

The Future Moves with Us

WASHTENAW CTE MILLAGE CAMPAIGN



National School Public Relations Association
2026 GOLD MEDALLION ENTRY
BOND/FINANCE CAMPAIGN

Washtenaw Intermediate School District
1819 S. Wagner Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103
www.washtenawisd.org

- *Education Service Agency/Intermediate Unit*
- *43,232 students within the service area*
- *Communications team of 2*

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About Washtenaw Intermediate School District (WISD)

WISD is the educational service agency for Washtenaw County, Michigan, serving nine public school districts and 13 public school academies in the greater Ann Arbor region. K-12 student enrollment in the service area is 43,232 and the total countywide population exceeds 375,000, with 300,000 registered voters. WISD provides special education programs and early childhood programs from birth through age 26, plus an array of services to local schools, including business, technology, and human resources assistance, cradle-to-career community partnerships, and professional development. Washtenaw County is also home to the University of Michigan (U-M), Eastern Michigan University (EMU), and Washtenaw Community College (WCC).



Campaign Overview

In 2021, WISD began digging into countywide Career Technical Education (CTE) data. At the time, WISD was one of 15 ISDs out of 56 statewide without a dedicated millage* (local property tax levy) for CTE, despite efforts to pass a proposal dating back six decades. Washtenaw County’s nine local districts—through four separate consortiums—operated 50 state-approved CTE programs through a combination of federal and state dollars and local general funds, with access varying greatly by district. WISD received some state grants to purchase equipment for CTE programs, which helped local districts launch 12 additional programs by 2024. As a result, Washtenaw CTE enrollment grew by 69%, despite total high school enrollment declining. Programs also had waitlists due to student demand exceeding capacity.

In early 2024, WISD received a state grant to conduct a feasibility study toward countywide consolidation of CTE services, and then additional funding to implement the study’s findings and pursue CTE millage funding. Using the four-step strategic public relations process (RPIE), WISD developed a communication campaign to:

- Conduct research on past elections, voter sentiment, student access, and labor trends;
- Plan strategies to develop CTE branding and successfully pass a ballot proposal;
- Implement varied tactics to share key messages with primary audiences; and
- Evaluate success through engagement analytics, election turnout, and passage of the millage.

WISD utilized web content, digital toolkits, videos, presentations, and handouts to ensure voters understood the importance of CTE access for students and schools. Due to state law, districts can inform voters but cannot encourage yes votes. WISD leveraged community partnerships, storytelling, and transparency to build public support and reinforce the district’s reputation for student equity and opportunity. As a result, voters approved a CTE millage proposal for the first time in the county’s history in the November 2025 election.

**Note: In Michigan, ISDs have the taxing authority for countywide millage proposals that benefit all local districts.*



University of Michigan Youth Policy Lab Report (Formal, Primary)

TIMELINE: FEBRUARY 2024

WISD received state grant funding to support a feasibility study toward countywide consolidation of CTE services. The district contracted with the **University of Michigan Youth Policy Lab** to examine disparities in and barriers to access in CTE programs countywide, as well as strategies to address these inequities. Key findings in the report included:



- **All Washtenaw County students have access to fewer CTE programs** compared to students statewide.
- **Access is even more limited** for Black and Hispanic students, students who are economically disadvantaged, and students in smaller districts.
- Washtenaw County is one of the last remaining counties in Michigan that does not levy a CTE millage, and **pursing millage funding could help meet the needs of all students** through more equitable access.

Think Tank Sessions (Informal, Primary)

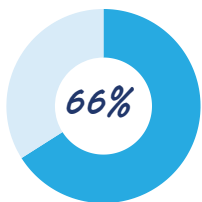
TIMELINE: APRIL - AUGUST 2024

WISD coordinated workshop sessions with industry, government, education, and philanthropy partners to seek qualitative input on charting a path forward and exploring a countywide, PreK-12 CTE model.

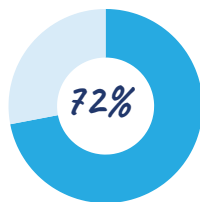
Online Survey and Focus Groups (Informal, Primary)

TIMELINE: DECEMBER 2024 - FEBRUARY 2025

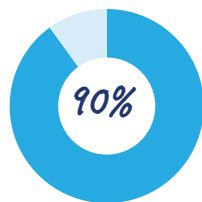
In an effort to understand perceptions of CTE in Washtenaw County, WISD contracted with Hanover Research, a professional market research firm. A total of 4,392 surveys were conducted with Washtenaw County students (grade 6-12), parents, school staff, and community members, and 61 students, parents, and business leaders participated in focus groups. High level results from the surveys included:



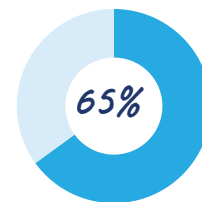
Positive overall impression of CTE



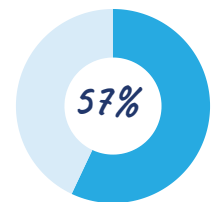
CTE is important for career skills



CTE experience was satisfactory



Insufficient funding is a barrier to access



College is necessary for career success

Key insights from the focus groups included:

- Schools should **introduce CTE/hands-on learning as early as elementary school** to shift mindsets.
- Parents recognized **societal misinformation and negative biases** about modern CTE programs.
- Some participants **recommended expanding CTE program offerings** and resources.
- Business leaders expressed **significant concern about** labor projections and **the existing skills gap**.
- Business leaders highlighted a **parental disconnect** from the lucrative opportunities in skilled trades.

Pre-Campaign Engagement Opportunities (Informal, Primary)

TIMELINE: MARCH - JUNE 2025

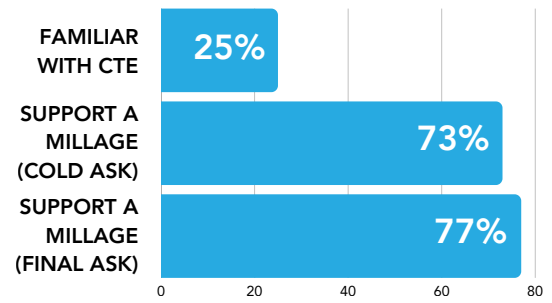
To further seek community input regarding CTE, WISD hosted a CTE summit, attended by more than 200 community members and key partners. WISD also presented to all nine local district Boards of Education, and all voted to support WISD placing a proposal on the ballot. WISD sought additional qualitative feedback through a branding workshop and the establishment of an advisory group of school and business leaders.



Formal Telephone Survey (Formal, Primary)

TIMELINE: APRIL 2025

In an effort to gain quantitative data in the final phase of research, Washtenaw ISD contracted with Epic-MRA, a professional survey research firm to conduct a formal telephone survey. A total of 600 surveys were conducted of a random sample of registered voters, with a $\pm 4\%$ margin of error. The results found a strong support for a tax increase to expand CTE programs, but a lack of general awareness of CTE.

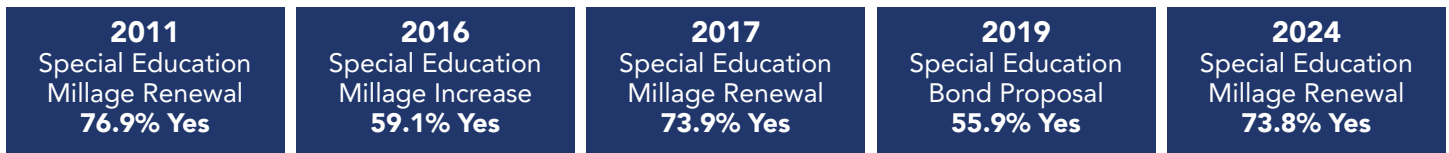


Fact Finding (Informal, Primary and Secondary)

WISD collected and reviewed supplemental data from multiple sources to help develop key messages for the campaign. This included enrollment growth and outcome data for Washtenaw County CTE students, state-level CTE information, projected job growth in CTE fields from Workforce Intelligence Network, labor market research from Hanover Research, and millage comparisons across other education service agencies.

Analysis of Election Data and Voting Trends (Informal, Secondary)

The community voters, more than 300,000 across nine districts that combine to form the WISD service area, **approved the previous five WISD ballot initiatives**, all tied to special education funding.



However, vocational or career technical education ballot proposals have not historically been supported by Washtenaw County voters. News records and election results from **four previous WISD vocational/career-focused millage proposals that failed** were reviewed. All were held as special elections, with noted low voter turnout. Economic instability, inflation, the merit of CTE over traditional academic concepts, and duplication of community college services were cited as opposition arguments in several instances.



Voter turnout in Washtenaw County during odd-year November elections has been significantly lower when compared with even-year state- and federal-heavy ballots. **In the past eight odd-year November elections, voter turnout averaged 18%.** Past results also indicated **more than half of Washtenaw voters now utilize absentee ballots**, with 85,000 registered voters on the permanent absentee ballot list.

KEY FINDINGS

- Despite 69% enrollment growth and high student demand, access remains inequitable and limited.
- Washtenaw County has not historically passed any CTE proposals, but surveys support moving forward.
- Surveying revealed only 25% of respondents were familiar with CTE in Washtenaw County.
- Washtenaw County has no clear definition or brand identity for CTE programs.
- School, business, and community leaders are unified in their vision and commitment to students and CTE.



Goal Statement and Objectives

Washtenaw County supports and sustains a unified Career Technical Education (CTE) model where all students can explore their passion, purpose, and potential through hands-on experiences, real-world opportunities, and pathways that lead to college and career success.

