

Special Education Millage Renewal - Tuesday, May 6, 2025

Frequently Asked Questions

What is MOISD?

MOISD stands for Mecosta Osceola Intermediate School District.

What local public school districts are served by MOISD?

- Big Rapids Public Schools
- Chippewa Hills School District
- Crossroads Charter Academy
- Evert Public Schools
- Morley Stanwood Community Schools
- Reed City Area Public Schools

Does MOISD provide special education services to students who attend private schools, too?

Yes. Students who attend private schools and have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), are eligible to receive special education services from MOISD through a Non-Public Service Plan. Non-Public students are not eligible to receive special education programming; however, students can receive services such as speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and school social work if they have been found eligible for those services.

What is the special education millage for?

The special education millage provides dedicated funding to support students with disabilities in Mecosta and Osceola Counties. Special education programs and services are legally required under state and federal law, but state and federal funding cover only a portion of the costs. The special education millage helps fill the funding gap, ensuring that students receive the services they need without overburdening local district budgets.

Special education services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Specialized testing to determine if a student has a disability
- Speech therapy
- Physical therapy

- Occupational therapy
- Social work services
- Hard-of-hearing and visual impairment services

What types of disabilities do students in MOISD districts have?

Students receiving special education services have a range of disabilities, including:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)
- Speech and Language Impairments
- Emotional Impairments
- Cognitive Impairments
- Physical and Other Health Impairments
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Vision Impairments
- Early Childhood Developmental Delays
- Severe Multiple Impairments

What is the Education Center and where is it located?

The Mecosta-Osceola Education Center, located at 15700 190th Ave, Big Rapids is part of the Mecosta-Osceola Intermediate School District (MOISD). This center provides specialized educational programs for students with diverse and complex needs, including those who require intensive services.

- Preschool to High School Programs: Serving students from preschool through 12th grade, the center offers classrooms tailored for students with Severe Cognitive Impairments (SCI), Moderate Cognitive Impairments (MoCI), Severe Emotional Impairments (EI) and programming for students with Autism. These programs focus on functional academics and emphasize skill development in the areas of functional communication, independence, and daily living skills.
- Transition Programs: For young adults ages 18-26, the center offers a post-high school program that concentrates on developing daily living skills, such as cooking, hygiene, and social interactions. These programs aim to prepare students for greater independence and community involvement.

- The Downtown Transition Center: Located at 220 S. Michigan Avenue in Big Rapids, the Downtown Transition Center focuses on supporting young adults in transitioning to independent living and employment.

Why aren't all special education costs reimbursed by the state?

The State of Michigan allocates funds to partially reimburse each district's special education expenses, with the remaining costs expected to be covered by other sources such as property tax revenue.

How are millage funds used?

Millage funds support special education programs in local districts covering costs such as specialized equipment and technology, learning supplies, and certified special education teachers and aides. In addition, the millage funds help pay for transportation costs of special education students to the Education Center, the Downtown Transition Center, and special education classrooms located in Big Rapids and Reed City.

How much does a bus with a wheelchair lift cost?

A bus equipped with a wheelchair lift costs approximately \$150,000, depending on the features and modifications required.

On average, how many total miles do MOISD buses travel in a year to transport special education students?

On average, MOISD buses travel 330,000 miles per year.

How does the millage impact the local school districts within MOISD?

Without the millage, local districts would need to shift general education funds to cover mandated special education costs, which could lead to cuts in other programs.

Continued funding helps ensure that students with disabilities have the resources and support they need to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally.

What special education programs does my local district operate?

Each of the local school districts provide a range of special education programming designed to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. Examples include:

- Resource Programs—Academic and behavioral support tailored to meet the individual needs of students. Programming is provided in smaller, structured settings.
- Resource Programming through Co-Teaching – Students receive specially designed instruction within the general education setting with accommodations to support access to the general curriculum.
- Self-Contained Classrooms – Students receive a majority of their education in a self-contained classroom within their local school district. Examples include:

- Intensive resource programming or a program for students with mild cognitive impairment (MiCI).
- Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) programming for preschool aged children (3-5 years old).

How many students in MOISD receive special education services?

Across the districts served by MOISD, approximately 1495 students are identified as having disabilities and receive special education programs and/or services as part of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Below are the number of students with IEPs in each local school district.

These services help students access a **free and appropriate public education (FAPE)** as required by law.

Continued millage funding ensures that students with disabilities receive the resources and support they need to succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally—without negatively impacting general education programs.

What opportunities does this millage provide for students?

The millage enhances the quality of special education services by funding:

- **Inclusion programs** that integrate special education students into general education settings.

- **Vocational and life skills training** to prepare students for employment and independent living.
- **Technology and adaptive equipment** to assist students with accessing the general curriculum.
- **Individualized or small group instruction** within the classroom or an alternative location, focused on skill development specific to students' individualized plans.
- **Paraprofessional support** for academic, medical, physical, and/or behavioral support.

How does this funding support local school districts?

The millage allows local districts to:

- Retain **special education teachers and support staff**.
- Provide **specialized programs** that would be too costly for an individual district to sustain.
- Ensure **compliance with federal and state special education mandates** without taking resources from general education programs.

Is this a millage increase?

This is **not a millage increase**, but a renewal of an existing millage that ensures:

- **Continued transportation and services** for students with disabilities
- **Financial stability** for local school districts
- **Opportunities for special education students** to succeed socially and academically

Where and when do I vote?

This election is on Tuesday, May 6, 2025. You can find the location of your voting precinct and the hours for voting by going to <https://mvic.sos.state.mi.us/>

Where can I get more information?

Visit [MOISD's website](#) or call **231-796-3543**.