



October 25, 2018

A2Y Chamber Statement of Support for the November 6th, 2018 Ypsilanti Community Schools Sinking Fund Millage

Voters in the Ypsilanti Community Schools (YCS) school district have a 10 year, 3.0 mill sinking fund proposal on the November 6th, 2018 ballot. The A2Y Chamber supports the millage, but wants the community to keep additional information in mind.

The sinking fund millage will raise roughly \$1.6M annually, which YCS will use to address very basic components of its operations that are vital in serving students. State law restricts the uses for sinking funds, and YCS will use the funding for infrastructure repairs, security upgrades and repairs, and technology improvements. YCS needs to repair leaking roofs throughout its district, resurface parking lots, and repair old flooring. The security improvements include the repair of fire sprinkler systems and the upgrading of security cameras across the district. The millage will allow YCS to address the current outdated computer systems that are available in insufficient numbers for students and staff. Sinking funds cannot be used for staff salaries.

The A2Y Chamber supported the creation of YCS in 2012, and it continues to advocate for the proper resourcing of the district. A 3.0 mill proposal is a meaningful ask in a community with a relatively high tax rate, but YCS simply does not have a sufficient general fund to cover these needed items given the number of students in the district which is the primary source of operating revenue and the annual obligation of more than \$2 million each year to cover the cost of the legacy debt from the prior districts. The district already had to spend reserves in its current budget, which brings its current reserves below the State's required 5% fund balance. A sinking fund allows YCS to address its needs without incurring *additional operational debt*. **The A2Y Chamber supports the YCS sinking fund millage because it will use the revenue in the proper ways for basic needs, and most importantly, it will allow YCS to continue to provide needed education resources to its students.**

If our community is serious about ensuring that all our children, regardless of their school district, have an opportunity to get a quality public education, we need to ensure these districts have adequate funding. The state currently funds education in a way that allows wealthier districts to succeed at the expense of those neighboring districts that are not as wealthy. It is an unsustainable system if we are serious about student achievement and workforce attraction and development. Employees need to be able to live in all parts of our county and still be able to send their children to a local district with the resources needed to provide a world-class education. Failure to ensure this outcome will limit our economic growth, perpetuate detrimental inequities, and most importantly, harm our capacity to fully realize the human capital that comes from a successful educational system that is open to all students.

In 2019 Michigan will have a new governor and legislature. As a business community, we need to take this opportunity to weigh in on the educational funding changes needed and expected. The A2Y Chamber will be actively looking to partner with other groups to advance ideas that will help our state ensure all its students have access to a public education system that can provide them with the needed education to succeed in both their lives and careers. This will ensure our communities continue to prosper.