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## Board Report — March 12, 2026

- **Special Education Millage Restoration:** Work is under way preparing for a tentative August 2026 countywide special education millage restoration renewal vote. In 2003, Ionia County voters approved a 4.75 mill special education millage. This amount immediately began to roll back due to the Headlee Override. In 2017, Ionia County voters approved a millage restoring the rate to the original 4.75 mills. We are asking a decade later once again that county voters consider a restoration of the special education millage to the original approved amount.

The district is currently working on ballot language with legal counsel. Proposed ballot language will tentatively come to the board of education for review and approval at its April 16 meeting. If we do not have the tax rate information by then that the ballot language needs, we may need a special board meeting in early May. The proposal must be filed with the county by May 12 for an August 4, 2026 election. The district will be creating a website for information, social media informational posts, campaign flyers and documents for disbursement, FAQ documents and video messaging among other actions intended to raise community awareness and hopeful support. Legal counsel will review all materials, print or visual, to ensure compliance with the campaign finance act.

- **Policy Update:** A recent state law that prohibits student cell phones has recently been enacted. This prohibition is effective beginning with the 2026-2027 school year. As such, the district will need to adopt a board policy in this regard. Clark Hill PLC has prepared draft policy language for the board. This will be presented for a first reading in April 2026 with adoption scheduled after a second reading in May 2026. We are electing to adopt this early as the June meeting is often busy with budget actions and adoptions; and since we have students in session in some specific programs in July, that start our 26-27 school year earlier than other districts.
- **Legislative Update:** The House School Aid Appropriations Subcommittee recently met to hear testimony regarding the idea of a weighted foundation allowance. Presenters included the Citizens Research Council of Michigan, Michigan Association of School Administrators and the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals.

House Bills 5032, 4583, 4584 and other non-education related bills were reported out of the House Election Integrity Committee last week. HB 5032 prohibits the use of school aid

dollars for the preparation of, education of or administration of ballot initiatives, such as bond issues. HB 4583 and 4584 require that all school-related ballot initiatives be placed only on the November ballots, eliminating special elections only for the purpose of school ballot initiatives.

The Senate passed SB 492, a bill that would prohibit disenrollment and the transfer of student records to a different school until the student has been formally enrolled in that school. The House passed HB 5364, which would mandate any changes to the Michigan Merit Curriculum be approved by the legislature before approval by the State Board of Education.

In the category of introduced legislation, HB 5646 would require all teacher preparation programs to include LETRS training and science of reading education. HB 5648 would require graduation credit for a skilled trades student in full time employment in a skilled trades program.

The House School Aid Appropriations Subcommittee will be meeting soon to hear presentations on school penalties for improper certification for teachers of record as well as literacy screening and assessment. It is also anticipated there will be continued discussion of the Governor's proposed weighted foundation formula as announced in her executive budget recommendation.