



Whitehall District Schools

2025 Operating Millage

Q & A

VOTE Tuesday, May 6, 2025
On or Before

Why does Whitehall District Schools have this millage?

Since 1994, all public schools in Michigan are required to levy an operating millage as part of the state's school funding system. 18 mills are required for the district to receive the full per-pupil foundation allowance.

Is this a new or additional tax in Whitehall?

The non-homestead operating millage was first levied in 1994 and has been continuously levied since then. Whitehall District Schools (WDS) voters have periodically approved this millage over the years.

Why 20 mills?

By law, Michigan schools can only collect up to 18 mills for operating costs. However, when property values rise faster than inflation, the Headlee Amendment automatically reduces the millage rate. That's why the district is requesting 20 mills instead of just 18. This is to build in a protection against falling below the 18 mills, as happened in 2024. This won't allow WDS to collect more than 18 mills; it simply helps protect funding from being reduced in the future.

Why now?

The district is asking voters to consider extending the operating millage for another 10 years. The last time this millage was approved was on May 5, 2015, at a rate of 18.5 mills. Due to the Headlee rollback, that rate dropped below 18 mills in 2024.

What is the current operating millage rate for Whitehall District Schools?

In 2024, the district levied 17.9832 mills due to a Headlee reduction from the 18.5 mills originally approved in 2015. As a result, WDS did not receive its full per-pupil funding because it was unable to levy the full 18 mills required.

What does this money pay for?

Revenue from the operating millage goes into the district's General Fund, which supports day-to-day operations—including salaries for teachers and staff, classroom supplies, transportation, utilities, and other essential services.

Why is a non-homestead millage important to Michigan schools?

All school districts must levy 18 mills on non-homestead property—such as businesses, vacation homes, rental properties, and other investment properties—to receive their full foundation allowance (per-pupil funding) from the state. If a district cannot levy the full 18 mills, it does not receive its full funding. If this proposal is not approved, WDS could lose approximately \$4,178,297 in funding for the 2026 tax year.

More questions? Please reach out to Superintendent, CJ Van Wieren

Office Phone: 231.893.1010

Email: cjvanwieren@whitehallschools.net