OBJECTIVE 1

At least 51% of Washtenaw County voters in the November 4, 2025 election will approve a ballot proposal to establish a 10-year, 1.0 millage to support CTE programs, with at least 20% voter turnout.

OBJECTIVE 2

Increase countywide awareness of Washtenaw CTE programs by 25% between May 1 and December 1, 2025.

Primary Audiences

Washtenaw ISD staff and families

Local public school teachers and administrators

Regional business and industry leaders

Postsecondary partners (U-M, EMU, WCC)

Families with school-age children

Community groups and associations

Union groups and labor organizations

Likely off-cycle election voters

Key Messages

- Career Technical Education (CTE) provides hands-on learning and real-world skills in high-wage, high-skill, in-demand pathways, opening doors to college, careers, and beyond.
- CTE programs support businesses and the local economy by building a skilled talent pipeline.
- Students are demanding more CTE opportunities, but access is limited for all students.
- Washtenaw County lacks sustainable CTE funding, and grants are expiring.
- The millage proposal would cost about \$0.54 per day based on average taxable home value.

Budget and Staffing Resources

WISD had a budget of \$60,000 for the millage informational campaign, including digital advertising, yard signs and banners, mailers, and print materials for WISD and local districts. Separate, additional funding through a state grant was available for non-millage expenses, including a budget of \$100,000 to increase community awareness of CTE through general marketing.

Strategies and tactics were supported through district staff resources, including the following key positions:

- **Director of Communication & Public Relations:** Oversee campaign strategies, messaging, and budget; manage communication toolkits; train staff and volunteers; liaise with news media.
- **Communications Specialist:** Execute campaign tactics; lead creation of visual assets; build web content; assist with strategies and messaging; collect data and campaign metrics.
- **CTE Director & CEPD Administrator:** Lead community presentations; identify external partnerships with community leaders; assist with messaging; support CTE team and advisory group.
- **Superintendent:** Lead the CTE advisory group; support local district leadership; assist with presentations.
- **CTE team members and local district staff (via a millage committee):** Provide leadership, community engagement, and support as needed.



Strategies and Tactics

STRATEGY 1

Drive voter participation in the CTE millage election by reaching and educating key audiences early through multi-channel engagement.

- Launch a millage webpage with information on the funding priorities, homeowner costs, student impact, and voting.
- Leverage media relationships to generate earned print, digital, and radio news coverage for the millage proposal.
- Develop a social media “get out the vote” (GOTV) campaign with election day and voter registration reminders.
- Share millage content via e-newsletter to CTE summit attendees, industry partners, and program advisory members.
- Create and purchase millage print materials and signage for WISD and local districts to distribute, including half-sheet flyers, a millage FAQ document, stickers, magnets, indoor and outdoor banners, and “vote” yard signs.
- Send direct mail postcards with basic proposal facts to likely voters prior to absentee mailings and election day.
- Present regularly on the CTE millage to community groups (chambers, union/trades groups, service clubs, etc.).
- Sponsor a table and/or represent Washtenaw CTE at relevant community networking or family outreach events.
- Host virtual and in-person public information sessions regarding the millage and post a recording online.
- Place print and digital ads on the CTE millage in local media outlets and higher education student newspapers.

STRATEGY 2

Equip WISD staff, local school district staff, and industry partners to be knowledgeable, trusted, and active messengers regarding the millage.

- Create regularly-updated millage toolkits for local districts, educators, and business partners with community-specific talking points, social graphics, letters, flyers, and a posting timeline.
- Share a slide deck and talking points for superintendents and encourage district- and building-level presentations.
- Present to all staff at WISD Opening Day, provide ambassador training to staff groups on legal requirements for communicating publicly about the millage proposal, and include millage updates in internal e-newsletters.
- Provide regular updates and opportunities for feedback to the millage committee and CTE advisory committee, and monitored messaging from an opposition group to address inaccuracies when necessary.

STRATEGY 3

Develop a cohesive brand identity for CTE in Washtenaw County through inclusive and visually consistent, data-driven, and story-based communication.

- Create a unified Washtenaw CTE logo, branding guidelines, and a clear internal definition for CTE.
- Produce and share a narrative-driven video series featuring CTE students and modern classroom technology.
- Produce and share documentary-style video series featuring industry, community, and education leaders highlighting how CTE impacts students and businesses.
- Underwrite student journalists through Concentrate Media’s Voices of Youth program to a variety of local CTE stories, with a particular emphasis on diverse stories and experiences.
- Publish a community report on CTE in Washtenaw County that utilizes data from the research phase.
- Use WISD social media, e-newsletters, and CTE webpages to spotlight CTE partnerships, collaborative projects, and success stories, and promote grant-funded CTE pilot programs, focusing on historically underserved students.
- Utilize paid Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube ads focused on raising CTE awareness through short-form videos.
- Work with a third-party marketing firm to purchase CTE awareness online display ads.

Mid-Campaign Updates

Throughout the campaign, we continuously monitored and adapted our tactics based on feedback from school leaders and community partners, as well as misinformation or questions raised by a formal opposition group that emerged.

- Sent a second GOTV mailer closer to election day to combat misinformation from the “Vote No” group.
- Created a public document outlining specific proposed CTE programs to be expanded with millage funding.
- Followed up via email with all 137 individuals who watched the Zoom community presentation recording.
- Added additional key messaging points addressing concerns about duplicating community college efforts.
- Created many unique variations on our millage presentation and messaging to meet specific audience needs.



Timeline

	Tactic	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	
DIGITAL	Student Video Series	[Bar]										
	Voices of Youth			[Bar]								
	CTE Community Report				[Bar]							
	Earned Media Coverage			[Bar]								
	CTE Millage Webpage			[Bar]								
	Millage Toolkits				[Bar]							
	Docu-Style Video Series				[Bar]							
	Slide Deck, Talking Points						[Bar]					
	Promote Pilot Programs						[Bar]					
	Social Media GOTV							[Bar]			[Bar]	
	CTE E-Newsletter							[Bar]				
PRINT	Millage Print Materials						[Bar]					
	Stickers, Banners, Signage						[Bar]					
	Vote Yard Signs							[Bar]				
	Direct Mail Postcards							[Bar]			[Bar]	
INTERNAL	Logo and Branding	[Bar]										
	Opening Day Presentation						[Bar]					
	Staff Presentations, Training						[Bar]					
	Millage Cmte., Advisory						[Bar]					
	Staff E-Newsletter Updates						[Bar]					
OUTREACH	Community Presentations			[Bar]								
	Event Sponsorships					[Bar]				[Bar]		
	Networking Events				[Bar]							
	Public Info Sessions						[Bar]					
	Radio Program Interviews								[Bar]			
	PAID ADS	Print/Digital News Ads					[Bar]					
Social Media Video Ads					[Bar]							
Change Media Display Ads					[Bar]							

Budget Tracking

MILLAGE INFORMATION — OBJECTIVE 1

ITEM	COST
Event Sponsorship (Disability Network, A2Y Chamber)	\$2,000.00
Vote Stickers and Magnets (5,000/each)	\$1,349.99
Digital and Print Ads (local print and digital news outlets)	\$13,996.00
Yard Signs (1,100 Total)	\$6,964.00
Vinyl Banners and Retractable Banners (107 total)	\$12,210.00
Various Flyers for WISD and Local Districts	\$5,929.97
Postcards (2 mailings, 51,069 pieces total)	\$15,511.23
Meta (Facebook/Instagram) Post Boost	\$49.94
TOTAL	\$58,011.13

CTE AWARENESS* — OBJECTIVE 2

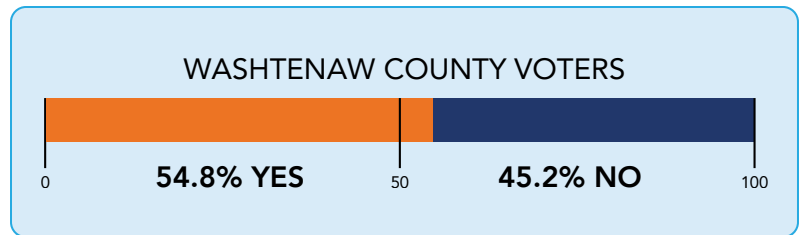
ITEM	COST
Brand Development and Student Video Series	\$81,000.00
Voices of Youth (Student Journalism Series)	\$58,000.00
Business and Education Leaders Video Series	\$40,500.00
Digital Ad Placements (Change Media Group)	\$30,435.00
CTE Community Report Project	\$29,900.00
Social Media Video Ad Campaign	\$2,705.54
TOTAL	\$242,540.54

*Grant-funded marketing to increase community awareness of CTE as part of efforts to consolidate services countywide. These ads contained no references to the millage/election.



Objective 1 - Election Results

At least 51% of Washtenaw County voters in the November 4, 2025 election will approve a ballot proposal to establish a 10-year, 1.0 millage to support CTE programs, with at least 20% voter turnout.



The November 4th ballot proposal passed, with **54.8% of Washtenaw County voters in support** (the total yes vote was 54.2%, as the WISD service area extends slightly into four other counties). We knew the margin of support would not reach the levels collected in the April polling results due to a number of factors, including an active local “Vote No” campaign opposing any tax increases, state school budget battles and delays, and growing economic concern due to inflation, tariffs, and the federal government shutdown.

