation costs out of their declining state funding.

What that means for scheduling a regional election is this: The largest and most influential of the 20 districts put their own needs above those of the region. No district wants its own needs to compete on the ballot with another school proposal, so district leaders will not approve a regional election date if it conflicts. So with only three possible election dates according to state law – May, August, November – it's tough to find a date all will agree to.

Kent ISD had studied the possibility of an enhancement millage for 2015, with serious discussion and a survey in 2011. Previous discussions of a regional millage were set aside because of competing bond issues on the ballot, other regional proposals by entities such as Kent County and the Grand Rapids Community College, and the national recession, which hit Michigan much harder than most states.



In April of 2016, after surveying the prospective electoral calendar through 2018, Kent ISD leaders proposed the idea of an enhancement millage to its member districts. Just three of the 20 superintendents were keen on the idea, but all agreed to allow Kent ISD to conduct a formal survey of the region's residents to gauge support for the concept.

### Research Results Seemed Promising

In May 2016, a survey of 500 registered voters found the long-term strategies of School News Network and Kent ISD's redesigned advocacy efforts to turn around confidence in area schools, were working. Compared to the 2011 survey, a greater percentage of respondents graded their district as an A or a B. The percentage of respondents who said their local district had "gotten better" nearly doubled, while the percentage who said it had "gotten worse" dropped in half.

To be certain of winning an election, you'd like 60 percent or more of respondents to say they'd vote "yes" when first asked, without explanation or positive arguments. While initial survey respondents fell well short of that mark, 54 percent said they'd support a tax proposal after hearing positive arguments.

Kent ISD leaders presented the research to the superintendents of its 20 member districts in June 2016 and asked them to quietly process the findings with their board presidents over the summer. They returned in August somewhat split. About half of the 20 supported the idea and another half was lukewarm, given the initial response they'd received from their boards. Kent ISD leaders prepared a campaign plan and worked with superintendents individually and in small groups to answer questions and give members confidence in a positive outcome.

By September, all superintendents agreed to the concept but several said their boards would be difficult to convince and require additional time. That set up another issue – we would be bypassing the November general election in favor of a "special" election in May that would be much more expensive to hold. In addition, it hamstrung our ability to communicate about the need for an election until January 2017.

In the run-up to the November election, school funding was a key issue among candidates for state office. Republicans running for re-election claimed school funding had increased and was adequate to meet student needs. Their opponents claimed otherwise. To begin to build the case for additional funding, Kent ISD contracted with an economist to analyze the state budget and projections for future years to demonstrate it would be difficult for the state to maintain current funding levels, making more cuts likely. That report was released in November and districts began passing resolutions in December calling upon Kent ISD to put an enhancement millage proposal on the ballot at the next available election date.

So in January, the Kent ISD School Board voted unanimously to place on the May 2, 2017 ballot a proposal to increase property taxes by 0.9 mills for a period of 10 years. This proposal would bring each district \$211 per pupil in increased funding each year. It would cost the average Kent County homeowner \$6.70 per month. The Kent County Taxpayers Alliance announced opposition immediately upon announcement of the election.

Subsequently, another survey of 500 registered voters and two focus groups were conducted. We learned the tumultuous presidential election and the divisive political environment had eroded support for schools. Still, the numbers offered promise – after hearing positive arguments, a majority of respondents would vote yes, meaning a vigorous campaign was necessary. In addition, voters gave a clear indication of their priorities – nine of 10 respondents in both the May 2016 and the January 2017 surveys supported our schools "expanding career training" and "giving students exposure to the world of work and business."

## Multi-pronged Campaign, Meeting Series Launch

The Strong Schools, Strong Communities campaign was launched with the assistance of the Byrum Fisk public relations firm. While they were preparing for the formal campaign launch, Kent ISD Assistant Superintendent Ron Koehler and WMTT Director Chris Glass embarked on their own initiative to meet individually with every influential business and political leader in the region. Their goal in the nearly 20 individual and small group meetings was to “open the books,” make the case for additional revenue, answer questions and enlist supporters or neutralize opponents. They met with each member of the region’s political delegation, both political parties’ executive committees, every member of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce executive, leadership and policy committees, and individual business and community leaders who were affiliated with statewide business and political organizations.

These meetings were essential for several reasons. Even though ours is a county of more than 630,000 residents, and a Metropolitan Statistical Area of more than a million, there are a handful of chief executive officers and philanthropists who have made K12 education their specific realm of expertise among their peers. In addition, organizations like the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce have become even more influential as local media have diminished in influence. This made the Chamber endorsement of a local tax election more important than that of MLive, the online successor to the Grand Rapids Press. Finally, conservative West Michigan is home to many contributors to the national Americans for Prosperity anti-tax organization and supporter of regionally affiliated groups like the Michigan chapter of AFP and the Kent County Taxpayers’ Alliance. If we could reach those who typically contributed to anti-tax efforts early, and convince them of the validity of our request, we hoped to mitigate or eliminate organized opposition to the proposal.

The meetings were productive. Several of the community leaders with whom we met were moved from being skeptics to contributors to the citizens “Yes For Kids” campaign, helping to finance mailings and telephone outreach to generate a “yes” vote. Others refused to support the effort but were impressed that we reached out to provide all the information before the campaign started. Ultimately, the organized opposition was starved for funds, limiting their activity to free social media and a robocall blitz of misinformation the weekend before the election. In addition, the meetings with individual members of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce policy committee blunted the efforts of a chairperson whose corporation – Amway Corporation – opposed the proposal. He was voted down and the chamber issued a measured endorsement.

## Consistent Info, Messaging Keys to Success

The Strong Schools, Strong Communities campaign consisted of communication and information created and supported by Kent ISD that allowed each of the 20 districts the opportunity for individual positioning and messaging under the overarching theme. Four mailings were conducted under the Strong Schools, Strong Communities information campaign, along with a strategic series of social media posts. Messaging in the Strong Schools, Strong Communities information campaign was carefully reviewed by attorneys to ensure it was “informational” even though it reflected the results of the research indicating voter priorities.

All local activities among the 20 districts were directed by an executive team of four superintendents, Kent ISD leadership and the Byrum Fisk consultants. Special attention was given to seniors, as research showed a special single issue election in May was likely to draw a large percentage of senior voters. Since voter turnout was expected to be very low and seniors are the only population to automatically receive absentee ballots, it was nearly certain the largest demographic group voting would be those over age 60. This group almost always leans toward voting “no” on tax proposals.

Campaign planners felt it was essential to break even among absentee voters to win the election.

Heavy emphasis in the messaging was placed on the priorities expressed by seniors in both the focus groups and the quantitative research. In addition to providing students with greater connections to the world of work, seniors responded to messaging reinforcing the West Michigan's ability to create its own talent pipeline and to increase property values through the strength and stability of its school districts.

Two "yes" mailings were conducted by the "Yes for Kids" community campaign, including one designed specifically to reach absentee voters before they filled out their ballots. In addition, paid telephone canvassing was conducted during the absentee voting period to encourage yes votes. An analysis of telephone calls conducted during and after the absentee voting period concluded the proposal won among absentee voters.

**And indeed, we won the election on May 2 by a 54-46 margin.** An enormous effort paid off and is bringing millions of dollars in badly-needed funding for our 20 districts. By the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the millage, these schools will have received nearly a quarter billion dollars of additional revenue!

In response and gratitude, a thank you video was created for voters, and we continued the [Strong Schools, Strong Communities](#) web presence with information about how each school district was spending revenue obtained from the election. Because the election was approved by voters in May, districts were rewarded with proceeds beginning with the late summer property tax collections, bolstering their budgets substantially in the 2017-18 school year.

## RACE - RESEARCH

Research drove the entire Strong Schools, Strong Communities campaign. In 2011 Kent ISD surveyed 400 registered voters and found:

- scarce support for a new property tax
- "no" voters more motivated to participate in a proposed election than "yes" voters
- just 55 percent rating their school district as an A or a B
- nearly 50 percent saying education quality remained the same in recent years; more saying quality was getting worse than those saying it had improved

Following that research, Kent ISD launched the news site, [School News Network](#) to regularly report on the compelling stories of student success and the challenging funding and policy issues faced by district leaders. Shortly thereafter, Kent ISD redesigned its legislative advocacy efforts to align with those of the local business community, creating the regional [West Michigan Talent Triangle](#) (WMTT) to reflect businesses need for a highly qualified talent supply chain to build the region's economy.

In May 2016, Kent ISD conducted similar research. It found:

- 28 percent of people said education quality had improved, 13% more than previously, while those saying it had gotten worse dropped in half. Undecided respondents increased
- A 61 percent majority gave a combined A&B grade to their local public school district, six points higher than in 2011
- A 40 percent plurality said their local school district has "too little funding" to provide a quality education (a drop of six points), with 42 percent saying it was "about the right amount"

- In the first cold test of a proposal to establish an enhancement millage of one mill for 10 years, 54 percent said they would vote “yes,” including 46 percent “direct yes” (significantly higher than in the previous survey), with 35 percent voting “no;” fewer than previous
- After hearing more detailed information, support increased to a 60 percent majority, including 53 percent “direct yes,” with 32 percent voting “no.” Again, there were significant gains over the previous survey
- When the whole 500 sample was combined, after hearing arguments both for and against the proposal, a 63 to 32 percent majority said they would vote “yes,” including 55 percent “direct yes”

These positive results led Kent ISD and its 20 member districts to pursue a proposal of just under one mill, or 0.9 mills for 10 years.

