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Char-Em ISD Career and Technical Education millage request on the May 5, 2026, ballot

**23 programs operating in 50+ classrooms,
dozens of K-12 initiatives funded by millage**

CHARLEVOIX - On May 5, 2026, voters throughout Charlevoix, Emmet and northern Antrim counties will be asked to consider Char-Em ISD's Career and Technical Education (CTE) millage proposal. This millage has funded vocational programs throughout the ISD's 11 public school districts for 30 years, with the original millage approved by voters in 1996.

The 1.0 mill request, if approved, would keep the current 23 high school career tech programs operating across the ISD's 11 public school districts, while maintaining numerous kindergarten-12th grade initiatives such as: Char-Em Street STEM delivering science, technology, engineering, and math tools; seven summer camps; career counseling; work-based learning; and tours of businesses, colleges, and trade schools, among many other efforts and innovations.

The millage would generate approximately \$8.1 million annually from 2026-2029.

This request comes before voters every four years, with the last approval in May 2022 of 1.0 total mill. Because that millage expired on Dec. 31, 2025, by law the ballot language cannot be worded as a "renewal," explained Char-Em ISD Superintendent Scott Koziol.

"This is the millage that has provided amazing opportunities for local students over the past 30 years," said Koziol. "I believe recognition of the importance of vocational education has never been greater. This region knows the critical role of the skilled trades. We see it every day in these classrooms, where students are gaining real-world skills and knowledge to succeed in these important careers."

Funding from the millage is distributed to each of the 11 local districts in an equitable manner, based on an established formula. Each district has at least one career tech program; many districts have multiple.

Jim Rummer, long-time Char-Em ISD Career and Technical Education Director, said career tech programs provide students with employability and technical skills that they need to enter the workforce and to be college or trade school-ready.

“Char-Em’s overall career tech program is looked at as a model statewide for how to prepare students in their post-graduation pursuits,” said Rummer. “For example, our lineworker and aviation programs are helping to fill critical gaps in those industries, where retirements are outpacing new hires. The situation is the same in education with a national teacher shortage. Our Future Educator Academy is training future teachers while they are still in high school. Our welding and construction programs are consistently full, with students employable directly upon graduation.”

Rummer said each of the current 23 career tech programs offered across 50 classrooms ISD-wide all play a role in supporting communities with critical services and family-sustaining wages and benefits.

“Gone are the days of the perception that college or university was the only valuable path for students after graduation,” said Rummer. “That track is certainly extremely important for many young people. However, graduating from high school and pursuing a skilled trade is just as valuable. These are the workers who are building houses, restoring power, flying airplanes, saving lives as paramedics, creating machined parts for equipment that drive any number of critical components across industries - the list could go on and on.”

Rummer noted that enrollment in Char-Em ISD career tech programs eclipses that in other areas, due in large part to the delivery model. Here, programs take place within high schools, instead of at a centralized career tech center. This model was developed because of the ISD’s large geographic region - over 1,000 square miles - and the many inland lakes that bisect the area that impact direct travel routes.

By bringing the programs into the schools and opening them up to any student in any district, 80 percent of all high school students in Char-Em take at least one career tech class before they graduate. Of those students, 80 percent go on to attend a post-secondary institution, such as a college or technical school.

“We have had so much support for the continued growth of programs and opportunities, and we hope to be able to continue to build on the strong foundation we have in place,” Rummer said. “In Char-Em, career tech is K-12. We are always looking for ways to get kids excited about their futures by sparking their interests at a young age.”

As Rummer noted, the CTE millage supports K-12 career and college awareness and preparation activities including:

- MiCareerQuest: A huge hands-on career expo each year for all ISD 9th graders, demonstrating jobs available in their own back yard;
- 7 summer camps for K-12;
- Char-Em Street STEM mobile STEM trailer, visiting over 5,000 K-8th graders each school year in public, charter, and private schools;
- CTE Exploration Days for middle schoolers;
- The return of “co-op” or work-based learning, where high school students can work during the school day and earn income and credit toward graduation;
- Career prep specialists and job coaches who work one-on-one with students, including students with disabilities, to guide post-graduation planning and assist with job connections;
- A new hiring event pairing graduating seniors with local businesses looking to hire on the spot;
- Celebrations like Career Tech to Careers signing events and annual student recognition banquet;
- Business, industry, college, and trade school tours;
- Paid summer Young Professionals work program;
- Paid summer work program for students with disabilities.

Rummer also noted that there are several “behind-the-scenes” benefits that the CTE millage provides districts that impact all grade levels and staff, such as funding for internet connectivity for students to access outside resources for career and college readiness. Additionally, servers, hardware, and technology repairs can be paid for through the CTE millage.

All local districts also receive a portion of the millage to fund a counselor who focuses on working to connect students to jobs, college, trade school or other post-secondary opportunities. It also funds a partnership with Jobs for Michigan’s Graduates (JMG), with JMG specialists now in every Char-Em ISD high school working directly with students to set them on successful paths after graduation.

Each of these components has been a part of the well-oiled machine that is Char-Em ISD Career and Technical Education over the past three decades.

“We never stop talking about how we can excite kids about their futures. We also continually look at workforce demands in our region and state to develop programs that will serve our employers,” said Rummer. “I’m proud of the robust career tech department we have at Char-Em ISD, and we greatly appreciate the public’s support of the work of this team to brighten futures for our region’s children.”

For complete millage details, visit the millage information page on the ISD website:

<https://charemisdcareertech.org/career-tech-millage-funding/>

About the millage and the vote

How much is 1 mill? 1 mill equals \$1 for every \$1,000 of a property's assessed value. A 1.0 mill levy equates to about \$100 per year for a \$200,000 house with a taxable value of \$100,000.

How to vote? Polls will be open on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Voters have until April 20, 2026, to register to vote in person (voters have until May 5 to register in person with required identification).

Absentee ballots: Request an absentee ballot or receive more information from your township, city or village clerk. Absentee ballots for those who have requested one will be mailed on March 26, 2026.

Who votes? Voters in the following school districts in Charlevoix, Emmet, and northern Antrim counties will be asked to vote on May 5, 2026: Alanson, Beaver Island, Boyne City, Boyne Falls, Central Lake, Charlevoix, East Jordan, Ellsworth, Harbor Springs, Pellston, and Petoskey.

What's on the ballot? The official ballot wording

"Shall the limitation on the amount of taxes in Charlevoix-Emmet Intermediate School District, Michigan, for area career and technical education programs be increased by 1 mill (\$1.00 on each \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a period of 4 years, 2026 to 2029, inclusive; the estimate of the revenue the intermediate school district will collect if the millage is approved and levied in 2026 is approximately \$8,178,239 from local property taxes authorized herein (this is a replacement of millage that expired with the 2025 tax levy)?"

2025-26 school year Career and Technical Education programs

Agriculture

Audio Engineering and Video Editing

Automotive

Aviation Science and Technology

Business Administration and Management

Construction Trades

Cosmetology

Culinary Arts

Digital/Multimedia Design

Drafting and Design Technology

Energy Fundamentals: Lineworker Emphasis

Future Educator Academy

Graphics and Printing Technology

Health Occupations

Horticulture

Machine Tool Technology

Marketing, Sales and Service

PowerSports Technology

Public Safety

TV & Film Production and Broadcasting

Unmanned Vehicle Technology

Welding Technology

Woodworking and Furniture Making

To see which programs are offered in each district, visit www.charemisdcareertech.org.