WISD intentionally focused on early voting, which was reflected in a **higher margin of victory among absentee voters**, who totaled 63.4% of all voters. **Overall voter turnout in Washtenaw County was 22.6%**, exceeding the 18% odd-year election average and the 9.8% turnout for the 1991 WISD CTE ballot proposal. Broken down by district, the average growth in yes votes in 2025 was 21% when compared to 1991 results.

Objective 2 - CTE Awareness

Increase countywide awareness of Washtenaw CTE programs by 25% between May 1 and December 1, 2025.



The strongest evaluation for an increase in awareness of CTE would have been a follow-up formal telephone survey using the same process and question from the spring. However, this was **cost-prohibitive at the time and not completed**. Instead, we collected digital metrics from WISD-posted, non-millage CTE content. Although impressions do not necessarily equate awareness, our digital reach for WISD-posted general CTE awareness content exceeded our expectations, thanks in large part due to short-form video content and website traffic. This led to an engagement rate of 30%, well above Hootsuite’s industry social media benchmarks in education of between 2.2-4.2%. WISD defined engagements as likes, link clicks, comments, and shares on social media channels, WISD webpage visits, and YouTube Ad TrueViews. We hope to conduct formal polling to measure awareness again in the future when funding allows.

Reflections and Improvements for Future Projects

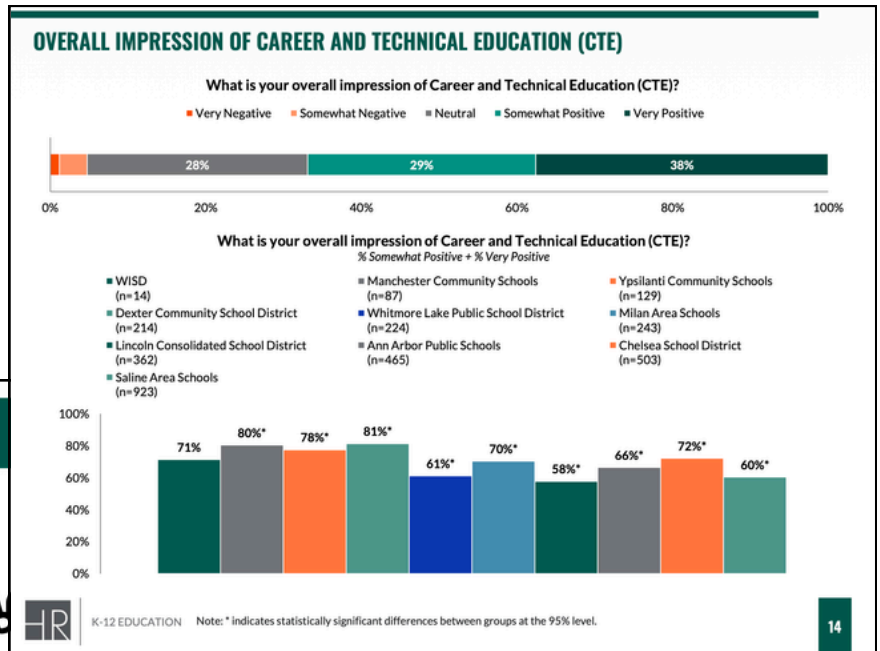
Following post-campaign reflection, we identified changes if we were to repeat this campaign, including:

- If the budget allowed, conduct formal polling/surveying after the campaign to compare CTE awareness in December with the April results to better measure success of Objective 2.
- Conduct a brushfire poll in the fall to test updated messages and gauge attitude shifts.
- Host a Reddit “Ask Me Anything,” as there were several active threads ranking highly in Google search results. We did not have an established Reddit presence, nor sufficient time to build platform trust first.
- Find ways for students and engaged elected officials to be more involved in the millage campaign.
- Place generic CTE billboards on key highway corridors. We explored this but never committed.
- Contracting with an external marketing firm led to a significant number of impressions, but the click-thru rate was well below industry benchmarks. We would reallocate those funds differently in the future.



Surveying, Focus Groups, and Benchmarking from Hanover Research

During the research phase, WISD contracted with Hanover Research, a professional market research firm, to conduct surveys, focus groups, and benchmarking analysis regarding CTE in Washtenaw County.



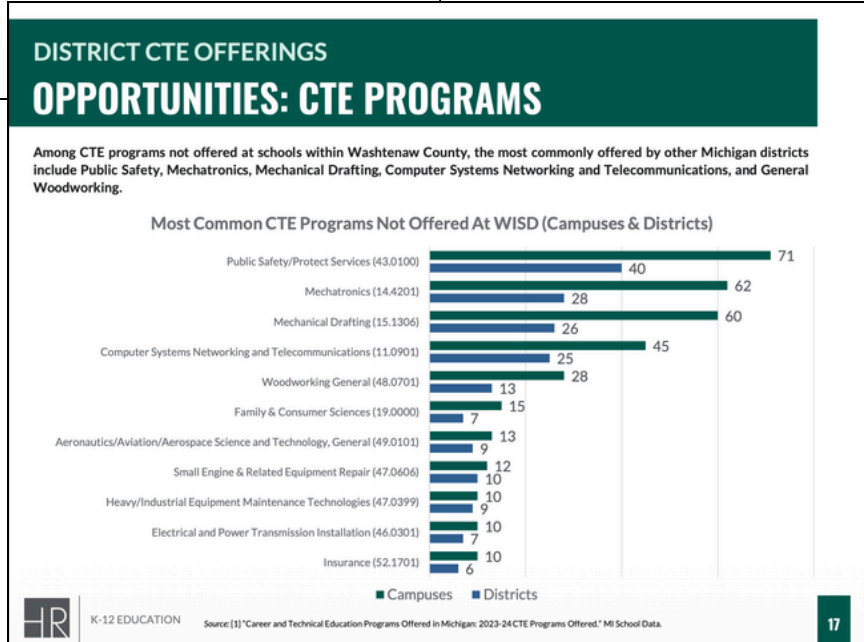
BIASES TOWARD CTE PROGRAMS

"I think the stigma in the community honestly is that you would go to a program like that if you were not successful in your classes. And school, it is still considered as a remedial or like we just got to get this kid to graduate high school, and we got to give them something."

"But didn't you just say that 'Oh, they said he's doing so well in his classes, so he shouldn't [be in a CTE program].' So that goes back to the fact that it's a remedial program with the view of the world. And that is like, Okay, well, if you can't if you're not going to survive in regular school, then you can go to this."

HR FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS

Parents recognize the importance of CTE programs and practical skills that prepare students for the workforce. Some worry that societal pressures and misinformation may dissuade other parents or students from exploring applied and experiential learning opportunities outside of college-centric ones.





Additional Information from Fact Finding

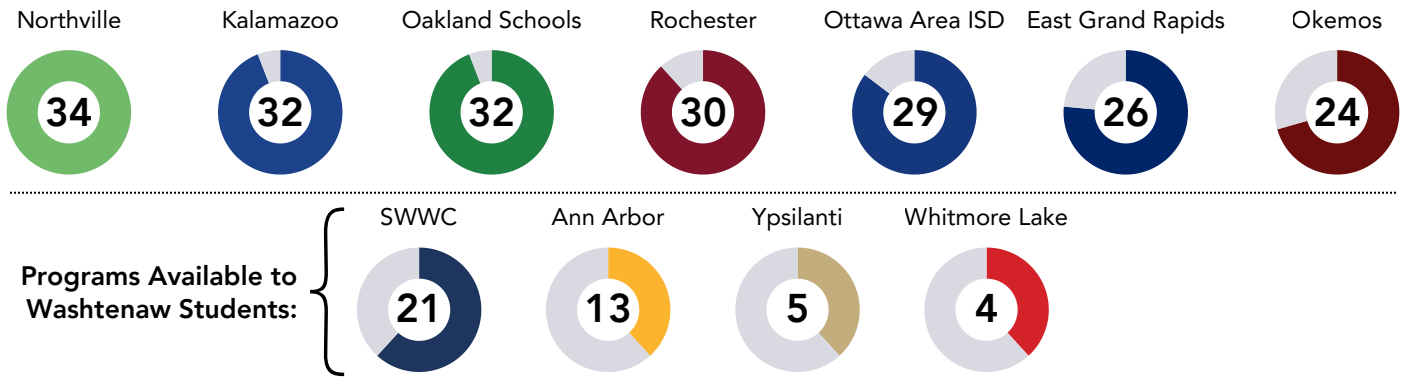
LABOR MARKET RESEARCH

Based on information collected from the Workforce Intelligence Network (WIN) for Southeast Michigan and Hanover Research, local, regional, and statewide labor market trends and economic forecasting project **significant growth by 2030 in CTE-related jobs**, such as:

- 51.2% - Nurse Practitioners
- 25.0% - Civil Engineers
- 16.6% - Mechanical Engineers
- 28.6% - Information Security Analysts
- 21.9% - Diagnostic Sonographers
- 16.2% - Chemists
- 25.2% - Software Developers
- 20.7% - Electricians
- 14.0% - Plumbers & Pipefitters