In that survey, and in qualitative and quantitative surveys conducted to guide messaging for the May 2, 2017 election, planners learned the top priority of the 1,000 registered voters, or nine of 10 respondents in each survey, was for schools “expanding career training” and “giving students exposure to the world of work and business.”

These results shaped messaging, tactics and, to some extent, the strategies deployed during the campaign. While outreach to business would have always played a significant role in the campaign, planners doubled down on their efforts to curry favor with the business community, holding nearly 50 one-on-one, small group and organized presentations to business groups and service organizations whose members were largely members of the business community.

These meetings resulted in an endorsement from the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, agreement from the CEO group Talent 2025 to be quoted in campaign literature promoting better education as a strategy to grow the region’s economy, and top business leaders contributing their names and their resources to the citizens “Yes for Kids” campaign.

## RACE - ANALYSIS/PLANNING

Planning anything that involves 22 separate units of government – Kent ISD, the 20 local education agencies and Kent County, which conducts elections – is a major undertaking.

The “special” election in May, as a single-issue election, would cost Kent ISD nearly \$350,000 just to hold, as it would require the ISD to pay for all election workers in every precinct that did *not* have another issue on the ballot. In essence, it was a double challenge. It gave opponents a built-in argument against the election, as it would use school resources to hold the election and it would be a low-turnout affair. Plus, it shortened the timeline considerably for communicating until all of those school boards (with new members) could consider board resolutions asking Kent ISD to hold the election.

Because of the impact the additional funds would have for our districts, Kent ISD was totally willing to take on the expense of the election. With the cost of election workers, research conducted by outside firms, the assistance of a public relations firm and the creation of information materials, it could cost as much as \$600,000.

Actual expenses were under that, at \$562,574. It was a good investment. It would return \$19.9 million to our 20 member districts in the first year and, with increases in property value, somewhere near a quarter of a billion dollars over the 10-year life of the enhancement millage.

What Kent ISD asked in return was the support of all 20 school districts. We did not want to enter into a difficult election with organized opposition and a splintered school community. Anything less than 100 percent support from our schools would make it nearly impossible to win the election, and Kent ISD's superintendent and school board were not interested in spending more than half a million dollars on a loss, or another half a million dollars at some point down the road on a second effort. We told member districts we had one arrow in the quiver, so we'd better be accurate in our aim. A bullseye would mean \$250,000,000 or more over a 10-year period. A miss would be a black eye for Kent ISD, our 20 districts, and years of budget cuts.

Planning included the development of an executive committee to represent the 20 districts. Kent ISD Assistant Superintendent Ron Koehler led the project in coordination with the four-member executive team, the superintendent of Kent ISD and the executive director of community relations for the Grand Rapids Public Schools, John Helmholtz, who has significant campaign experience in Kent County and across Michigan.

Obviously, the planning covers the 147 board members who govern the 20 school districts and Kent ISD. They were provided information on a regular basis through their superintendents to help them better understand the shortage of funds, state government budget projections that indicated current funding levels were threatened by future tax reductions and commitments to highway funding, and a detailed analysis of school spending across Kent ISD. All 20 school boards ultimately passed resolutions calling for the election.

That detailed analysis was provided in the form of a school funding boot camp held at Kent ISD in January 2017 for any school board member who had concerns regarding the need for the enhancement millage revenues. The "boot camp" was scheduled to provide information for the many new members who were elected in November, 2016, to the 20 local district boards. It was very important that we did not seat new board members in January who were vocally critical of the May enhancement millage election.

A week-by-week campaign calendar was developed and the executive team held a weekly conference call with a detailed agenda to coordinate activities. Koehler and the public relations firm Byrum Fisk analyzed the research to develop messaging.

Detailed voter analysis identified the number of likely voters, the demographic groups represented among those likely voters, and the school districts that would deliver the greatest percentage of the vote. The analysis targeted an optimistic 60 percent yes vote in the Grand Rapids Public Schools and an even larger margin in the four districts with a long history of strong voter support for schools (East Grand Rapids, Forest Hills, Northview and Rockford). Grand Rapids' recent history suggested 60 percent would be possible but difficult to achieve, as its margin of victory in its latest bond campaign was 53 percent, lowered in part by an active anti-tax campaign. Our strategy was to achieve the margin of victory in those five districts and work to get as close to 50-50 as possible in the remainder.

Planning focused on activities to be conducted by campaign leadership and at each individual district. In addition, Koehler deployed the ["Let's Talk"](#) online inquiry system developed by K12 Insight to provide a link on each local district website that would give any visitor to any of the 21 district websites an opportunity to ask a question regarding the election. He answered every general information directly and directed district-specific inquiries to the superintendent of the appropriate district. In addition, every district had a Strong Schools, Strong Communities web link on their district website that reported how much money the district would receive from the new property tax and how it would be spent if the election were successful.

There were three separate crescendos of activity once school boards passed their resolutions and the Kent ISD board called for the election on January 16. One led up to the formal campaign



announcement on March 15, 2017; the second led up to the absentee voter deadline; and the third was, of course, the run up to the May 2 election.

Because of the voter focus on connecting students to the world of work, the campaign kick-off was at a manufacturing facility where the owners – one of whom was a local school board member – had created a manufacturing “academy” for 8<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> grade students who spent a portion of their day in a lab learning about computer aided design and robotics.

Presentations and mailings to seniors were coordinated to coincide with the receipt of absentee ballots and the final push to election day focused largely on parents and school staff, all identified as likely “yes” voters but among the least likely to turn out at an election, particularly in the busy springtime period so filled with athletics, school proms, graduation planning and senior events.

## RACE - IMPLEMENTATION/COMMUNICATION

The communication effort was designed as an “umbrella” campaign that provided a central theme and messaging driven by research with materials, presentations and activities organized around each of the 20 districts. It was designed to capture the energy and precision of 20 local school elections being held on the same day.

A strong social media campaign was conducted with the assistance of NSPRA social media guru Shane Haggerty, who helped develop a strategy to extend the reach of local district social media pages, the School News Network social media presence and Kent ISD social media to the demographic groups most likely to support the millage and to repost information about it to their friends.

Web pages, FAQs and informational materials were all designed to reflect the priorities expressed by survey respondents. Four Strong Schools, Strong Communities mailers were sent to likely voters over the last month of the election, with two focused on absentee voters. In addition, we asked voters to go to the polls May 2 in a sign on our electronic billboard, seen by thousands of cars each day. Two citizen campaign “Yes for Kids” mailings were sent immediately preceding the election.

Individual districts each posted web pages featuring Strong Schools, Strong Communities messaging, the amount their district would receive and how they intended to use the revenue. They distributed materials, especially the first Strong Schools, Strong Communities flyer, and made presentations to parent and community groups.

One district superintendent gave 56 presentations in his 8,000 student district. Some probably gave no more than a couple to staff and parent groups. Still, the coordinated effort of a central campaign with 20 outposts of activity blanketed Kent County like no other countywide campaign because school districts have more “boots on the ground” than any other organization seeking voter support.

Especially valuable to our campaign was an [animated video](#) produced and developed late in the campaign to appeal to parents and staff. The video went viral, hitting tens of thousands of social media viewers in the final days of the campaign, driving home the importance of the needed revenues and reminding people to vote. The same format was used immediately after the campaign to [thank voters](#) for their support. We also thanked them with another sign on our electronic billboard.

## RACE - EVALUATION

The campaign was a success. We won by a margin of 54-46, and hit our “yes” vote targets in the five key districts. Our success was so thorough that absentee voter canvassing showed that we had won the absentee ballot and we would have won the election without the 60 percent vote total we targeted in Grand Rapids Public Schools, as our goal of getting 50 plus 1 in our outlying districts was a success. Three quarters passed the millage and those that failed did so by very small margins.

Our strategy of meeting with all pertinent community leaders, including those who had financed anti-tax campaigns in the past, was successful as well. Three anti-tax groups -- Kent County Taxpayers Alliance, the Grand Rapids Taxpayers Association and Kent Education Action – were limited to social media campaigns and a misleading [robocall](#) campaign on the final days before the election because they did not have the resources to send out mailers or to target absentee voters.

Former Kent County Senator Ken Sikkema, the majority leader in the state senate for much of his term, met with the region’s superintendents and board members in the Capitol soon after the election, as the West Michigan Talent Triangle hosts a “capitol day” each year to connect school leaders with state decision makers. He said the Kent ISD enhancement millage vote was the most important ballot proposal in the state in 2017, as it demonstrated Michigan’s funding formula – considered by most to be badly broken – may survive the criticism of many in and out of state government because Kent had demonstrated the local option portion of the formula was attainable.

Another measure of success was the widespread inquiry from other regions of the state following the election. Five ISDs contacted Koehler for presentations within two months of the campaign for consultation or formal presentations to their superintendents.

Local districts began collecting tax revenues from the enhancement millage beginning in August of 2017, just three months following the election. The revenues allowed many to stave off layoffs, give long-awaited pay increases to staff, and to provide new career exploration opportunities for students. As promised, they [published](#) summaries of how their districts used the funds on a regional website for transparency purposes and also to maintain support for a renewal at the end of the 10-year levy or at some point in between if revenues failed to meet the need.



