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Dear Community Members,

Ionia Public Schools will ask voters to approve a non-homestead operating millage restoration on May 4, 2021. The proposal asks voters to approve raising the operating millage rate levied on non-homestead property to its original 18 mills, after being statutorily reduced by the Headlee Amendment (a 1978 Amendment to the Michigan Constitution), which requires a millage reduction when annual growth on existing property value is greater than the rate of inflation. During the 2020 tax year, Ionia Public Schools was impacted by Headlee, causing a reduction in the operating millage from the full statutory 18 mills to 17.7804 mills, a decrease of .2196 mills.

Approval of the ballot proposal will ensure that Ionia Public Schools receives full per pupil funding. The state funding formula assumes that each local school district will levy 18 mills on non-homestead property, with the remainder of the per pupil funding coming from the state School Aid Fund. If local districts levy less than 18 mills for operations, the state does not make up the difference.

If approved, Ionia Public Schools will be authorized to levy up to 1 mill on non-homestead property to restore the original 18 mills from 2021 through 2024. If defeated, the district will only be able to levy 17.7804 mills, resulting in a loss of revenue to the Ionia Public Schools general fund of approximately \$27,500 annually.

The Ionia Public Schools May 4, 2021 ballot proposal for operating millage restoration will not affect or increase property taxes on primary residences. The proposal will only impact non-homestead properties such as industrial, commercial, and investment property, along with vacation homes and rental properties by restoring the levy to the original 18 mills. By law, the School District cannot levy more than 18 mills for operating purposes.

Please call me if you have questions regarding the May 4, 2021 ballot proposal. You may reach me by phone at 616-527-9280.

Together we can make a difference in the lives of our students and community.

Ron Wilson is superintendent of Ionia Public Schools. The views expressed in this column do not necessarily represent the views of Ionia school elected officials, employees or students. You may contact Ron by email at rwilson@ioniaschools.org.