

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Kalamazoo RESA Career & Technical Education (CTE) Millage Proposal would fund systemic redesign of K-12+ CTE**

*Survey finds support among voters*

PORTAGE, MICH. — On Tuesday, Nov. 5, Kalamazoo County voters will decide on the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA) Career and Technical Education (CTE) Millage Proposal. The one-mill property tax increase would be levied over 20 years to help fund a redesign of career and technical education programs and services available to all students in KRESA's service area. Under the plan, expanded career exploration and planning would begin as early as elementary school with work-based learning and skill training following in high school through early college.

The current CTE system, Education for Employment (EFE), is a decentralized consortium. Students take classes at several high schools, area businesses and community-based organizations across the county, as well as Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

"While historically sound, this current model is not designed to produce the robust career preparation that our students and employers need," said Dave Campbell, Kalamazoo RESA Superintendent.

The changing demands in our local labor market and the global economy for highly skilled workers has created a worker shortage and a skills gap for regional employers. Many students graduate without the support or training they need to find meaningful, successful employment.

"Our rapidly changing society and economy are making it much more complex to be a young person trying to find their way," said Campbell. "When young people learn marketable skills through CTE, it gives them hope and a plan."

At a time when post-secondary education is more expensive than ever, offering students comprehensive career exploration and planning along with marketable, high-skill training is more important than ever. A comprehensive redesign of CTE would improve access to training and better support our students and community. In a recent survey, potential voters agreed. EPIC-MRA, an independent research firm, polled 400 active and likely voters within the Kalamazoo RESA service area and found that 73 percent of respondents were in favor of the KRESA CTE Millage Proposal. After receiving more information about the proposal, overall voter support increased to 76 percent.

In addition, the survey found:

1. 89% of all respondents agreed: "Receiving job training in the workplace will offer students actual experience in career areas where they expressed an interest, help them decide if the career choices they make are right for them, and also help them land a job."
2. 87% of all respondents agreed: "Students who complete career technical education courses will likely be able to earn a certificate in the career area they have chosen which they can show to prospective employers."
3. 85% of all respondents agreed: "Passage of the CTE proposal will make sure our career and job training programs are able to ensure our children are prepared for the jobs available in today's job market and the ever-changing job market of the future."

4. 84% of all respondents agreed: "Redesigned and expanded CTE programs will strengthen partnerships with area employers and area colleges, which can prepare students for the high-tech, high-wage jobs of the future."
5. 82% of all respondents agreed: "an enhanced CTE program will enable our children to learn the skills needed for the jobs available, as well as allow them to earn a good living and raise their families here, which makes the tax increase well worth it."

The KRESA CTE millage proposal will appear on the Nov. 5 ballot. Registered voters in the Kalamazoo RESA service area are eligible to vote. If approved, the millage would provide:

- Increased equity, efficiency and quality of CTE programming, kindergarten through early college
- More career readiness coaches exposing more students to potential careers
- A centrally located career center with additional specific career-focused off-site satellite campuses
- Efficient transportation so more students can participate
- State-of-the-art technology and equipment to prepare students for high-demand, high-skill and high-wage careers
- More instructional support staff to help students who are at-risk and those with disabilities
- Additional training and support for students and families, including underrepresented populations
- More career planning, apprenticeships and work-based learning to help students choose the right careers
- More students earning credentials/certificates to meet the needs of employers
- Enhanced partnerships with employers and colleges to help prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy and labor market
- Graduates with the skills needed to earn a good living in the Kalamazoo area, supporting both economic and community growth.

If approved, the CTE proposal would cost a homeowner with a home with a taxable value of \$75,000 (approximate market value of \$150,000) \$6.25 per month.

Learn more about the Kalamazoo RESA CTE Millage Proposal, as well as the community and business input and extensive research and analysis behind the request, at [kresaCTE.org](http://kresaCTE.org).

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