# SUPPORT MATERIALS: *Research*

GREAT LAKES ECONOMIC CONSULTING (GLEC)

## Briefing Paper for Kent County Superintendents:

Mitch Bean, GLEC  
11/11/2016

Kent ISD retained Great Lakes Economic Consulting (GLEC) to prepare a briefing paper for Kent Superintendents. The purpose of the briefing paper is to outline the current consensus economic and revenue forecast; summarize the impact of recent tax policy changes on the availability of future K-12 resources; and consider how spending pressures in other areas of the state budget can be expected to affect K-12 resources.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Both U.S. and State economic growth is expected to be modest going forward
- Light vehicle sales are expected to hit a high of about 17.7 million vehicles in 2017; however, that level is likely not sustainable
- The variability and dramatic increase of refundable business tax credits has added a great deal of uncertainty to state resources
- Total state revenue subject to the state revenue limit is estimated to be about \$9.99 billion below the limit in FY 2017-18
- The current recovery has lasted for 28 quarters which is fairly long by historical standards – yet the current recovery has been less than half as strong as past recoveries.
- The impact of tax cuts already enacted and phasing in will dramatically reduce available revenue in future years
- The combination of spending pressures and already enacted tax cuts will pressure every area of the budget and require either more revenue or drastic cuts to state services
- Since School Aid Fund (SAF) revenue and General Fund-General Purpose (GF/GP) revenue has been comingled through the Higher Education budgets, state GF/GP and SAF revenues must be looked at as a whole

### CONSENSUS ECONOMIC GROWTH RATES

The May 2016 consensus forecast indicates that both the US economy and the State economy will continue to grow through 2018 – albeit at a modest rate.

During 2016, both the U.S. and Michigan economies are expected to expand at a slightly slower rate than they did during 2015, although employment is expected to be slightly stronger. The U.S. and Michigan economies are forecast to exhibit both income and employment growth during 2016 and through 2018 – although Michigan is generally expected to grow more slowly than the nation as a whole.

*To begin to build the case for additional funding, we contracted with an economist to analyze the state budget and projections for future years to demonstrate it would be difficult for the state to maintain funding levels as they were.*

*2017 survey results showed voters supported expanding career training and giving students exposure to the world of work and business.*

	<b>STR FAV</b>	<b>TOT FAV</b>	<b>TOT OPP</b>	<b>STR OPP</b>	<b>DK/ REF</b>
Give students exposure to the world of work and business with partnerships that prepare them for careers?	56%	<b>88%</b>	<b>10%</b>	4%	2%
To maintain current numbers of teachers so class size is not increased?	55%	<b>86%</b>	<b>10%</b>	3%	4%
To maintain existing programs and services offered to students?	46%	<b>85%</b>	<b>10%</b>	3%	5%
Giving students living in poverty a good start and surround them with support to keep them in school?	53%	<b>83%</b>	<b>12%</b>	4%	5%
To offer early college programs to give students a head start on college and careers?	48%	<b>82%</b>	<b>15%</b>	5%	3%
To provide nursing, mental health or counseling support programs for students?	49%	<b>78%</b>	<b>18%</b>	7%	4%
Offering programs to keep kids in school, reduce absenteeism, and stabilize families?	47%	<b>75%</b>	<b>18%</b>	7%	7%



EPIC • MRA  
4710 W. Saginaw Highway  
Suite 20  
Eastland, MI 49817  
517-886-8868  
800-545-8249  
Fax: 517-886-9176  
e-mail: info@epicmra.com  
website: www.epicmra.com

**Kent Intermediate School  
District Survey on Establishing  
an Enhancement Millage**

**Executive Summary  
and  
Demographic Analysis  
Report – First Draft**

**June 2016**

- Educational
- Political
- Industrial
- Consumer
- Market
- Research
- Analysis

*In 2016, Kent ISD commissioned research to gauge voters' receptiveness to an enhancement millage.*

*The findings suggested a very good chance of passing a modest millage.*

*EPIC • MRA p. 8*

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Based on the results of this survey, the Kent Intermediate School District has an excellent chance of earning voter support for establishing an enhancement millage of 1 mill for a period of 10 years, with a more likely prospect of passing an enhancement millage of 0.75 mills for either 10 years or 5 years. The overall “yes” vote results (including those that would “lean toward” voting “yes”), increased from 54 percent total support on the first cold question to 60 percent after respondents heard more details about the enhancement millage proposal.

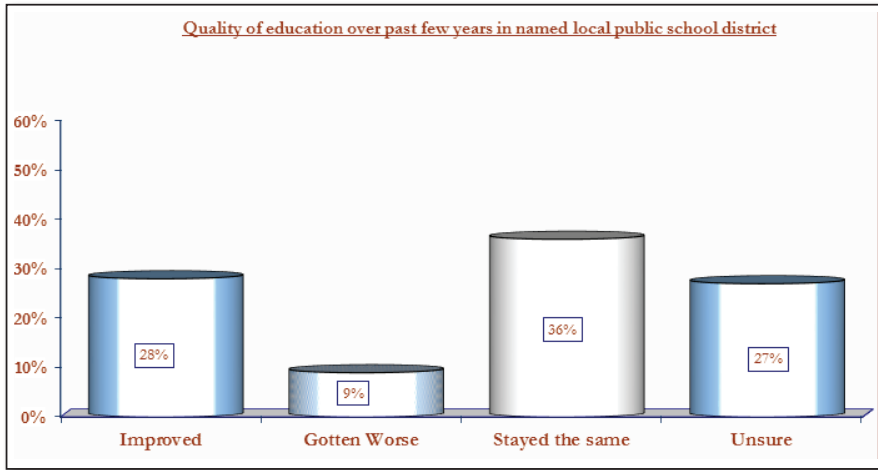
Of the more recent surveys conducted by EPIC-MRA for other ISD’s in Michigan, also focused on establishing an enhancement millage to fund school operations, voters in the Kent ISD show significantly more support than was indicated in the initial survey conducted for Kalamazoo RESA when they first successfully passed an enhancement millage. The Kent ISD also shows slightly more support for an enhancement millage proposal than the level shown for Midland County ESA when they passed their enhancement millage.

EPIC-MRA has had the opportunity to work with two ISD’s (out of the four that have passed enhancement millage proposals in Michigan) to provide survey research services for their efforts. Based on current survey results, and notwithstanding the potential for competing tax increase proposals on the same ballot, there appears to be sufficiently strong support that would indicate that the prospects are very good that Kent ISD could become the fifth ISD in Michigan to earn voter support for an enhancement millage.

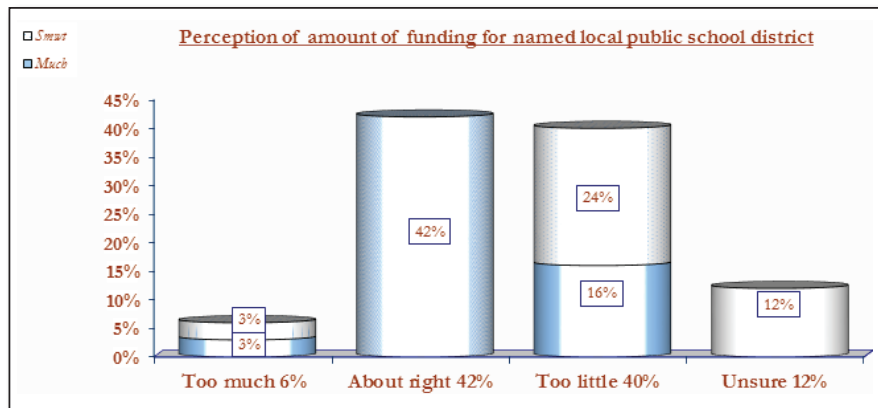
Support did not significantly change as a result of respondents hearing arguments in favor of the proposal (support increased by one point), but support also increased by another point after respondents heard arguments against the proposal. Among Split Sample A respondents, after hearing arguments in favor of the proposal first, support increased by one point to 61 percent overall, and then, upon hearing arguments against the proposal, support increased yet another point to 62 percent.

Support among Split Sample B respondents remained at 60 percent after hearing negative arguments first, but then increased by 4 points, up to 64 percent, after hearing positive arguments second. Among the entire 500 respondents, support remained at 60 percent on the third vote (between the supporting and opposing arguments), and moved to 63 percent on the final vote.

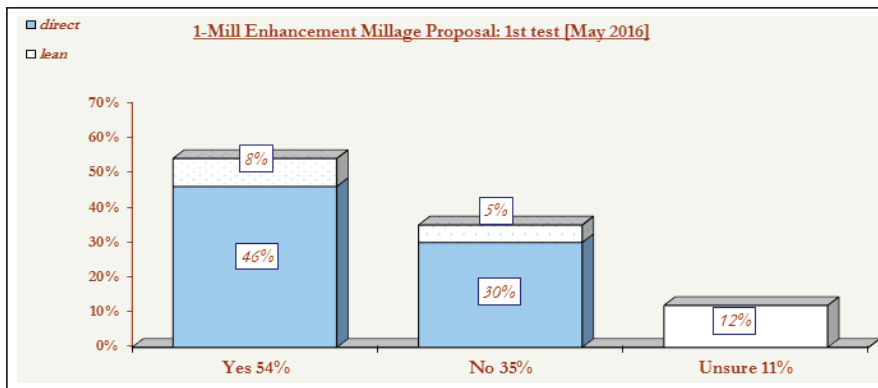
SUPPORT MATERIALS: *Research Cont.*



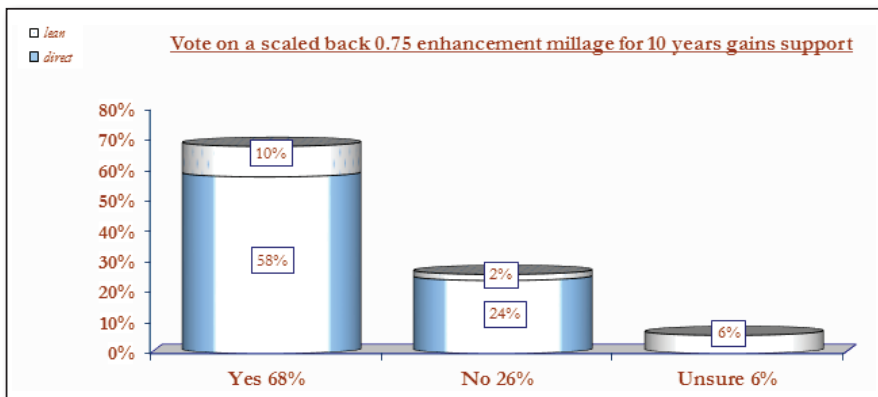
2016 Survey results reflecting voters' perception of the quality of education in their district.