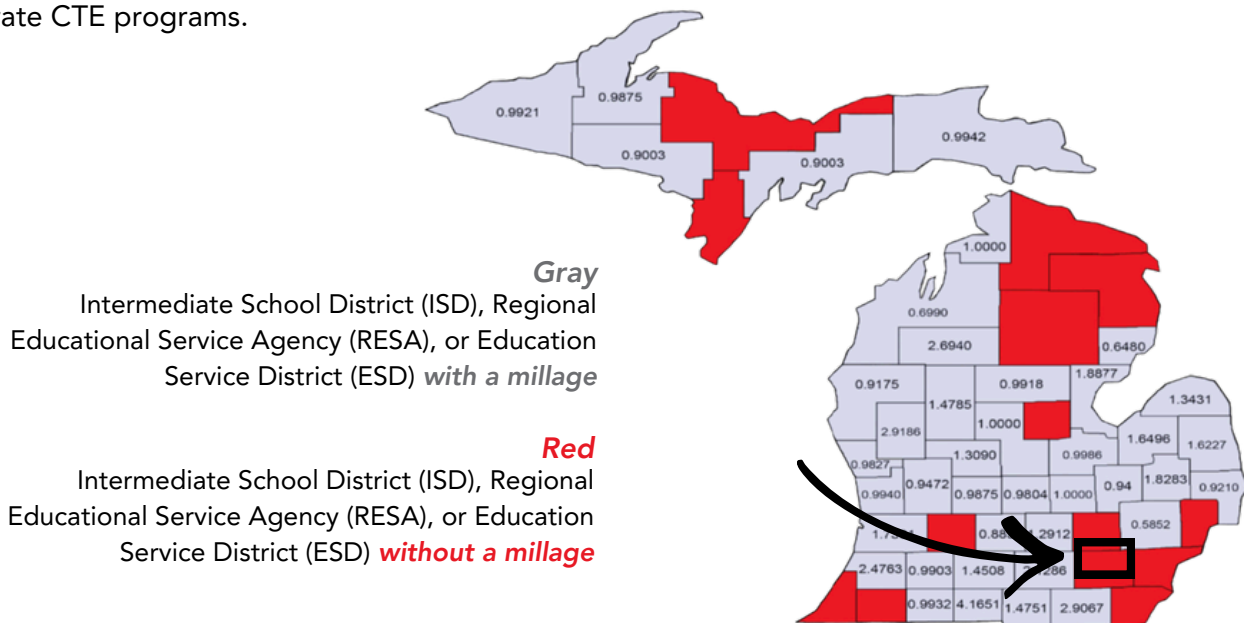
WASHTENAW CTE ACCESS COMPARED TO OUT-OF-COUNTY DISTRICTS

CTE students across Michigan have access to a greater number of unique CTE programs than in Washtenaw County. The below comparisons have similar socio-economic demographics and/or academic reputation.



CTE MILLAGES ACROSS MICHIGAN

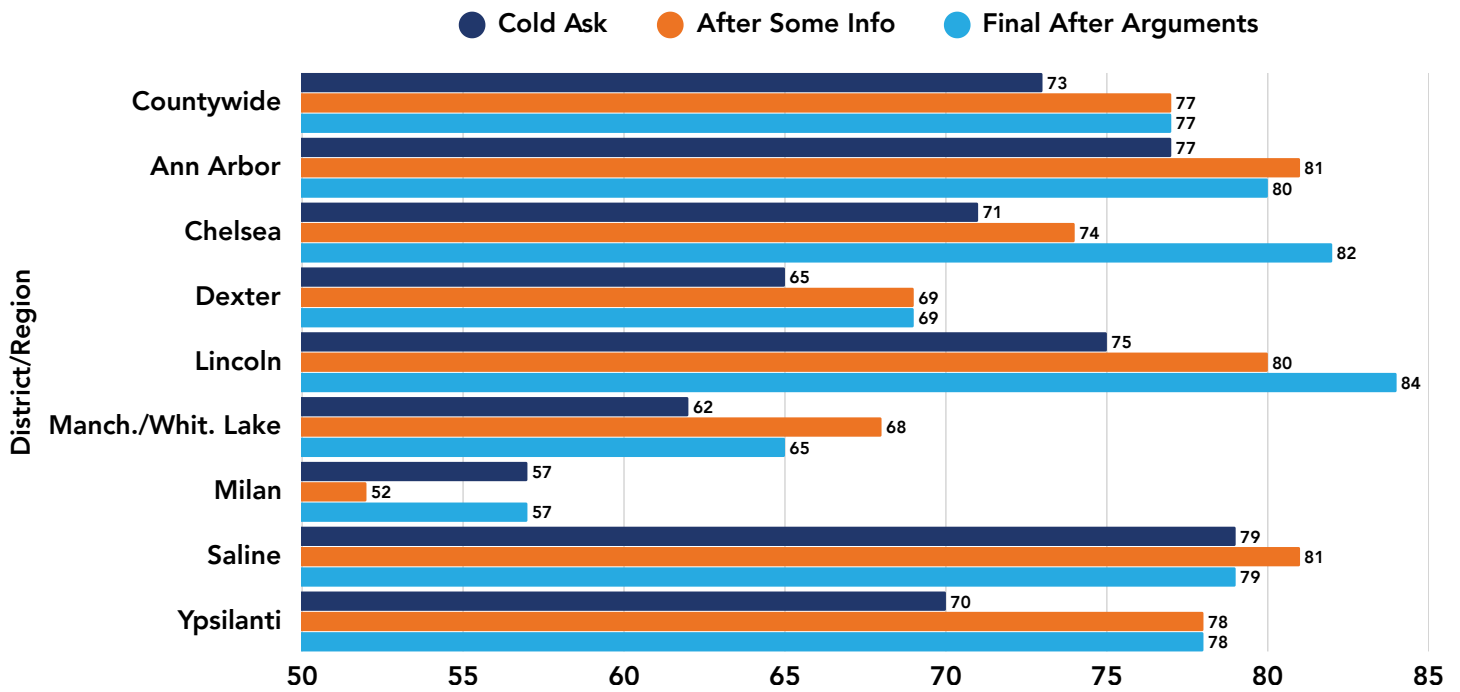
42 Michigan ISDs, or 75%, have a millage to support CTE programs. These millages range from 0.6 to 4.2 mills, and total funds collected vary because the tax rate is levied on the value of the real estate in the area. WISD estimated state and federal funding dedicated to CTE only covers approximately 28% of funds needed to operate CTE programs.





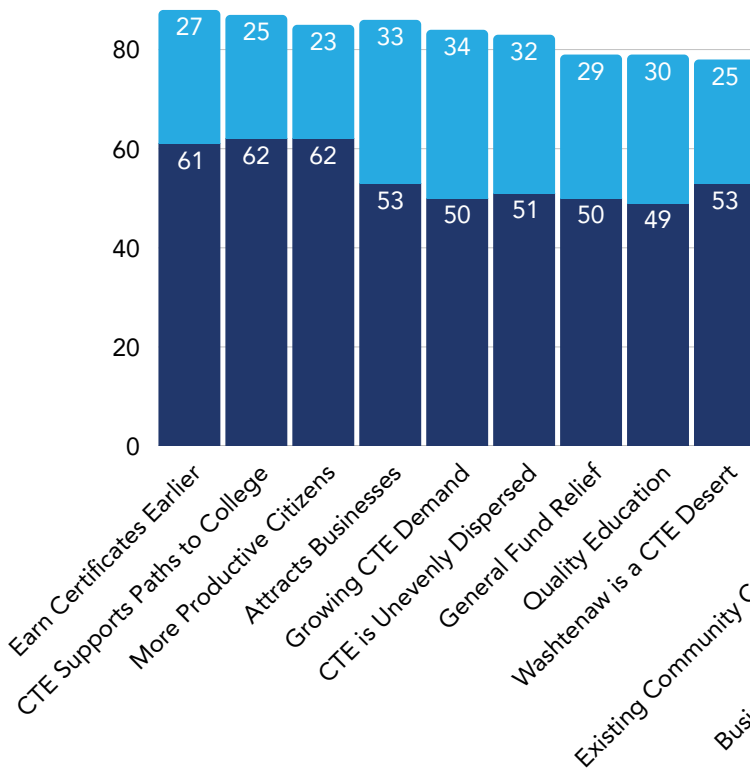
Formal Telephone Survey Results

SUPPORT FOR 1.0 MILL TO SUPPORT AND EXPAND CTE PROGRAMS



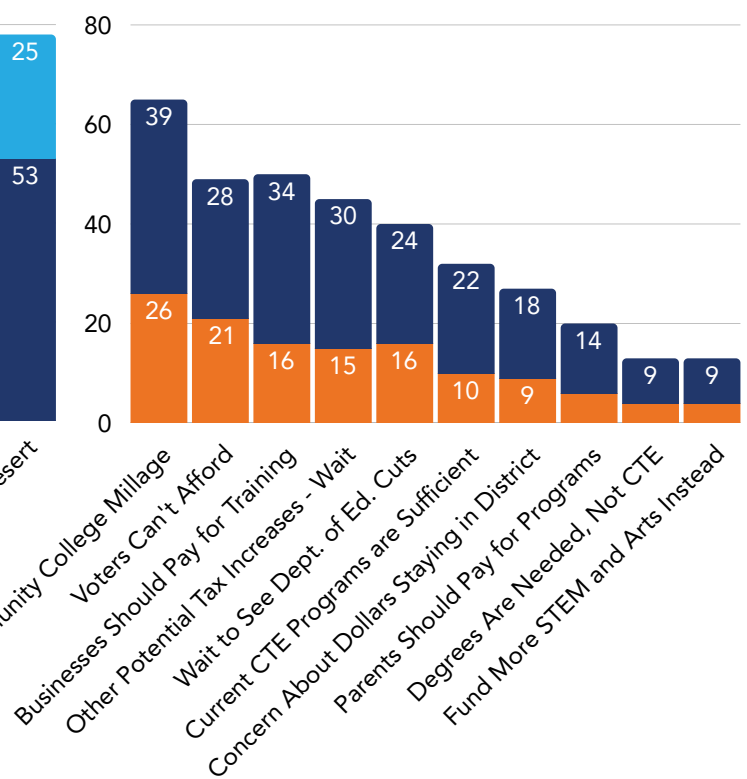
RANKED SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

Very Convincing (dark blue) Somewhat Convincing (light blue)



RANKED OPPOSING ARGUMENTS

Very Convincing (orange) Somewhat Convincing (dark blue)



SUPPORTING MATERIALS



Key Resources - CTE Branding and Awareness

WASHTENAW CTE COMMUNITY REPORT

In June 2025, WISD released a report on CTE in Washtenaw County in partnership with Forthright Advising. This was timed with the WISD Board of Education voting to move forward with the millage proposal. This served as a key document in launching our branding and many of our key messages for the project.

