

To: C.A.P. Board of Directors

From: Cara Marie Dobie

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Legislative Report

K-12 Budget

Governor Snyder's budget proposal included a total state budget for education of \$12.6 billion dollars, a 2 percent increase over last year. This would include an additional \$50-100 in K-12 per pupil allowances, with an extra \$50 per pupil for high school students. This would bring the minimum foundation allowance to \$7,611 and the basic foundation allowance to \$8,279 per pupil.

Governor Snyder also proposed a 40 percent increase to at-risk funding with an additional \$150 million, for a total of \$529 million. Additionally, the budget recommendation includes \$33 million to pay for early literacy coaches at intermediate school districts and assist teachers and districts in implementing strategies to improve third grade reading levels.

Most importantly to note for CAP, the governor's budget also strips from last year's budget the \$2.5 million earmarked for reimbursing private schools for costs associated with complying with state law mandates.

Draft Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan for Final Public Comment

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) recently released its full draft plan for meeting the requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. The draft plan was presented to the State Board of Education by Venessa Keesler, Deputy Superintendent, Division of Educator, Student, and School Supports at MDE, at its February 14 meeting. ESSA replaced the No Child Left Behind Act and is scheduled for full implementation during the 2017-18 school year.

The draft plan is open for 30 days of public comment concluding on March 16. The MDE invites both individuals and organizations to review the plan and submit comments through email or mail. MDE plans to submit the final draft to the U.S. Department of Education for review on April 3, 2017.

School administrators urged Superintendent of Public Instruction Brian Whiston to delay submitting the plan until September. In a letter on March 7, the Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA) and the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) noted changes in the federal administration and insufficient time to consider comments, "raise uncertainty about the state's plan to comply with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act."

In addition, there are also concerns with the ESSA plan's A-F grading system. Sen. Marty Knollenberg (R-Troy) questioned using a single letter grade, which in his view seemed "arbitrary." Both MASA and MAISA stated the current timeline for public comment doesn't allow for "meaningful consideration or incorporation of input." ESSA's plan would move Michigan away from its current color-coded grading system to an A-F scale.

“By waiting until the September submission deadline, MDE would have a much clearer understanding of the future of the ESSA and the DOE’s implementation expectations.”

However, Superintendent of Public Instruction Whiston said he is not planning to adjust the schedule and still plans to submit the plan on April 3.

U.S. Senate Vote on Accountability Not Changing Michigan’s ESSA Plan

Despite the U.S. Senate afternoon vote on Thursday, which overturns rules implemented by the Obama administration regulating how states would hold schools accountable for not meeting standards under the new act, Superintendent of Public Instruction Brian Whiston is not planning any changes in the state’s plan to comply with the new Every Student Succeeds Act.

Michigan Department of Education spokesperson Martin Ackley noted the department is going to continue coordinating with stakeholders and will move forward with the ESSA state plan that will “lead to improved outcomes for students in Michigan.”

Representative Kelly Keen on Keeping Shared Time Funding

Recently, Rep. Tim Kelly (R-Saginaw) chair of the House K-12 Appropriations subcommittee, made it known he isn’t interested in scaling back shared-time funding by 50 percent as outlined in Governor Snyder’s budget recommendation.

Shared-time funding, according to *MIRS News*, is expected to cost \$115 million, doubling since 2012. Currently, shared time costs the state approximately \$80 per public school student. It allows non-public and homeschooled students to enroll in classes like band or others outside of the core curriculum.

"I think that when we talk about delivering education to families and students on an individual basis and ones that benefit the community, this is all a part of it," Kelly said before the committee. "Last year, the Governor's recommendation was to cut or cap this and this year it was his recommendation as well and it certainly is not the desire of the chair to adopt that portion of the executive budget."

Cyber School Funding Up for Debate

Under Governor Snyder’s K-12 education funding plan, released February 8, cyber schools would receive 80 percent of the state’s foundation allowance with \$22 million of the savings directed to high schools. This change, according to the FY 2018 budget, reflects the fact that virtual schools have little or no facility costs.