2016 Survey results reflecting voters' perception of the amount of funding their district receives.



In the first cold test of a proposal to establish an enhancement millage of 1 mill for 10 years, 54% said they would vote "yes."



When survey respondents were asked how they would vote on a scaled back proposal to establish an enhancement millage of 0.75 mills instead of one mill, for period of 10 years, support increased to 68 percent voting "yes."

# SUPPORT MATERIALS: *Analysis/Planning*

May 2, 2017 Enhancement Millage Election Timeline			DRAFT
Wk. #	Target Dates	Major Targets	
48-55 Weeks	April 11 - May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kent ISD and KISA discuss the possibility of a county-wide enhancement millage</li> <li>Kent ISD conducts countywide survey through EPIC - MRA</li> </ul>	
40-47 Weeks	June - July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey presented to KISA at June meeting</li> <li>Survey Key findings and talking points information produced</li> <li>Local superintendents informally share information with school boards</li> </ul>	
31-39 Weeks	Aug-Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KISA approves moving ahead with countywide enhancement millage</li> <li>Executive Committee is established</li> <li>Executive committee meets to establish millage amount, united theme and information campaign</li> </ul>	
18-30 Weeks	Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive committee recruits citizens committee for fundraising and "yes" voter campaign</li> <li>Individual surveys to identify local interests</li> </ul>	
	Nov - Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local boards approve resolutions requesting a regional enhancement millage – forward on to Kent ISD</li> </ul>	
14-17 Weeks	Jan 2-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	
	Feb 7, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feb. 7 – Filing due with election coordinator no later than 4 p.m.</li> <li>Kent ISD files ballot proposal language with the county clerk</li> </ul>	
10-13 Weeks	Jan 30-Feb 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kent ISD posts millage information on website/announcements on social media</li> <li>Kent ISD finalizes information materials</li> <li>Review communication materials in local district communication kit from Kent ISD</li> <li>Review Campaign Finance Act6 guidelines</li> <li>Produces communication notebook for each district</li> </ul>	
	Feb 27- March 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin publishing millage information in employee communications</li> <li>Customize millage presentation for meetings/community forums</li> <li>Conduct information meetings and training for all central office staff and building administrators. Review Campaign Finance Act guidelines.</li> <li>Conduct infoamtion meeting sand training for union leadership in district. Review Campaign Finance Act guidelines</li> <li>Create link to Kent ISD millage information on local district website</li> <li>Post district-specific millage information on district website</li> </ul>	
8 Weeks	March 6-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kent ISD posts _____ on website</li> <li>Informational meetings for employees in all buildings</li> <li>Information meeting sofr parent groups</li> <li>Share district millage co9mmuncations plan</li> </ul>	

*Week-by-week campaign calendar outlines activities throughout the campaign.*

7 Weeks	March 13-17	<b>Absentee ballots available after</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up information displays in all district schools and administrative buildings</li> <li>Continue employee presentations</li> <li>Continue building-level parent group presentations</li> <li>Conduct informational presentations to local community groups</li> </ul>
6 Weeks	March 20-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue employee presentations</li> <li>Continue building-level parent group presentations</li> <li>Continue community group presentations</li> </ul>
5 Weeks	March 27-31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue employee presentations</li> <li>Continue parent group presentations</li> <li>Continue community group presentations</li> </ul> <b>The last day to register to vote is Monday, _____</b>
4 Weeks	April 3-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Spring Break</b></li> <li>Community group presentations</li> </ul>
3 Weeks	April 10-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete employee presentations</li> <li>Complete parent group presentations</li> <li>Complete community group presentations</li> </ul>
2 Weeks	April 17-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize election night communication plans with KISA</li> </ul>
1 Week	April 24-28	
One Day	May 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove all millage literature and displays in buildings that serve as voting locations</li> </ul>
Election Day	May 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Polls open from _____ on Tuesday, May 2, 2017</li> <li>Prepare election night statement for local media; designate spokesperson</li> <li>Attend election eve gathering to await results</li> <li>Communicate unofficial results to interested parties</li> </ul>
Up to Two Weeks After	May 3-May 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thank everyone who helped disseminate information</li> <li>Share timing and distribution of proceeds with constituent districts</li> </ul>

*The "Let's Talk" online inquiry system provided a link on Kent ISD's and each district's website to give any visitor an easy way to ask a question regarding the millage and election.*

*Our School Finance Book Camp was developed for any school board member throughout the county who had concerns about the millage, and especially for those recently elected.*

## School Finance Boot Camp

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2017  
KENT ISD



# SUPPORT MATERIALS: Communication/Implementation

Non Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Permit No. 339



**STRONG Schools Mean  
STRONG Communities**

*"Strong schools are the key to attracting families and businesses to West Michigan."*

**STRONG Schools**  
**STRONG Communities**

The first and largest of four informational direct mail pieces which contained messaging about what the enhancement millage would mean for voters and students.

This piece was distributed in both English and Spanish.

**STRONG schools** make West Michigan a great place to live, raise a family or start a business.



**Strengthening our schools** strengthens our future workforce and develops and attracts strong talent right here in West Michigan. If approved, the Strong Schools, Strong Communities Proposal will allow local districts to:

- Expand career training and technical course offerings that will give students real life, on-the-job training and a head start on their careers.
- Give students exposure to the world of work and business with partnerships that prepare them for careers.
- Give students living in poverty a good start, and surround them with the support needed to keep them in school.

**What every taxpayer should know:**

- By law, every penny generated from this proposal will be distributed to local school districts to maintain existing programs and improve services offered to students.
- If approved, all millage dollars will be publicly reported on each district's website and an independent audit will be conducted to ensure transparency and accountability.
- The proposed rate of 0.9 mills will cost the average homeowner \$6.70 dollars per month with 100% of funds going to local schools.

*It's our responsibility as a community to work together to ensure our students have access to a high-quality education that helps them learn, achieve and be college and career ready.*

**STRONG Schools**  
**STRONG Communities**

Non Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Permit No. 339



**Escuelas FUERTES forjan  
Comunidades FUERTES**

*"El tener Escuelas Fuertes es la clave para atraer familias y negocios al Oeste de Michigan."  
— Win Irwin, Irwin Seating Co.*

**STRONG Schools**  
**STRONG Communities**

**Escuelas FUERTES** hacen del Oeste de Michigan un gran lugar para vivir, levantar una familia o empezar un negocio.



**Fortalecer nuestras escuelas** vigoriza nuestro mano de obra futura así como desarrolla y atrae tremendo talento hacia el Oeste de Michigan. Si la Propuesta Escuelas Fuertes, Comunidades Fuertes es aprobada esta permitirá a los distritos locales:

- Ampliar la formación profesional y la oferta de cursos técnicos que preparen a los estudiantes de capacitación real en su trabajo y ventajosa en el avance de su carrera.
- Prevenir a los estudiantes de desajustes al mundo laboral y de negocios con asociaciones que los preparen para sus carreras.
- Preparar oportunidades de vida para los estudiantes que viven en pobreza y rodeados con el apoyo que necesitan para seguir estudiando.

**Lo que todo contribuyente debe saber:**

- Por ley, cada centavo generado de esta propuesta será distribuido entre los distritos escolares locales para mantener programas existentes e mejorar servicios ofrecidos a los estudiantes.
- Si se aprueba, todos los dólares de millaje serán reportados públicamente en la página de web de cada distrito y se llevará a cabo una auditoría independiente para asegurar la transparencia y la rendición de cuentas.
- La tasa propuesta de 0.9 milésimas le cuesta al propietario un promedio \$6.70 dólares por mes con 100% de los fondos siendo distribuido a las escuelas locales.

*Es nuestra responsabilidad como comunidad el trabajar juntos para asegurar que nuestros estudiantes tengan acceso a una educación de alta calidad que les ayude a aprender, alcanzar logros y estar preparados para la universidad y para la vida.*

**Escuelas Fuertes** son la clave para atraer familias y negocios al Oeste de Michigan. Y ellas son parte esencial de nuestra calidad de vida en el Oeste de Michigan y necesitamos asegurarnos de que permanezcan fuertes.

Obtenga más información acerca de la Propuesta Escuelas Fuertes, Comunidades Fuertes, que estará en la **boleta del Martes, 2 de Mayo, 2017**.

Visite [www.strongschoolstrongcommunities.com](http://www.strongschoolstrongcommunities.com) para más información.