WASHTENAW CTE BRAND GUIDELINES

WISD partnered with Rhodes Branding to develop the Washtenaw CTE logo and brand guidelines, including a branding workshop with school leaders, students, community partners, and industry representatives.



Millage Proposal Slide Deck

WISD made more than a dozen variations of the [millage public presentation slide deck](#) to best meet the needs of various key audiences. For example, emphasizing skilled trades opportunities for labor groups versus more college-connected CTE pathways in university-oriented groups in Ann Arbor. In all, **WISD staff led more than 100 total presentations** in the months leading up to Election Day.

WHAT IS CTE?

Career Technical Education (CTE) helps students **learn by doing**, combining classroom learning with **hands-on experiences and real-world skills**. From preschool through high school, CTE sparks **curiosity**, builds **confidence**, and connects students to fulfilling college and career pathways.

Washnetaw ISD
ELECTION DAY
NOVEMBER 4, 2025

CTE Benefits Our Students, Businesses, and Communities

Washnetaw ISD
ELECTION DAY
NOVEMBER 4, 2025

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

What We're Already Doing to Support CTE

RESEARCH - Starting in 2019

- University of Michigan Youth Policy Lab reports on unequal access, 2019-2024
- Hanover Research focus groups and surveys with students, parents, and business leaders, 2024

VISIONING - Starting 2022

- Countywide superintendent work groups, 2022-2024
- Think tank sessions with industry, government, education, and philanthropy partners, 2024
- CTE community summit, 2025
- WISD forms advisory committee of school and business leaders, 2025

FUNDING - Starting in 2021

- Michigan Department of Education grants to purchase CTE equipment to launch new programs, 2021-2024
- WISD receives a state grant to explore consolidating into a countywide model, 2024

Washnetaw ISD
ELECTION DAY
NOVEMBER 4, 2025

THE 1-2-7 RULE

For every 1 job that requires a master's degree or more... → 2 jobs require a bachelor's degree and... → 7 jobs require an associate's degree, certificate or credential.

For example, for every 1 doctor, we need at least 2 registered nurses, and 7 x-ray techs, phlebotomists, EKG techs, medical assistants, surgical techs, EMTs

Source: Defining the Goal: The True Path to Career Readiness in the 21st Century, 2016

Washnetaw ISD
ELECTION DAY
NOVEMBER 4, 2025

NO SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

Limited-Time Grants

WISD has used state funds from Section 61c CTE Equipment Grants to help local districts add new programs in the last five years, and these funds are no longer available.

Programs added focused on engineering, computer science, aviation, hospitality, exercise science, and construction.

3 new programs, 14 new programs, 7 new programs

Washnetaw ISD
ELECTION DAY
NOVEMBER 4, 2025

WHAT WOULD THE MILLAGE COST?

For every \$100,000 in taxable home value, the cost is \$100 annually, or just over a quarter per day.

Taxable Home Value	Monthly Cost	Daily Cost
\$100,000	\$8.33	\$0.27
\$150,000	\$12.50	\$0.41
\$200,000	\$16.67	\$0.54

Washnetaw ISD
ELECTION DAY
NOVEMBER 4, 2025

HOW COULD FUNDS BE USED?

For 6th-10th Grade Students

Examples of 6th-10th Grade Opportunities:

- Summer career exploration camps
- Pathway elective courses
- Project Lead the Way Gateway (STEM) curriculum
- Extracurriculars and clubs
- FIRST Robotics
- Drone soccer
- Field trips
- Guest speakers
- Career Day

Washnetaw ISD
ELECTION DAY
NOVEMBER 4, 2025

WHEN IS THE MILLAGE ELECTION?

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE?

Registered voters who are residents in the school districts of: Ann Arbor, Chelsea, Dexter, Lincoln, Manchester, Milan, Saline, Whitmore Lake, and Ypsilanti

HOW CAN I VOTE?

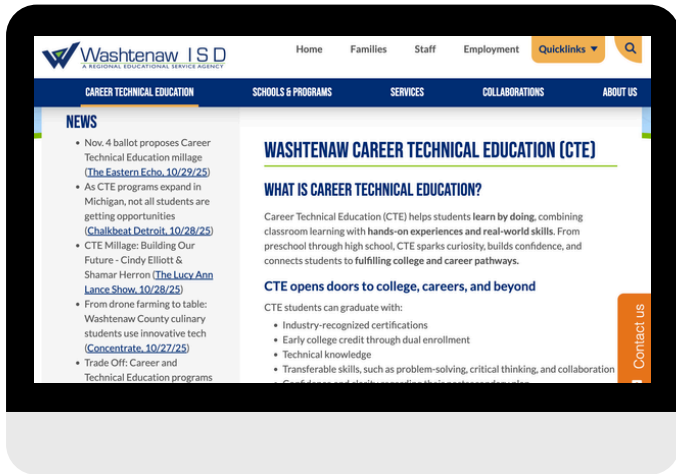
You can vote in person at your polling location on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. You can also vote early in person or by absentee ballot. Absentee ballots are available beginning September 25.

Washnetaw ISD
ELECTION DAY
NOVEMBER 4, 2025

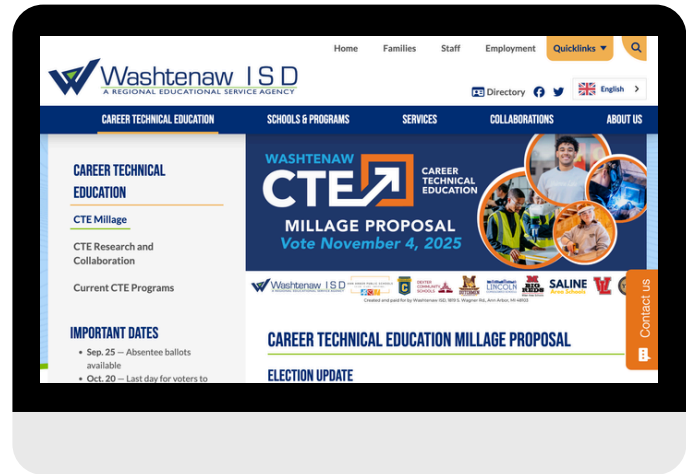


District Website

[CTE HOME WEBPAGE - 8,485 PAGEVIEWS](#)



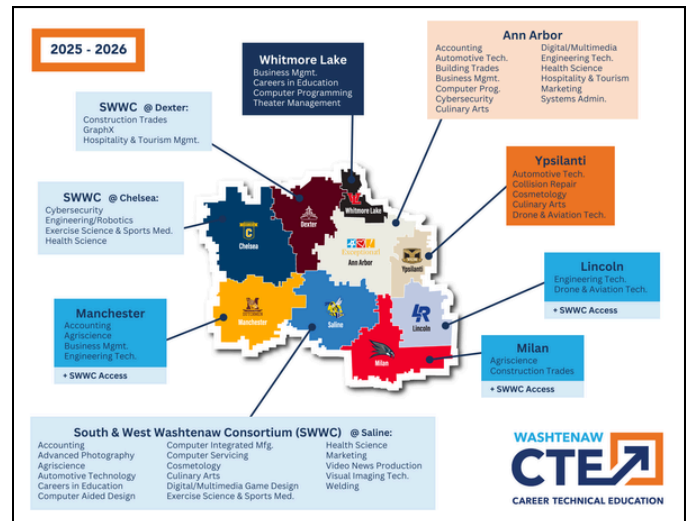
[MILLAGE WEBPAGE - 12,818 PAGEVIEWS](#)



[CTE RESEARCH WEBPAGE - 529 PAGEVIEWS](#)



EXISTING PROGRAMS MAP



Key Resources - Millage Proposal

- [MILLAGE COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT: K-12 SCHOOL DISTRICTS](#)
- [MILLAGE COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT: BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS](#)
- [MILLAGE COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT: EDUCATORS](#)
- [PRESS RELEASE: WISD BOARD ADOPTS CTE MILLAGE RESOLUTION](#)
- [SMORE NEWSLETTER SAMPLE: CTE IN ACTION / ELECTION WEEK](#)
- [SLIDE DECK: MILLAGE AMBASSADOR TRAINING](#)
- [ELECTION DOS & DON'TS FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES](#)



Voices of Youth CTE Series Partnership

Voices of Youth is a paid youth journalism training program through Concentrate Media designed to increase youth voice and civic engagement on critical local issues. WISD partnered with the Voices of Youth program for a series focused on CTE. WISD provided underwriting support and pitched story ideas, and Concentrate Media mentors worked with high school students to pursue story leads and complete articles. Articles were published online, shared with 16,000+ subscribers, and posted on social media channels.

