



# SCHOOL EQUITY

ADEQUATE & EQUITABLE RESOURCES FOR  
MICHIGAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

[www.schoolequitycaucus.org](http://www.schoolequitycaucus.org)

March 28, 2025

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings from the School Equity desk. I hope you are enjoying the recent change of weather and are ready to embrace Spring. I remember well from my days as a superintendent how much student energy comes with this season, and how quickly the days disappear for the remainder of the school year. Hopefully you can find some time to pause and take inventory of the good work you've done for the students in your districts.

It's been a relatively slow month in Lansing, with the new legislature finding their footing and getting to work on their respective versions of the new budget. So far it's been more posturing than progress, but that's all part of the process. Let's take a look at some items of interest we are keeping an eye on for our schools.

## **Federal Cuts**

As promised, the Trump Administration is wasting no time in slashing spending across virtually every federal department. While this is not an uncommon practice for presidents early in their tenures, we are seeing unprecedented cuts to staffing across in the Dept of Education – roughly half of their workforce - which has prompted many questions about the potential impact on schools. What we know now is that new Secretary of Education, Linda McMahon, has been ordered to reduce the DOE to virtually nothing. Recent comments by Pres. Trump indicate it may not disappear entirely, but it's scope and authority would be greatly diminished and it would focus only on essential funding, such as Title programs, student loans, and school meals. The President has stated that he intends to keep state education fully funded – Michigan receives an estimated \$2.2 billion in federal ed funding – but we've also heard that Title funds could be reduced by up to 25%, which we are actively lobbying against. Questions also remain around school choice, which has long been a priority for this administration, and how funding streams would change for public schools.

In a recent meeting with a representative from Governor Whitmer's office, we were told that there are modest reserves of emergency funds for education, but that there is no current plan to backfill losses sustained by federal cuts.

## **State Legislative Activity**

- A House Joint Resolution has been introduced by Rep. Tim Kelly (R-Saginaw Township) that would remove university funding from the School Aid Fund. This would free up as much \$500 million for K-12 schools. Being part of the Michigan Constitution, an amendment would be necessary, requiring a 2/3 vote in the legislature and approval by voters in November of 2026.

School Equity strongly supports this initiative.

- A Road Funding bill has passed the house, which would remove the gas tax and backfill the funding that would be lost by schools, approximately \$755 million. There would be a subsequent hold created in the GF that would need to be filled.

School Equity supports this initiative, under the condition that the SAF remains whole.

- The House Education and Workforce Committee have heard testimony on a set of bills that would be included in the Republican Education Package:
  - HB 4155 would require MDE to provide an annually updated list of recommended curriculum and assessment vendors for school districts to use when selecting materials.
  - HB 4156 would add three (3) credit requirements to the MMC, including courses in personal finance, careers and science.
  - HB 4157-4158 would create an alternative to the M-STEP, with a pilot program to be implemented across 90 state districts.
  - HB 4159 would mandate a more involved and evidence-based approach to establishing math, reading, and writing standards.

School Equity is taking a neutral position on these bills, with the exception of HB 4156, which we oppose.

## **Upcoming Events**

1. We are excited to bring back the Legislative Day in Lansing, to be held in the conference room at Karoub Associates across from the capitol on Tuesday, May 20. If you haven't registered, you can do so at the following link. Space is limited and interest is strong, so don't delay! <https://forms.gle/To4AxPePgOsRba557>
2. We are please to announce our first annual "Small but Mighty" one-day conference to be held at Treetops Resort in Gaylord on Tuesday, July 16. The day will include a variety of speakers on topics related specifically to our small and rural districts, which was a high priority in our recent member survey. Discounted lodging and golf will also be available to attendees. Stay tuned for a formal invitation!

## **House-Keeping**

1. Our Region Tour has officially come to an end for this year, and we want to thank those who were able to host us. If you'd like to schedule an updated presentation and legislative update in your Region for next school year, please let me know.
2. I had a wonderful visit to Munising Schools this month to help advocate for infrastructure funding with district leaders and their local state rep. If I can help you with district needs related to our mission, please don't hesitate to ask.
3. Our new and improved School Equity logo is displayed above! An update was long overdue and we hope our new look demonstrates our commitment to remaining current and relevant in today's world of K-12 education!

That's all for this month's Newsletter. If there is a specific topic related to school equity that you would like to see addressed as a special feature in a future Newsletter, stand-alone mailing, podcast, or Town Hall Zoom, please let me know. We are here to serve!

Best regards,



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