**STRONG Schools**  
**STRONG Communities**

SUPPORT MATERIALS: *Communication/Implementation Cont.*

**A STRONG Workforce Begins with STRONG Schools<sup>1</sup>**

**VOTE**  
On Tuesday, May 2, 2017

**Strong schools** are a key part of strengthening our future workforce and developing and attracting talent right here in West Michigan.<sup>1</sup> And strong schools are the key to attracting families and businesses to our area.

If approved, the Strong Schools, Strong Communities Proposal will allow local districts to:

- Expand career training and technical course offerings that will give students real life, on-the-job training and a head start on their careers.
- Give students exposure to the world of work and business with partnerships that prepare them for careers.
- Give students living in poverty a good start, and surround them with the support needed to keep them in school and help them succeed.

Strong schools are an essential part of our quality of life here in West Michigan, making our community a great place to live and raise a family.<sup>1</sup>

**STRONG Schools**  
**STRONG Communities**

**VOTE Tuesday May 2, 2017**

Kent Intermediate School District  
2017 Proposal #17  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Non-Profit Org  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Permit No. 239

Informational direct mail pieces contained messaging about what the enhancement millage would mean for voters and students.

**TALENT**  
**MADE IN WEST MICHIGAN**

Learn about the **Strong Schools, Strong Communities** Proposal on the **Tuesday May 2, 2017** ballot

**TALENT**  
**MADE IN WEST MICHIGAN**

**Strong schools** are a key part of strengthening our future workforce and developing and attracting strong talent right here in West Michigan.

If approved, the Strong Schools, Strong Communities Proposal will allow local districts to:

- Expand career training and technical course offerings that will give students real life, on-the-job training and a head start on their careers.
- Give students exposure to the world of work and business with partnerships that prepare them for careers.
- Give students living in poverty a good start, and surround them with the support needed to keep them in school and help them succeed.

**What every taxpayer should know:**

- By law, every penny generated from this proposal will be distributed to local school districts and go directly to the classroom.
- All millage dollars will be publicly reported on each district's website and an independent audit will be conducted to ensure transparency and accountability.
- The proposed rate of 0.9 mill will cost the average homeowner \$6.70 dollars per month.

Visit [www.strongschoolsstrongcommunities.com](http://www.strongschoolsstrongcommunities.com) for more information.

**Vote Tuesday May 2, 2017**

**STRONG Schools**  
**STRONG Communities**

Kent Intermediate School District  
2017 Proposal #17  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Non-Profit Org  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Permit No. 239

**SUCCEED**  
**THE TOOLS TO**

**Vote Tuesday May 2, 2017**

Visit [www.strongschoolsstrongcommunities.com](http://www.strongschoolsstrongcommunities.com) for more information.

**STRONG Schools**  
**STRONG Communities**

If approved on Tuesday, May 2, 2017, the **Strong Schools, Strong Communities** Proposal will give West Michigan students the tools to succeed.

*And strong schools are the key to attracting families and businesses to our area.<sup>1</sup>*

**Schools** are an essential part of our quality of life here in West Michigan, making our community a great place to live and raise a family.<sup>1</sup> By strengthening our schools, we're also strengthening our future workforce by developing and attracting strong talent right here in West Michigan.<sup>1</sup>

If approved, the **Strong Schools, Strong Communities** Proposal will allow local districts to:

- Expand career training and technical course offerings that will give students real life, on-the-job training and a head start on their careers.
- Give students exposure to the world of work and business with partnerships that prepare them for careers.
- Give students living in poverty a good start, and surround them with the support needed to keep them in school and help them succeed.

**What every taxpayer should know:**

- By law, every penny generated from this proposal will be distributed to local school districts and go directly to the classroom.
- All millage dollars will be publicly reported on each district's website and an independent audit will be conducted to ensure transparency and accountability for taxpayers.
- The proposed rate of 0.9 mills will cost the average homeowner \$6.70 dollars per month.

**Vote Tuesday May 2, 2017**

Visit [www.strongschoolsstrongcommunities.com](http://www.strongschoolsstrongcommunities.com) for more information.

**STRONG Schools**  
**STRONG Communities**



SUPPORT MATERIALS: *Communication/Implementation Cont.*

*Kent ISD's website acts as the hub of information regarding the millage as a whole. During the campaign, it displayed information about how each planned to use the proposed dollars.*

*Now, the site shows how many dollars each district receives from the millage and updates on how those dollars are being used.*



*Each district (and Kent ISD) placed this button on their homepage so voters could easily get to information about what the millage would mean for their district.*





## 10 Questions About the Strong Schools, Strong Communities Proposal

### 1. What is the "Strong Schools, Strong Communities" proposal?

The Strong Schools, Strong Communities proposal is a regional enhancement millage that will appear on the May 2, 2017 ballot. 100% of all funds generated by this proposal will go to local schools to maintain current programs and improve services offered to students.

### 2. How much will the proposal cost homeowners?

The proposed rate of 0.9 mills will cost the average homeowner \$6.70 per month.

### 3. When will the proposal appear?

The Strong Schools, Strong Communities proposal will appear on the May 2, 2017 ballot. It is a 10-year proposal that starts in the summer of 2017.

### 4. How will school districts be held accountable for this proposal?

By law, every penny generated from this proposal will be distributed to local school districts to maintain existing programs and improve services offered to students. All spending will go through an independent financial audit every year, with spending disclosed on a public website to ensure transparency and accountability.

### 5. Why is this proposal necessary?

For years, West Michigan school districts have taken steps to tighten their belts, make cuts, find efficiencies, reduce staff and consolidate services. Despite these efforts, too many school districts and communities continue to struggle to provide the quality education students deserve.

### 6. Why is Kent ISD requesting this millage?

By law, only Kent ISD can ask voters for a regional enhancement millage, and it is the only way to receive additional revenues to meet student needs. All revenue from this proposal will be distributed to each local school district on a per pupil basis. This proposal will expand career training and technical course offerings to give students real life, on-the-job training and a head start on their careers. It will also give students exposure to the world of work and partnerships with business that prepare them for college and careers. Additionally, the proposal gives students living in poverty a good start, and surrounds them with the support needed to keep them in school.

### 7. How much funding will my school district receive?

If approved, every penny generated from this proposal will be distributed equally to local districts on a per pupil basis. The Strong Schools, Strong Communities proposal will generate an estimated \$19.9 million for the 20 school districts in the first year.

The proposal will generate revenue for students in the following school districts:

- Byron Center
- Caledonia
- Cedar Springs
- Comstock Park
- East Grand Rapids
- Forest Hills
- Godfrey-Lee
- Godwin Heights
- Grand Rapids
- Grandville
- Kenowa Hills
- Kelloggsville
- Kent City
- Kentwood
- Lowell
- Northview
- Rockford
- Sparta
- Thornapple Kellogg
- Wyoming

### 8. What impact will this proposal have on kids in my school district?

This proposal will expand career training and technical course offerings to give students real life, on-the-job training and a head start on their careers. It will also give students exposure to the world of work and partnerships with business that prepare them for college and careers. Additionally, the proposal gives students living in poverty a good start, and surrounds them with the support needed to keep them in school.

### 9. Why is this proposal important?

Strong schools are the key to attracting families and businesses to West Michigan. It's our responsibility as a community to work together to ensure our students have access to a high-quality education that helps them learn, achieve and be college and career ready. We owe it to our kids and grandkids to give them the same opportunities as we did to achieve, succeed and compete for jobs.

### 10. How do I get more information on this proposal?

Additional information is available at [www.strongschoolsstrongcommunities.com](http://www.strongschoolsstrongcommunities.com)

*FAQs were designed to reflect the priorities expressed by survey respondents. Kent ISD distributed a "general" version (left), while each district distributed a version customized to their schools (example below).*



## Thornapple Kellogg Schools Answers: 10 Questions About the Strong Schools, Strong Communities Proposal

### 1. What is the "Strong Schools, Strong Communities" proposal?

The Strong Schools, Strong Communities proposal is a regional enhancement millage that will appear on the May 2, 2017 ballot. 100% of all funds generated by this proposal will go to our local schools to maintain current programs and improve services offered to all our students.

### 2. How much will the proposal cost homeowners?

The proposed rate of 0.9 mill will cost the average homeowner \$6.70 per month.

### 3. When will the proposal appear?

The Strong Schools, Strong Communities proposal will appear on the May 2, 2017 ballot. It is a 10-year proposal that starts in the summer of 2017.

### 4. How will school districts be held accountable for this proposal?

By law, every penny generated from this proposal will be distributed to local school districts to maintain existing programs and improve services offered to students. All spending will go through an independent financial audit every year, with spending disclosed on a public website to ensure transparency and accountability.

### 5. Why is this proposal necessary?

For years, our district and all West Michigan school districts have taken steps to tighten their belts, make cuts, find efficiencies, reduce staff and consolidate services. Despite these efforts, too many school districts and communities continue to struggle to provide the quality education students deserve. Among the ways we've reduced spending over the last five years as a base foundation district are:

- increased class sizes
- absorbed and cut teaching, support staff and administrative positions

### 6. Why is Kent ISD requesting this millage?

By law, only Kent ISD can ask voters for a regional enhancement millage, and it is the only way to receive additional revenues to meet student needs. All revenue from this proposal will be distributed to each local school district on a per pupil basis. This proposal will expand career training and technical course offerings to give our students real life, on-the-job training and a head start on their careers. It will also give students exposure to the world of work and partnerships with business that prepare them for college and careers. Additionally, the proposal gives students living in poverty a good start, and surrounds them with the support needed to keep them in school.