This tactic aligned under Strategy 3 (develop a comprehensive and cohesive brand identity for CTE in Washtenaw County through visually consistent, data-driven, and story-based communication).



9

paid youth writers



30+

youth interviewed



18

articles published



826

engagements



370K+

total reach



Saline manufacturing students create adaptive tools to help people with disabilities

BY VAISHNAVI ATTILI • COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT • MAY 22, 2025

Students in Trent Trout's Computer Integrated Manufacturing class at Saline High School are learning to develop innovative real-world solutions for people with disabilities.



From builders to health leaders, these Washtenaw County professionals found their start in high school CTE classes

BY SHRUTI ATTILI • KIDS AND EDUCATION • SEPTEMBER 17, 2025

Career and technical education (CTE) programs are instrumental in preparing the next generation of builders, managers, and innovators.



Diversity in skilled trades: Women find rewarding work in traditionally male-dominated fields

BY LILLIAN GENTRY • COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT • JULY 7, 2025

In the latest installment of our Voices of Youth series, student writer Lillian Gentry interviews female students and adults about their experiences in skilled trades.



Drone pilot program offers Ypsi-area high schoolers early training for aviation careers

BY JAISHREE DREPAUL • KIDS AND EDUCATION • OCTOBER 2, 2025

A new drone aviation technology pilot program is giving students hands-on experience, mentorship, and a focus on real world skills.



From high school CTE classes to WCC to U-M, Saline native blazes his own trail in business

BY TOVA WEISS • KIDS AND EDUCATION • SEPTEMBER 9, 2025

Evan Aeschliman has forged his own path toward a career in business, progressing from high school career and technical education courses to Washtenaw Community College to the University of Michigan.



New program offers Washtenaw County students experience in business, entertainment, sports, and tourism

BY AUDRA AMBROZAITIS • KIDS AND EDUCATION • OCTOBER 30, 2025
Students in the BEST leadership program gain valuable experience to take their ambitions to the next level through hands-on learning, real industry connections, and opportunities to expose their talents.



How an Ypsi high schooler found "direction" in skilled trades after taking CTE classes

BY SARAH RIGG • KIDS AND EDUCATION • OCTOBER 13, 2025

Dylan Presley found his calling in career and technical education (CTE) classes, and he expects to go into the trades after he graduates high school.

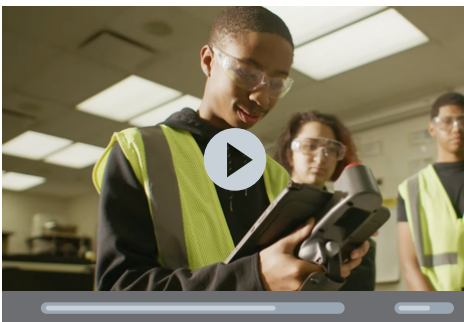
 [Click to see the full list of articles.](#)



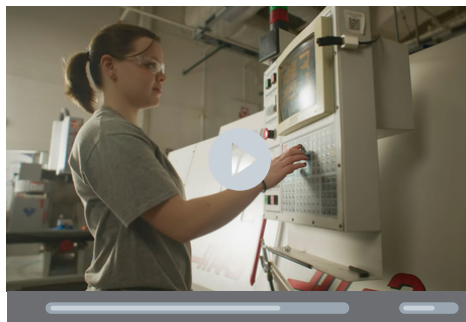
The Future Moves with Us Video Series

WISD partnered with Rhodes Branding to develop a narrative-driven video series featuring students in CTE programs to build awareness for future-focused CTE opportunities in Washtenaw County, showcasing modern technology and pathways while addressing misconceptions.. WISD then collaborated with 7 Cylinders Studio to create documentary-style videos featuring local leaders in business, education, and economic development highlighting the impact of CTE programs on students, the economy, and the broader community. The final 25-video playlist included both 90-second videos and short-form cuts.

The videos were posted on WISD’s district website, newsletters, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube and shown during public presentations throughout the community. WISD also used many of them in a Google Ads with mobile, desktop, and Smart TV placements. The metrics from this video series made up the majority of impressions and engagement data collected as part of Objective 2 evaluation.



DYLAN: YOUR LIFE DOESN'T FIT IN A BOX



GRACE: WHEN YOU CAN SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE



JAYDEN: THE SUCCESS YOU SEE



RICH CHANG, ENTREPRENEUR AND ENGINEER



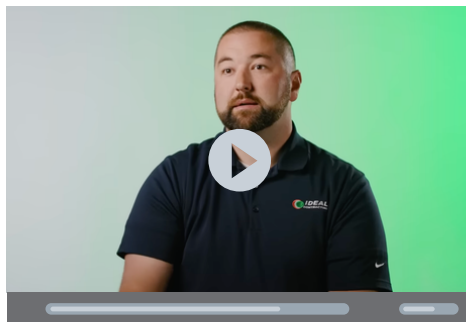
CINDY ELLIOTT, TRINITY HEALTH MICHIGAN MEDICAL GROUPS



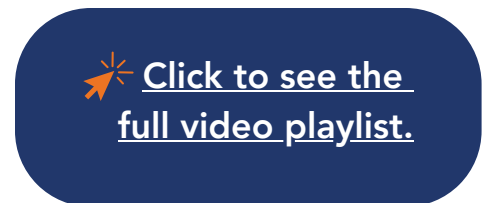
SHAMAR HERRON, MICHIGAN WORKS! SOUTHEAST



JAZZ PARKS, ANN ARBOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS



ANDREW MILKEY, IDEAL CONTRACTING





Millage Print Materials

BALLOT LANGUAGE BREAKDOWN

WASHTENAW CTE CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION MILLAGE PROPOSAL

Breaking down the ballot language

On November 4, 2025, voters in the Washtenaw ISD service area will be asked to consider a 1 mill tax to expand PreK-12 Career Technical Education learning experiences in local schools. Learn more at www.washtenawisd.org/ctemillage.

BALLOT LANGUAGE	EXPLANATION
Shall Washtenaw Intermediate School District, Michigan...	The WISD service area includes the Ann Arbor, Chelsea, Dexter, Lincoln, Manchester, Milan, Saline, Whitmore Lake, and Ypsilanti school districts.
come under sections 681 to 690 of the Revised School Code, as amended...	The applicable Michigan state law that allows ISDs to create and operate a CTE program if approved by voters.
and establish an area career and technical education program, which is designed to encourage the operation of area career and technical education programs...	The WISD would create a countywide framework to expand equal access to CTE learning opportunities for PreK-12 students.
if the annual property tax levied for this purpose is limited to 1 mill (\$1.00 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a period of 10 years, 2026 to 2035, inclusive...	The proposed millage is 1 mill for 10 years, or \$1 on each \$1,000 of taxable property value (taxable value is roughly 50% of market value).
the estimate of the revenue the intermediate school district will collect if the millage is approved and levied in 2026 is approximately \$25,020,000 from local property taxes authorized herein?	The proposed millage would collect approximately \$25 million per year in the first year and similar annual funding each year for 10 years.

GOTV POSTCARD TO ELECTION DAY VOTERS

WASHTENAW CTE CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Countywide PreK-12 Proposal

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE, CAREERS, AND BEYOND

Created with input from **educators, employers, and students** across Washtenaw County, our schools have worked together to create a plan for Career Technical Education (CTE), **preparing students in all districts for college and career** while supporting and growing our local economy through a **skilled talent pipeline**.

Register at
propose
School
Whitmore
Vote

Your Vote Matters

VOTE ON NOVEMBER 4, 2025

Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

If the CTE millage is approved, here's our plan:

- Sustain CTE programs and update labs, tools and technology to align with today's industries.
- Expand high-demand programs like health sciences, welding, and skilled trades.
- Launch new programs in entrepreneurship, drone and aviation technology, cybersecurity and more.
- Eliminate barriers so all districts have equal access.
- Continue growing partnerships with WCC, EMU and U-M to offer more dual enrollment and industry certifications for students.
- Give PreK-12 students earlier exposure to career pathways through curriculum, camps, electives, and hands-on experiences.

Created and paid for by the Washtenaw Intermediate School District
1819 S. Wagner Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103

CTE MILLAGE FAQ SHEET

WASHTENAW CTE CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

CTE MILLAGE PROPOSAL

Vote on or before November 4, 2025

On November 4, 2025, voters in the 1 mill tax to expand PreK-12 Career Technical Education learning experiences in local schools. Learn more at www.washtenawisd.org/ctemillage.

Washtenaw CTE Quick Facts

86% of students enroll in college after graduation (MDE OCTE CTEIS report, 2025)

69% student enrollment growth over the last four years (MI School Data, 2021-22 to 2024-25)

1,395 industry-recognized certifications earned in 2024 (MDE OCTE CTEIS report, 2025)

1

For every 1 job that requires a master's degree or more...

2

2 jobs require a bachelor's degree and...

7

7 jobs require an associate's degree, certificate or credential.