Rep. Tim Kelly (R-Saginaw) noted “We don’t fund schools. We fund students...” Sen. Geoff Hansen (R-Hart), chair of the Senate K-12 Appropriations subcommittee agreed “money should follow the kid.” He also noted cyber schools have their own built-in costs of school supplies and paying for teachers.

Sen. Curtis Hertel (D-East Lansing) is supportive of the Governor’s proposal noting “It doesn’t make sense that the foundation allowance be the same for cyber schools. Obviously it costs more to maintain a building long term. There are legacy costs that public schools have.”

Michigan Department of Education Predicts No New Deficit Districts for 2016-2017

Superintendent of Public Instruction Brian Whiston told Appropriations members for the first time in several years, there should be no new districts facing budget deficits when the 2016-2017 school year ends. He noted in the MDE quarterly reports on deficit districts there were only 27 on the list compared to 40 last year.

Paul Connors, Department of Treasury, also spoke at the joint meeting of the House Appropriations School Aid and Department of Education Subcommittee and the Senate Appropriations K-12 School Aid and Education Subcommittee. He indicated “the districts flagged for review under the new early warning system are also showing improvement.” He noted there were 76 districts identified as having financial stress this school year, but only 7 of those remain on MDE’s list.

Michigan House Panel to Consider Common Core Repeal

HB 4192, introduced Thursday, February 9, and sponsored by Rep. Gary Glenn (R-Larkin Twp.), would prohibit the state from continuing to use the Common Core State Standards, or any standards developed in conjunction with other states and require the state to implement the standards used by the commonwealth of Massachusetts during the 2008-2009 school year. It also prohibits the use of any assessment based on the Common Core State Standards and requires the state to create and implement a new student assessment, and requires the Legislature approve the chosen assessment.

The Common Core State Standards were developed by a consortium of states, represented by governors and state superintendents with considerable input from teachers and education professionals.

21st Century Education Commission Urges Keeping Common Core

Michigan retaining Common Core State Standards and increasing funding for education will be the recommendation of the 21st Century Education Commission in a report expected to be released on March 10. *Gongwer News Service* received a copy of the executive summary of the report which further recommended more training and support for teachers throughout their careers.

While the commission does not specifically name Common Core, it alludes to the “rigorous standards Michigan has adopted be maintained to ensure that longitudinal data on student growth remains intact.”

New Subcommittee to Study the Michigan Merit Curriculum

On March 1, Sen. Phil Pavlov (R-St. Clair), chair of the Senate Education Committee, announced a new subcommittee set to study the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC). Sen. Marty Knollenberg (R-Troy) was named chair of the new subcommittee.

Since 2006, the state of Michigan has required students to obtain 18 credits in eight specific subject areas as a requirement of receiving a high school diploma.

SRO School Closures Up to Local Districts

On Tuesday last week, Superintendent of Public Instruction Brian Whitson announced of the 38 schools the School Reform/Redesign Office slated for possible closure, five will likely close due to local decisions. He noted the state will not be forcing closures because, “closing a school can negatively impact a community and we ought to look at that.”

He also stated he’ll be having conversations with local superintendents if a school has been failing for four or five years, noting schools cannot continue to fail over long periods of time. He also pointed out an inadequate point within the SRO plan, noting there is no accounting for staff changes within a school. He used the example of a new principal and giving staffing changes time to work.

Charter-Related Amendment within SB 102

SB 102, sponsored by Sen. Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City) creates the Michigan Community Foundation Act. The bill does give a school district flexibility in how it uses money made from a property sale. However, Sen. Mike Shirkey (R-Clark Lake) added an amendment that would ban school boards or intermediate school boards from placing a deed restriction preventing a charter school from moving in if a district attempts to use the foundation model.

Sen. Shirkey noted the amendment was designed to prevent a “potential loophole” where foundations are used to prevent a property purchase with public funds to not be used for a future public school.