### 7. How much funding will my school district receive?

If approved, every penny generated from this proposal will be distributed equally to local districts on a per pupil basis. The Strong Schools, Strong Communities proposal will generate an estimated \$19.9 million for the 20 school districts in our region the first year. Our district will receive about \$638,360 in the first year.

### 8. What impact will this proposal have on kids in my school district?

Our school district will be able to use these resources to meet the unique needs of our students and provide high-quality classroom instruction. Funds from this proposal will be spent on:

- maintaining our current educational offerings
- attracting and retaining quality staff
- increasing community enrichment programs
- maintaining cutting edge technology resources and support
- maintaining district facilities

This proposal will expand career training and technical course offerings to give students real life, on-the-job training and a head start on their careers. It will also give students exposure to the world of work and partnerships with business that prepare them for college and careers. Additionally, the proposal gives students living in poverty a good start, and surrounds them with the support needed to keep them in school.

### 9. Why is this proposal important?

Strong schools are the key to attracting families and businesses to West Michigan. It's our responsibility as a community to work together to ensure our students have access to a high-quality education that helps them learn, achieve and be college and career ready. We owe it to our kids and grandkids to give them the same opportunities as we did to achieve, succeed and compete for jobs.

### 10. How do I get more information on this proposal?

Additional information is available on our school website, at [strongschoolsstrongcommunities.com](http://strongschoolsstrongcommunities.com) and you are always welcome to call Superintendent Tom Enslin at 269.795.3313.

SUPPORT MATERIALS: *Communication/Implementation Cont.*

**We appreciate** the strong support **you** have shown for our schools

**YOUR votes have helped schools:**

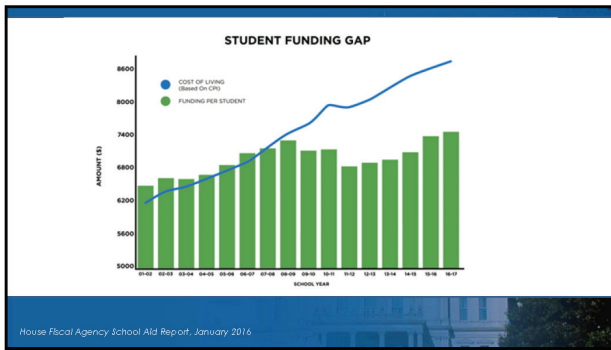
- **Remodel** or build facilities
- **Improve** safety & security
- **Upgrade** technology

But Schools are **STILL** making cuts

Holding cost increases to just **0.6%** a year despite declining spending power

Spending down fund balances by **\$33 million**

**& SPENDING SAVINGS**



Our reality is a **BIG** Funding Gap

Base Foundation Funding

Bloomfield Hills School District  $\rightarrow$  \$12,064

75% of Kent Districts at or near  $\rightarrow$  \$7,511

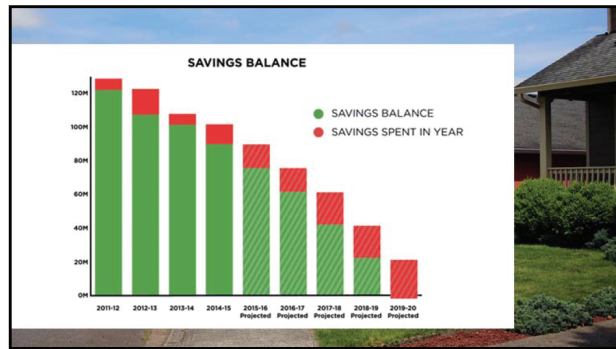
Most Kent Schools are at or near the **bottom** of foundation funding

Building **stronger** Schools & a **stronger** community

If approved, this would cost an average homeowner approximately **\$5.62 per month, \$67.50 a year**

Average Home Value	Annual Millage Amount
\$150,000 - \$250,000	< 0.9 mills
\$200,000 - \$300,000	0.9 - 1.9 mills
\$300,000 - \$400,000	1.9 - 2.9 mills
\$400,000 - \$500,000	2.9 - 3.9 mills
\$500,000 - \$600,000	3.9 - 4.9 mills
\$600,000 - \$700,000	4.9 - 5.9 mills
\$700,000 - \$800,000	5.9 - 6.9 mills
\$800,000 - \$900,000	6.9 - 7.9 mills
\$900,000 - \$1,000,000	7.9 - 8.9 mills
\$1,000,000 - \$1,100,000	8.9 - 9.9 mills
\$1,100,000 - \$1,200,000	9.9 - 10.9 mills
\$1,200,000 - \$1,300,000	10.9 - 11.9 mills
\$1,300,000 - \$1,400,000	11.9 - 12.9 mills
\$1,400,000 - \$1,500,000	12.9 - 13.9 mills
\$1,500,000 - \$1,600,000	13.9 - 14.9 mills
\$1,600,000 - \$1,700,000	14.9 - 15.9 mills
\$1,700,000 - \$1,800,000	15.9 - 16.9 mills
\$1,800,000 - \$1,900,000	16.9 - 17.9 mills
\$1,900,000 - \$2,000,000	17.9 - 18.9 mills
\$2,000,000 - \$2,100,000	18.9 - 19.9 mills
\$2,100,000 - \$2,200,000	19.9 - 20.9 mills
\$2,200,000 - \$2,300,000	20.9 - 21.9 mills
\$2,300,000 - \$2,400,000	21.9 - 22.9 mills
\$2,400,000 - \$2,500,000	22.9 - 23.9 mills
\$2,500,000 - \$2,600,000	23.9 - 24.9 mills
\$2,600,000 - \$2,700,000	24.9 - 25.9 mills
\$2,700,000 - \$2,800,000	25.9 - 26.9 mills
\$2,800,000 - \$2,900,000	26.9 - 27.9 mills
\$2,900,000 - \$3,000,000	27.9 - 28.9 mills
\$3,000,000 - \$3,100,000	28.9 - 29.9 mills
\$3,100,000 - \$3,200,000	29.9 - 30.9 mills
\$3,200,000 - \$3,300,000	30.9 - 31.9 mills
\$3,300,000 - \$3,400,000	31.9 - 32.9 mills
\$3,400,000 - \$3,500,000	32.9 - 33.9 mills
\$3,500,000 - \$3,600,000	33.9 - 34.9 mills
\$3,600,000 - \$3,700,000	34.9 - 35.9 mills
\$3,700,000 - \$3,800,000	35.9 - 36.9 mills
\$3,800,000 - \$3,900,000	36.9 - 37.9 mills
\$3,900,000 - \$4,000,000	37.9 - 38.9 mills
\$4,000,000 - \$4,100,000	38.9 - 39.9 mills
\$4,100,000 - \$4,200,000	39.9 - 40.9 mills
\$4,200,000 - \$4,300,000	40.9 - 41.9 mills
\$4,300,000 - \$4,400,000	41.9 - 42.9 mills
\$4,400,000 - \$4,500,000	42.9 - 43.9 mills
\$4,500,000 - \$4,600,000	43.9 - 44.9 mills
\$4,600,000 - \$4,700,000	44.9 - 45.9 mills
\$4,700,000 - \$4,800,000	45.9 - 46.9 mills
\$4,800,000 - \$4,900,000	46.9 - 47.9 mills
\$4,900,000 - \$5,000,000	47.9 - 48.9 mills
\$5,000,000 - \$5,100,000	48.9 - 49.9 mills
\$5,100,000 - \$5,200,000	49.9 - 50.9 mills
\$5,200,000 - \$5,300,000	50.9 - 51.9 mills
\$5,300,000 - \$5,400,000	51.9 - 52.9 mills
\$5,400,000 - \$5,500,000	52.9 - 53.9 mills
\$5,500,000 - \$5,600,000	53.9 - 54.9 mills
\$5,600,000 - \$5,700,000	54.9 - 55.9 mills
\$5,700,000 - \$5,800,000	55.9 - 56.9 mills
\$5,800,000 - \$5,900,000	56.9 - 57.9 mills
\$5,900,000 - \$6,000,000	57.9 - 58.9 mills
\$6,000,000 - \$6,100,000	58.9 - 59.9 mills
\$6,100,000 - \$6,200,000	59.9 - 60.9 mills
\$6,200,000 - \$6,300,000	60.9 - 61.9 mills
\$6,300,000 - \$6,400,000	61.9 - 62.9 mills
\$6,400,000 - \$6,500,000	62.9 - 63.9 mills
\$6,500,000 - \$6,600,000	63.9 - 64.9 mills
\$6,600,000 - \$6,700,000	64.9 - 65.9 mills
\$6,700,000 - \$6,800,000	65.9 - 66.9 mills
\$6,800,000 - \$6,900,000	66.9 - 67.9 mills
\$6,900,000 - \$7,000,000	67.9 - 68.9 mills
\$7,000,000 - \$7,100,000	68.9 - 69.9 mills
\$7,100,000 - \$7,200,000	69.9 - 70.9 mills
\$7,200,000 - \$7,300,000	70.9 - 71.9 mills
\$7,300,000 - \$7,400,000	71.9 - 72.9 mills
\$7,400,000 - \$7,500,000	72.9 - 73.9 mills
\$7,500,000 - \$7,600,000	73.9 - 74.9 mills
\$7,600,000 - \$7,700,000	74.9 - 75.9 mills
\$7,700,000 - \$7,800,000	75.9 - 76.9 mills
\$7,800,000 - \$7,900,000	76.9 - 77.9 mills
\$7,900,000 - \$8,000,000	77.9 - 78.9 mills
\$8,000,000 - \$8,100,000	78.9 - 79.9 mills
\$8,100,000 - \$8,200,000	79.9 - 80.9 mills
\$8,200,000 - \$8,300,000	80.9 - 81.9 mills
\$8,300,000 - \$8,400,000	81.9 - 82.9 mills
\$8,400,000 - \$8,500,000	82.9 - 83.9 mills
\$8,500,000 - \$8,600,000	83.9 - 84.9 mills
\$8,600,000 - \$8,700,000	84.9 - 85.9 mills
\$8,700,000 - \$8,800,000	85.9 - 86.9 mills
\$8,800,000 - \$8,900,000	86.9 - 87.9 mills
\$8,900,000 - \$9,000,000	87.9 - 88.9 mills
\$9,000,000 - \$9,100,000	88.9 - 89.9 mills
\$9,100,000 - \$9,200,000	89.9 - 90.9 mills
\$9,200,000 - \$9,300,000	90.9 - 91.9 mills
\$9,300,000 - \$9,400,000	91.9 - 92.9 mills
\$9,400,000 - \$9,500,000	92.9 - 93.9 mills
\$9,500,000 - \$9,600,000	93.9 - 94.9 mills
\$9,600,000 - \$9,700,000	94.9 - 95.9 mills
\$9,700,000 - \$9,800,000	95.9 - 96.9 mills
\$9,800,000 - \$9,900,000	96.9 - 97.9 mills
\$9,900,000 - \$10,000,000	97.9 - 98.9 mills