(Defining the Goal: The True Path to Career Readiness in the 21st Century, 2018)

A Roadmap for CTE Learning

PROPOSED K-12 PROGRAMMING

WASHTENAW CTE CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

CTE MILLAGE PROPOSAL

Vote on or before November 4, 2025

Proposed PreK-12 Exploration Opportunities

Examples of career awareness and exploration opportunities for students PreK-12 that lead to elective and state-approved CTE programs in high school.

FORMAL CURRICULA

HighScope STEM Made Simple (PreK)
Small group activities developed by preschool teachers with intentional vocabulary and skills to support emerging STEM knowledge.

NextWaveSTEM (K-12th)
Lesson plans and STEAM kits for hands-on learning in robotics, coding, drones, AI, 3D printing, sustainability, and engineering.

Project Lead the Way (PLTW) (K-12th)
Curriculum designed for college and career readiness, connecting STEM to CTE through hands-on, project-based learning.

Roadmaps and BrainVentures™ (K-6th)
Digital lessons aligned with instructional standards from University of Michigan College of Engineering's Center for Digital Curricula.

Uncharted Learning (K-12th)
Student entrepreneurship curriculum that teaches students business practices, the experimentation cycle, collaboration, and public speaking.

World of Work (K-12th)
Comprehensive curriculum aimed at early exposure to self and career exploration, connecting students with up to 78 career options.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

Classroom Mini-Grants (PreK-5th)
Teachers apply for grants for relevant projects, such as creative play centers, STEM sensory activities, and career exploration take-home kits.

Drone Soccer (6th-8th)
A competitive, team-based sport involving drones that integrates STEM principles, teamwork, and a practical understanding of aerospace.

Elementary Explorers (3rd-5th)
A rotation-based event where elementary students complete a short project or activity in various high school CTE classrooms.

Family Engagement Events (PreK-5th)
Funding for career-focused family engagement events, such as Touch a Truck, career day, industry field trips, and more.

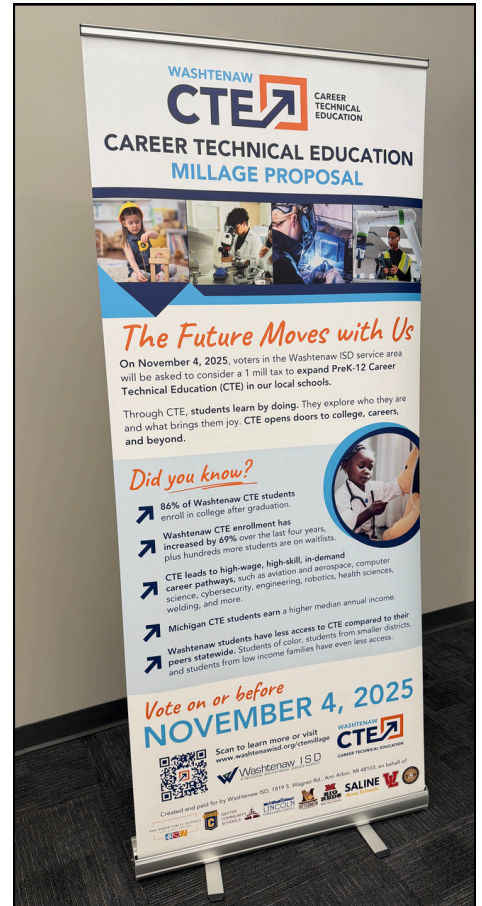
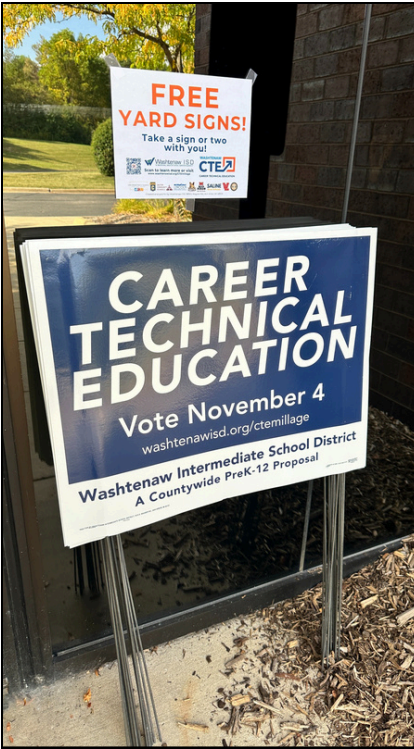
From Curiosity to Career (6th-8th)
A 9-week program where high school CTE students and instructors teach industry-connected lessons in advanced manufacturing.

Summer Career Camps (PreK-8th)
Low-cost, one-week summer camps where younger students explore various career pathways through hands-on activities.

Learn more about Washtenaw CTE and the millage proposal at www.washtenawisd.org/ctemillage



Signage and Banners





Samples of Social Media Graphics



Meet Grace
ANN ARBOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“CTE has transformed my life in many ways. I’ll be attending college in the fall, and I’m grateful to be taking my CTE experiences with me.”



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Meet Dylan
YPSILANTI COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

“The CTE program provided structure, opened multiple doors, and gave me opportunities in robotics, engineering, and aerospace. ”



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Meet Jayden
WHITMORE LAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“CTE has allowed me to learn about myself and skills I never knew I possessed, preparing me for the world beyond high school.”



Created and paid for by Washtenaw Intermediate School District, 1819 S. Wagner Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103



WASHTENAW CTE
CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSIONS

3 OPTIONS!

Tuesday, September 16 @ 5:30 pm
via Zoom Webinar (register for link)

Wednesday, September 24 @ 5:30 pm
In-person at Washtenaw ISD
1819 S. Wagner Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103


Thursday, October 9 @ 5:30 pm
In-person at Washtenaw ISD
1819 S. Wagner Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Created and paid for by Washtenaw Intermediate School District, 1819 S. Wagner Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103

WASHTENAW CTE
CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

ELECTION DAY IS NOVEMBER 4TH!
PreK-12 Career Technical Education Millage

Still need to learn more?





Watch the informational Zoom Recording

- ▶ Convenient
- ▶ On-demand
- ▶ Watch anywhere

Visit www.washtenawisd.org/ctemillage

Created and paid for by Washtenaw ISD, 1819 S. Wagner Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103 on behalf of:





ELECTION DAY

Today is Election Day!
POLLS OPEN 7 AM-8 PM

WASHTENAW CTE
Career Technical Education
Countywide PreK-12 Proposal


Created and paid for by Washtenaw ISD, 1819 S. Wagner Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103 on behalf of:



WASHTENAW CTE
CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

DID YOU KNOW?

A CTE millage would expand countywide access from preschool through graduation.



PreK *wonder*
Children utilize play and imagination, sparking curiosity about how the world works.

awareness **K-5**
Students discover personal interests and a sense of self, expanding their view of what is possible.

6-8 *exploration*
Students explore their interests and skills, and match them to potential careers pathways.


preparation **9-12**
Students connect academic content to careers through real-world, applied and experiential learning and plan for their future.

COLLEGE
APPRENTICESHIP
WORKFORCE
MILITARY


Created and paid for by Washtenaw Intermediate School District, 1819 S. Wagner Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103

WASHTENAW CTE
CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

DID YOU KNOW?

86% 


of Washtenaw CTE students enroll in college after graduation.




Created and paid for by Washtenaw Intermediate School District, 1819 S. Wagner Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103

WASHTENAW CTE
CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

DID YOU KNOW?

High school CTE enrollment has grown by **69%** 

in four years, with hundreds still on waitlists.

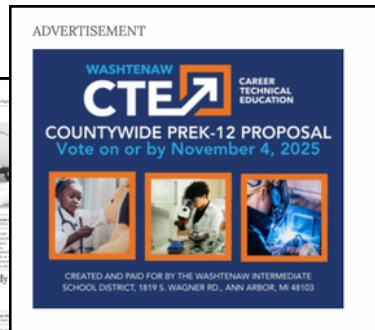
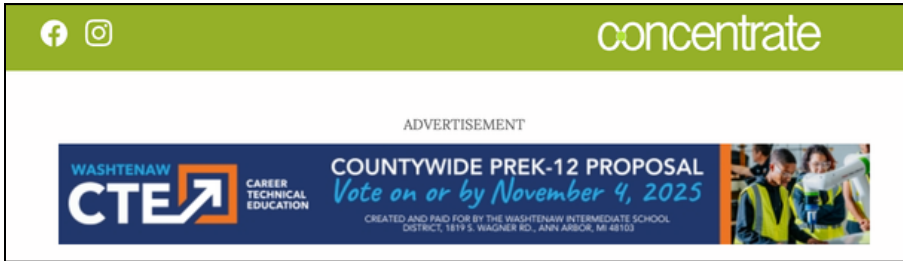


