



## **Comstock Park Public 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.

We have also had to dip into our savings account, often called the district’s fund balance. Our enrollment has declined approximately 600 students since 2009. The corresponding revenue the district receives has therefore decreased annually with less students.

CPPS has actively sought ways every year to reduce its expenditures. For example, we have 25 less teaching staff members along with reductions in support staff, bus routes, building administration and central office staff. CPPS collaborates with Kent ISD on technology and business services to reduce personnel costs. We privatized custodial services. We share curriculum services with a neighboring district. We have entered consortiums for utilities and purchasing to lower and control costs. We estimate we have saved cumulatively about \$9.5 million in expenditure cuts or reductions since 2009.

We have utilized our savings account, the district’s fund balance, heavily the past four years to maintain student programming. After this school year ends, we will have spent approximately \$2.5 million of our fund balance the past four years for this purpose; leaving the district with about \$750,000 in our savings account. The revenue the enhancement millage would provide CPPS would be instrumental in our ability to maintain or grow student programming and opportunities.

## 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 \$430,000 in the first year.

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

Comstock Park Public Schools will use this revenue to establish vital and important components of our educational programs. Areas that have been identified include:

- K-12 instructional intervention services such as literacy coaches and math interventionists
- Stabilize and/or lower class sizes with an emphasis on lower elementary
- Sustain and expand career counseling and mental health counseling services
- Sustain and improve Advanced Placement courses, dual enrollment courses and early/middle college opportunities for high school students to earn college credit

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## 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 Ethan Ebenstein at 616.254.5000.