Median Kent County home value according to Zillow.com



**Closing the Gap**

These dollars would help close the school funding gap and maintain class size, programs and student services.

What your neighbors said – **Preserve & maintain** our current educational experience

- 88%** Connect Students to World of Work
- 86%** Maintain Class Size
- 85%** Preserve Existing Programs & Services
- 82%** Early College, Giving Students a Head Start

*Excerpt slides from presentations to stakeholders that thanked them for supporting schools, explained the school funding deficit, the enhancement millage and how millage dollars would be used.*



# SUPPORT MATERIALS: Communication/Implementation Cont.



## Kent ISD

During the months of October 2016-February 2017 Kent ISD will begin an educational image enhancement campaign of Facebook properties within the ISD. The goals will be to:

- Increase audience size of Facebook pages
- Increase awareness of messaging and themes selected by Kent ISD and based on those issues/messages presented in the executive summary/demographic report.

By growing the audiences of the Facebook pages within the ISD, as well as focusing messaging on those issues that are shown to garner support, the campaign will help Kent ISD reach its objective of positioning Facebook as a strong communication channel and educating its target audiences.

It is recommended that this campaign focus on two waves:

- October: Focus simply on building up the audience through regular Facebook ads that grow awareness that the organizations have a Facebook page.
- November-February: Focus on seeding key messages and content (in content buckets) that grow awareness and educate the public.

Content Buckets (based on research in executive summary report for Kent ISD)

- College & Career Readiness
  - Giving students exposure to the world of work and business with partnerships that prepare them for careers (88 percent favor – 56 percent strongly);
  - Offering early college programs to give students a head start on college and careers (82 percent favor – 48 percent strongly);
- Support of Student & Teacher Endeavors
  - Maintaining current numbers of teachers so class size is not increased (88 percent favor – 55 percent strongly);
  - Maintaining existing programs and services offered to students (85 percent favor – 46 percent strongly);
- Student Well-Being
  - Giving students living in poverty a good start and surround them with support to keep them in school (83 percent favor – 53 percent strongly);
  - Providing nursing, mental health or counseling support programs for students (78 percent favor – 49 percent strongly);
  - Offering programs to keep kids in school, reduce absenteeism, and stabilize families (75 percent favor – 47 percent strongly).

Month	Content Bucket	Goal	Suggested Budget (budget projects all 22 entities participating)
October	Brand Awareness of Individual Pages	Increase audiences and page likes	\$2K-\$4K (overall for all pages) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$100-200/per organization</li> <li>• 1-2 ads for the month per organization</li> </ul>
November	College & Career Readiness	Messaging & awareness in advance of election	\$1800 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$20 boosted posts/4 boosted posts for the month</li> <li>• \$80 spend per organization</li> </ul>
December	Support of Student & Teacher Endeavors	Messaging & awareness in advance of election	\$1800 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$20 boosted posts/4 boosted posts for the month</li> <li>• \$80 spend per organization</li> </ul>
January	Student Well-Being	Messaging & awareness in advance of election	\$1800 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$20 boosted posts/4 boosted posts for the month</li> <li>• \$80 spend per organization</li> </ul>
February	All buckets	Messaging & awareness in advance of election	\$1800 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$20 boosted posts/4 boosted posts for the month</li> <li>• \$80 spend per organization</li> </ul>

### Audience Profile

Age: 18-64  
 Education: Post High School/College Education  
 Income: \$50K and above  
 Gender: Both  
 Zip Codes: TBD

We can also microtarget the following: Ethnicity, Generation (Millennial, Gen X, Baby Boomer), Home (Ownership, Rental, etc.), Parents (Single moms, stay-at-home moms, Moms with preschoolers, moms with kids in grade school, moms with kids in high school, etc.), Politics (affiliations), Work

### Ad Type Recommendations:

- Regular Facebook Ads
  - Single image or video
  - Build awareness and increase page likes/followers
- Facebook Carousel Ads
  - Multiple images
  - Build awareness and increase page likes/followers
  - Messaging and education
- Boosted Posts
  - Image, video, graphic, photo album
  - Messaging and education
  - More authentic in nature because they are posts on your page

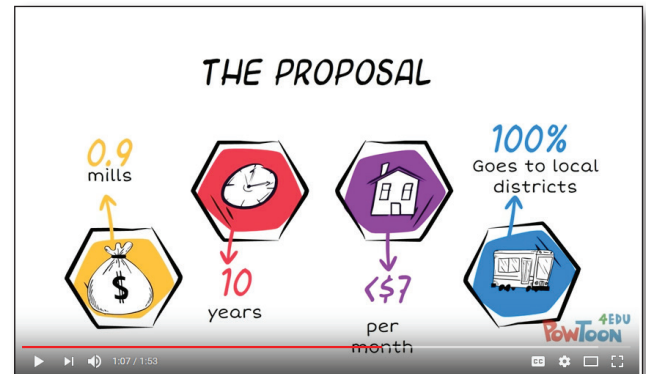
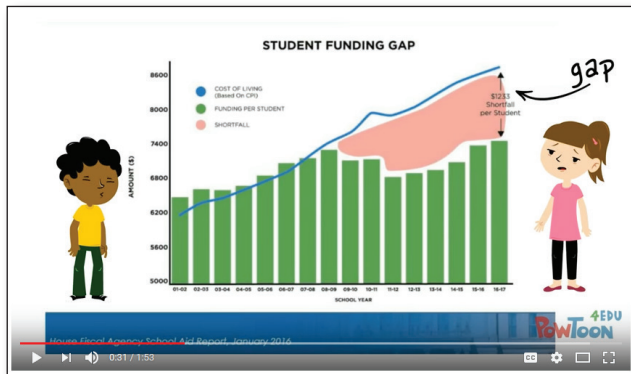
### Budget and Ad Buy Strategy

- Once we are able to hold our conversation next week, I will be able to put this together. We will need to decide what is a realistic budget for you, how many organization you realistically think will be involved and/or which should be invested in more heavily.

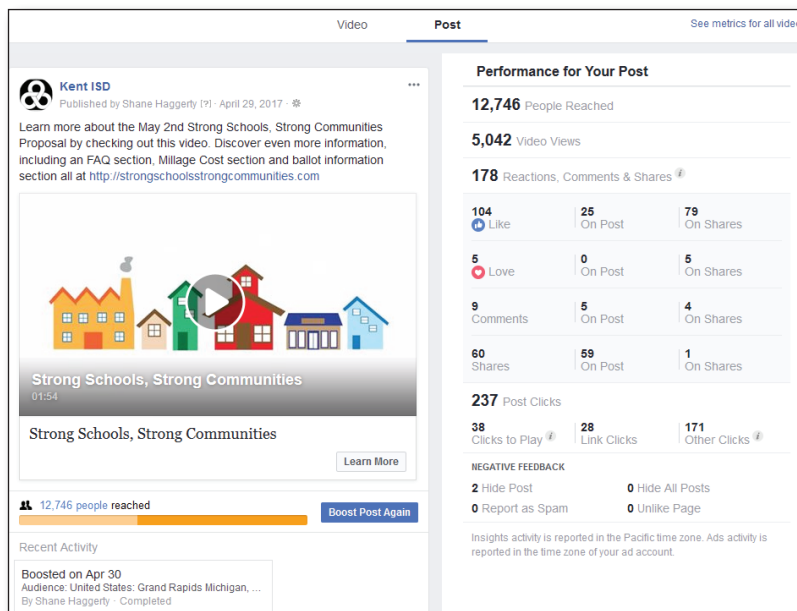
*This social media campaign plan (left and above) targeted messages based on survey respondents. Our social media consultant followed this plan posting to Kent ISD's facebook and several of our school districts who gave him access to their accounts.*

*Example and analytics of a boosted post which linked to a local media story explaining what an enhancement millage is and how it works.*

SUPPORT MATERIALS: *Communication/Implementation Cont.*



*An animated video* was developed and produced to appeal to parents and staff. It quickly explained the funding issues, main points of the millage and what the dollars would be used for. Released roughly a week before the election, it garnered nearly 60,000 views across multiple platforms.