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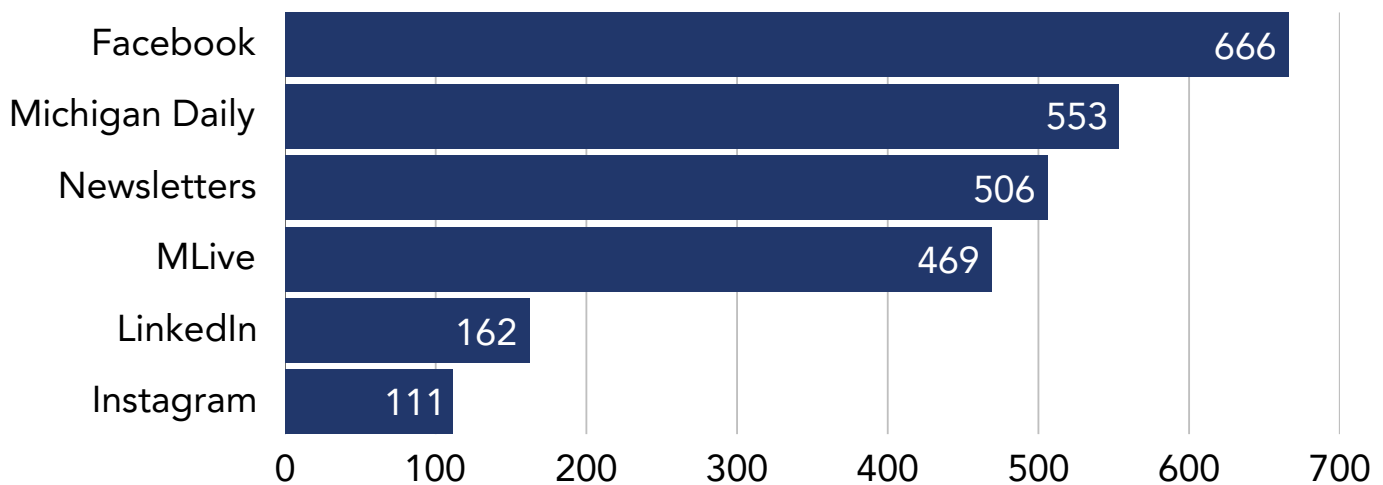
Millage Digital Newspaper Ad Samples

WISD purchased millage print ads in MLive, the Ann Arbor Observer, and the Ypsilanti District Library's fall newsletter, and digital ads in the Ann Arbor News, U-M's Michigan Daily, and EMU's Eastern Echo.



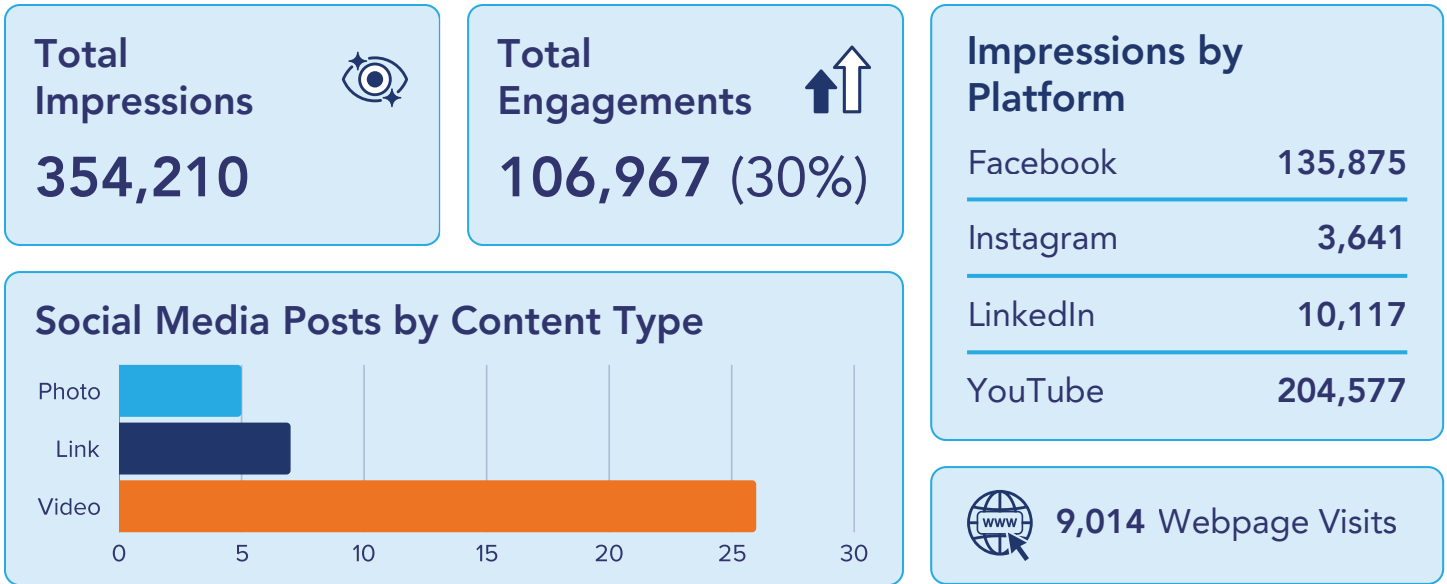
Digital Metrics - CTE Millage Election Information

● Engagements by Platform





Digital Metrics - CTE Awareness (Objective 2)



Generic CTE Web Display Ad Creative Samples - Change Media Group

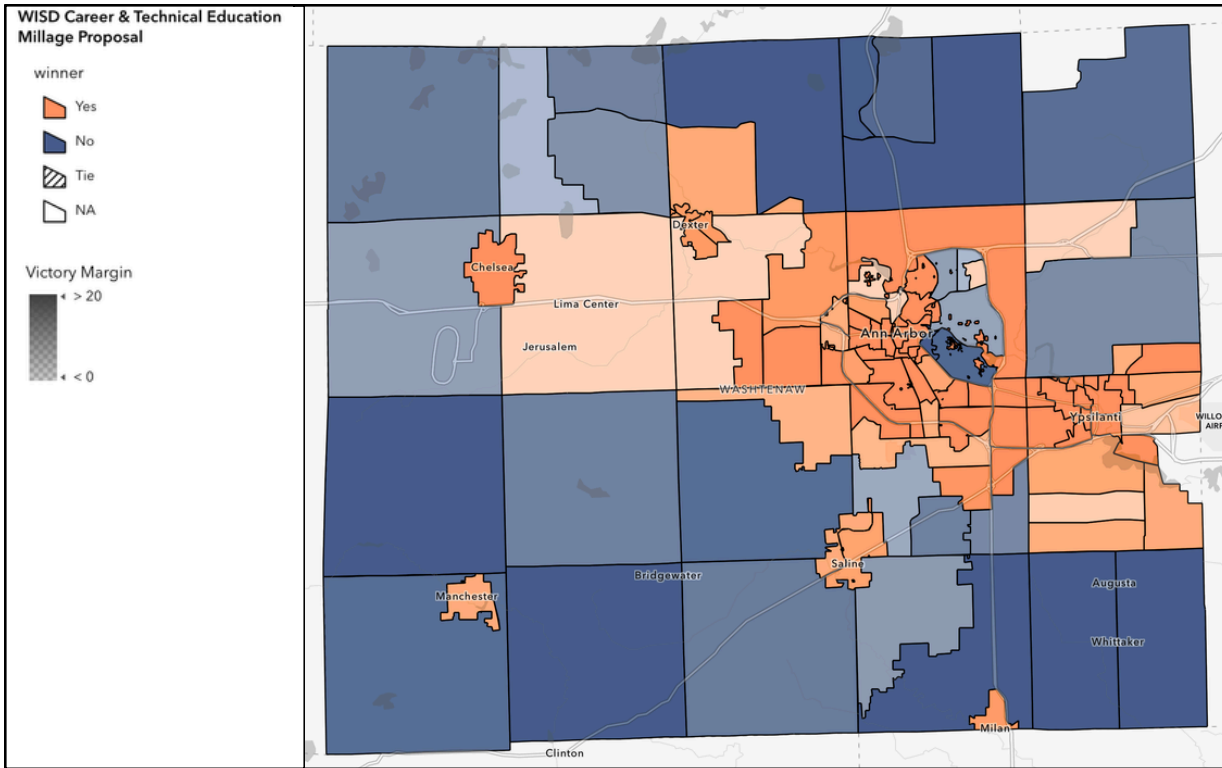
WISD partnered with Change Media Group, a third-party marketing firm, to place geofenced digital display ads with generic CTE awareness messaging across social media, news, and sports websites. The ad creative used movement to transition between the two images, was sized for inline posts and banners, and was responsive for mobile devices. The ads totaled 1,664,414 impressions and 6,316 engagements.





Election Results

YES VOTE HEAT MAP



2025 EARLY VOTING COMPARISON

Our analysis of election data and voting trends indicated that a majority of Washtenaw County voters cast absentee ballots. In response, we strategically concentrated much of our outreach in the period leading

Vote Type	Total	Vote Type %	Yes Votes	No Votes	Outcome %
Absentee	41,636	64%	23,539	18,097	57% / 43%
Early In-Person	745	1%	435	310	58% / 42%
Election Day	23,242	35%	11,973	11,269	52% / 48%

up to the mailing of absentee ballots, maintained a consistent communications presence thereafter, and implemented an additional push as election day approached. The emphasis on absentee ballot timing, combined with the opposition campaign gaining momentum closer to election day—appears to correlate with the stronger margin of support among early voters.

COMPARING 2025 AND 1991 RESULTS

While all school districts saw an increase in support for a CTE millage in 2025 when compared to the near-identical ballot question in 1991, much of our efforts were targeted to the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti areas, where 1) there is a higher concentration of voters; and 2) student access is historically inequitable. The three school districts in those areas saw some of the highest “yes” vote percentages overall, in addition to some of the largest growth percentages over 1991 election results. This data appears to correlate with our efforts to focus our messaging on increasing access and equity in these communities.

District	1991 Yes %	2025 Yes %	Change
Ann Arbor	38%	57%	+19%
Lincoln	27%	53%	+26%
Ypsilanti	27%	60%	+33%



Thank you, voters!

**CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION
MILLAGE PROPOSAL PASSES**

