

**To:** Council About Parochiaid  
**From:** Cara Marie Dobie and Courtney VanCamp  
**Date:** December 10, 2021  
**Re:** Legislative Report

## Supplemental Budgets

For folks newer to the legislative process, a “supplemental budget bill” is legislative-ese for “a spending bill that changes – positive or negative – the current-fiscal-year State budget.” On the week of November 30, the legislature passed two massive supplemental appropriations bills totaling nearly \$4 billion dollars of the American Rescue Plan Act money Michigan was allocated. The bills were primarily in two areas: water infrastructure; and public safety.

SB 565 allocate about \$3.3 billion toward Michigan’s aging, unhealthy, and sometimes deadly or dangerous water systems, including lead pipe replacement in Benton Harbor and other targeted areas. Of course, healthy drinking water is a critical component of healthy students, but the most relevant parts of these bills are twofold:

1. \$85 million for “Healthy Hydration,” a grant program to schools for the installation of filtered drinking water stations. The grant requires a 30% match from the applying district
2. Healthy Hydration is tied to SB 184, which requires schools to develop a drinking water safety plan, and establish a schedule for sampling and testing and annual filter replacement; in other words, where SB 184 requires a drinking water safety plan, SB 565, among other things, helps school district pay for what it will take to implement such a plan

SB 565 (and 184) have been voted out of the Senate and await House action.

The House also passed a supplemental budget bill, but this one is focused on public safety and law enforcement. HB 5522, which totals \$368 million, includes a \$50 million grant to school districts for school resource officers. In its introduced form, HB 5522 had \$10 million allocated for this purpose. On the heels of the tragedy at Oxford High School, the House increased that number. HB 5522 was voted out of the House and awaits action in the Senate.

## Financial Literacy Bill Passes House

On Wednesday, December 1, the House passed House Bill 5190, which would require a half credit of “personal finance” in order to graduate. This is not an additional credit; rather, it would replace a half-credit in world language. Under the bill, students would not be allowed to waive this new requirement. All new requirements would begin with students entering eighth grade in 2023.

The bill is now under consideration by the Senate Education and Career Readiness Committee (though no date is set for a hearing yet).

## **MDE Discusses Early Literacy and Broadband**

State Superintendent Michael Rice, Ph.D. spoke in front of a joint meeting of the House and Senate K-12 Appropriations Subcommittee on Thursday, December 2, regarding early literacy and investing in the state's E-Rate program. The Department shared their legislative request for \$10 million to fund an E-Rate Enhancement Matching Grant. This proposal would be a dollar-for-dollar matching grant program to help schools with infrastructure/construction of expanding broadband internet in a district's school buildings. If approved, the funds would be allowed for E-Rate-eligible institutions (a federal grant program), primarily schools and libraries, to match the federal dollars currently going to these entities. This program will help reduce access barriers, allow for greater high-speed connectivity and reduce monthly costs incurred by districts for internet access.

Dr. Rice also spoke on MDE's collaboration with ISDs and other statewide organizations to help parents, teachers and students to improve literacy outcomes.

If one is so moved and has an extra hour in their day, and a gallon of coffee, [follow this link](#) to watch an archived video of the committee hearing.

## **Dyslexia**

The Senate Education Committee, after a pause last summer, reconvened to hear a series of bills dealing with dyslexia pre-screening and screening; training teachers in identifying dyslexia; creating guidelines around appropriate screening tools; and creating an advisory committee within MDE. SB 380 – 383 were introduced in June by a bipartisan group of lawmakers, led by Senator Jeff Irwin of Ann Arbor, and including Senator Lana Theis, the Chair of the Senate Education Committee.

A few school administrative groups have concerns with the bills, regarding what could be messy implementation, given some confusion in terms and definitions in the bills that conflict with existing special education laws. Further, there is disagreement between advocates, who believe the bills would allow for a number of qualified and eligible screenings to be used, and the same administrative organizations, who believe the bills seek to codify one single screening (Orton-Gillingham). No vote was taken on the measures, as these details are negotiated.

## **Cloudy Crystal Ball**

Some prognostication:

- There are perhaps 5 session days left in 2021; however, bills not passed by this December still have 1 year left to pass. Michigan has a 2-year session, and we are finishing year 1.
- Next year is a massive State election year. Running for office will be: our now-13-member Congressional delegation; Governor; Attorney General; Secretary of State; 2 Supreme Court Justices; our 38 State Senators; and our 100 State Representatives, along with myriad local elections. Most candidates, except for the statewide seats, are running in newly-drawn districts, which, by the way, have not been officially redrawn yet (they remain in draft form, yet to be approved, challenged, in court, and redrawn/approved from there)

- Early next year, starting in February, not only will the Governor and the Legislature negotiate on the FY '23 budget; they will also negotiate on the several-billion in remaining ARPA funds, and possibly the \$1.5-or-so billion in surplus State General Funds. Each entity is gathering their hopes and dreams to begin the talks