*Analytics of a facebook ad promoting the animated video.*

SUPPORT MATERIALS: *Communication/Implementation Cont.*



Messages displayed on our electronic sign on a main highway reminded voters to go to the polls on May 2, then thanked them for their support after the election.



*A second animated video* circulated through social media and thanked the community for their support.

**Kent ISD**  
Published by Katie McClintic (7) · May 3, 2017 ·

Huge thanks to all our voters for supporting our students and all of our local communities!

**STRONG Schools**  
**STRONG Communities**

Thank you!

12,715 people reached

Boost Post Again

Recent Activity

Boosted on May 03  
Audience: United States: Byron Center (~10 mi), L...  
By Katie McClintic · Completed

View Results

559

13 Comments 45 Shares

Like Comment Share

**Performance for Your Post**

12,715 People Reached

801 Reactions, Comments & Shares

639 Like	516 On Post	123 On Shares
44 Love	37 On Post	7 On Shares
1 Wow	1 On Post	0 On Shares
7 Angry	5 On Post	2 On Shares

65 Comments

46 Shares	45 On Post	1 On Shares
-----------	------------	-------------

294 Post Clicks

123 Photo Views	1 Link Clicks	170 Other Clicks
-----------------	---------------	------------------

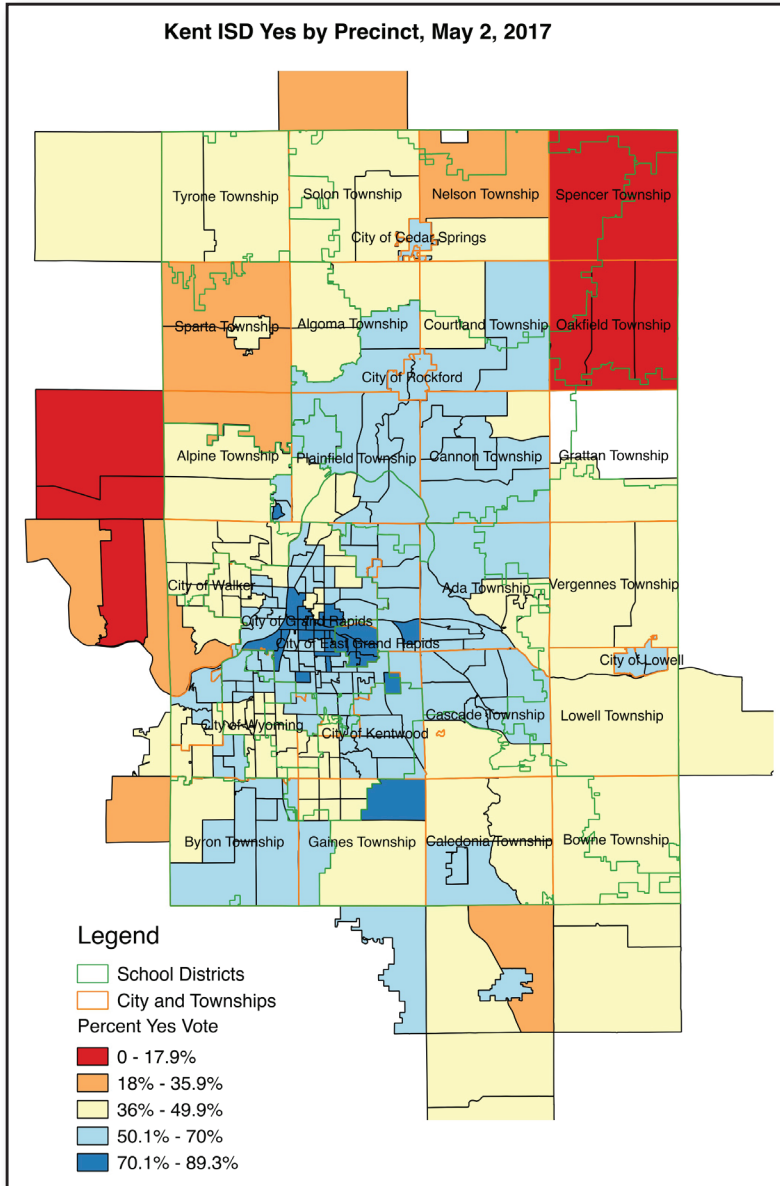
**NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**

12 Hide Post	5 Hide All Posts
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlike Page

Insights activity is reported in the Pacific time zone. Ads activity is reported in the time zone of your ad account.

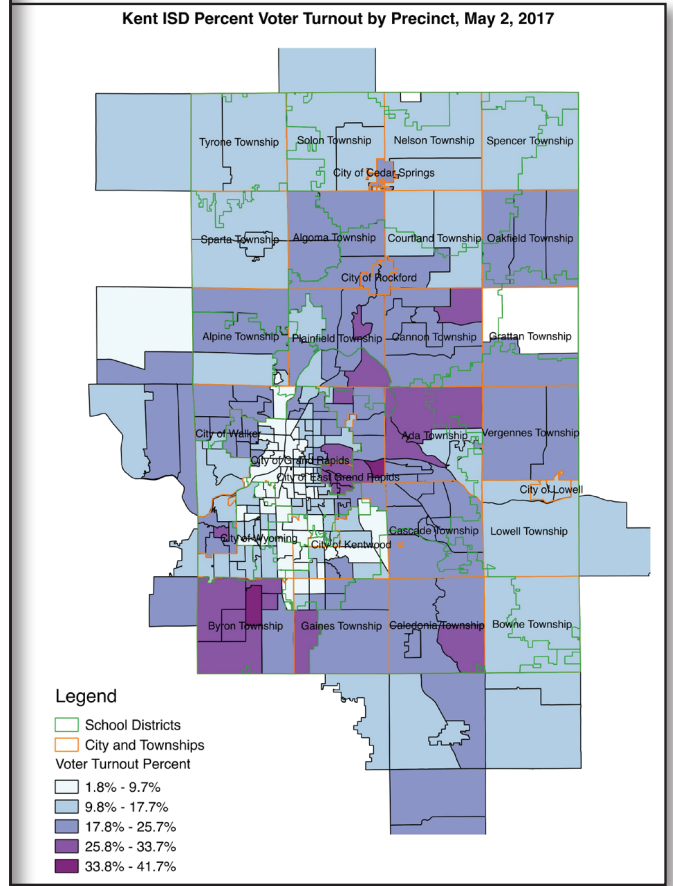
After the election we thanked voters for their support via social media. Here's an example post and data.

# SUPPORT MATERIALS: *Evaluation*



Left: Map of “yes” voters and concentration throughout the county.

Below: Map showing voter turnout.



N

SCHOOLS
DISTRICT
SERVICES
GET INVOLVED
NEWS & EVENTS
COMMUNITY
CONTACT US

Enhancement Millage Resources in Action in our Schools

**28 Feb Enhancement Millage Resources in Action in our Schools**

Posted at 09:28h in Northview Public Schools by Northview Public Schools · 0 Likes · Share

Sent on behalf of the communications department at Kent ISD:

**DISTRICTS CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS**

**Enhancement Millage Uses Match Parent Priorities in Education**

Grand Rapids, MI – Expanded opportunities for students to prepare for college and careers, reduced class sizes, more engaging instructional methods and additional support for students struggling in math and reading are among the leading ways the 20 districts served by Kent ISD are deploying new resources from the Strong Schools, Strong Communities millage.

Voters in May, 2017 approved the Strong Schools, Strong Communities enhancement millage which provided approximately \$20 million in additional resources for schools in the 2017-18 school year, and collections will continue for 10 years. Schools are using those resources to create new career exploration and preparation opportunities for students, expand science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) programming, and to maintain and reduce class size.

You can learn how your district is supporting improved student achievement and creating new opportunities for students through these new millage revenues by clicking on your district name at [this link](#).

**N** Northview Public Schools

**Find Information**

Search Here

**Quick Navigation**

- District Calendar
- Food Service
- Northview District Newsletter
- District Staff Directory

**Recent News**

- Crossroads Middle School (28)
- East Oakview (8)
- Family Resources (6)
- Friday Folder – North Oakview (16)

Many of our districts have created webpage dedicated to updating their communities on how they're using the enhancement dollars.



**KENT ISD  
FACEBOOK ADVERTISING  
Strong Schools, Strong Communities Proposal  
Measurement Report**



**Pre-Campaign Boosted Posts (Nov-Dec 2016)**

2,624 engagements (views, likes, comments)  
39,775 reach (saw the ad)  
2,116 actions taken (link clicks)

**COST: \$875**



**Campaign Boosted Posts (Jan-May 2017)**

17,705 engagements (views, likes, comments)  
59,019 reach (saw the ad)  
10,572 actions taken (link clicks)

**COST: \$2,090.82**



**Full Campaign Ad Placements (Nov 16-May 17)**

59,707 engagements (views, likes, comments)  
190,820 reach (saw the ad)  
61,017 actions taken (link clicks)

**COST: \$3,774.44**

**+914**

The number of fans gained on the Kent ISD Facebook page from start of effort through May 3, 2017

**\$6,740.26**

Total cost of boosted posts and ad placements for the campaign

**73,705**

Total link clicks to the Strong Schools, Strong Communities website

**80,036**

Total engagements with Facebook ads during the campaign

**289,614**

Total reach of Facebook ads run during the campaign

**52,280**

Video views of the Strong Schools, Strong Communities information video during campaign