



# SCHOOL EQUITY

ADEQUATE & EQUITABLE RESOURCES FOR  
MICHIGAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## August 2025 Newsletter: Back-to-School Edition

Dear Member,

I hope this letter finds you well-rested after a beautiful Michigan summer. I was recently reflecting on the fact that, unlike most industries, educators have the benefit of starting over each year. Leadership is hard work, but the ability to put the past year to rest, reboot, and start fresh is a blessing!

With that in mind, let's jump in and take a look at what lies ahead.

### **DELAYED STATE SCHOOL AID BUDGET: UNCERTAINTY CONTINUES**

With the 2025-26 school year fast approaching, Michigan's School Aid Budget remains in limbo, leaving districts grappling with financial uncertainty. While negotiations continue in Lansing, superintendents must prepare for potential delays in funding, which could impact staffing, programming, and operational stability.

#### **Key Concerns and Messaging:**

- **Cash Flow & Budget Planning** – Without finalized numbers, districts may need to tap into reserves or delay critical expenditures.
- **Staffing & Contracts** – Hiring freezes, delayed raises, and contract negotiations could complicate back-to-school preparations.
- **Special Education & At-Risk Funding** – Clarity is needed on whether key equity-focused funding streams will be increased, or even maintained.
- **Federal Programs** – The distribution of Title funds and meal programs remains in limbo.

### School Equity Advocacy Efforts:

- We are pressing lawmakers for:
  - ✓ **Prompt passage** of the budget to avoid ongoing disruptions and unnecessary cuts.
  - ✓ **Support for per-pupil increases** to support all students and address rising costs.
  - ✓ **Protection of key categorical funding**, such as transportation, for high-need districts.
- **Action Step:** Contact your legislators and share how the delay impacts your schools.

### LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

#### Senate Education Committee Hears Testimony on K-3 Class Size Bills

- This week, the **Senate Education Committee** reviewed **Senate Bills 493 & 494**, which would **cap K-3 class sizes at 19 students**, citing research on improved academic outcomes. To support implementation, a **\$65 million grant program** would be created, with priority given to high-need districts. **Four districts—Muskegon Heights, Benton Harbor, Flint, and Wayne-Westland—will automatically qualify.**
- **School Equity Position:** While we certainly support the idea of smaller class sizes, we cannot support its funding through additional grants. Many of our member districts are not staffed or trained to write grants for dollars that should be delivered through the base foundation allowance. This is an inequity that must be recognized and addressed.

#### Senate Bill 492

- Would **prohibit schools from transferring student records** until written confirmation of enrollment is received, enhancing privacy protections.
- More testimony is expected before a committee vote.

#### House Approves ACT WorkKeys Opt-Out Legislation

- The House passed **Senate Bills 349-350 (S-3)**, creating an **opt-out process for the 11th-grade ACT WorkKeys exam**. Key details:
  - Schools must notify parents by December 31.
  - Parents must submit a signed waiver by February 28 to exempt their student.
  - Students without waivers must still test.
- The bills now return to the Senate for concurrence.

## **STATE SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH: FINALISTS NAMED**

The **State Board of Education** has announced **seven finalists** to replace outgoing Superintendent **Michael Rice**. Interviews will be held **August 18-19**, with a selection expected by **September 9**. Finalists are as follows:

- **Christopher Timmis** (Dexter Community Schools)
- **Glenn Maleyko** (Dearborn Public Schools)
- **Paul Salah** (Huron Valley Schools)
- **Judy Walton** (Harrison Community Schools)
- **John Severson** (Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators)
- **Lisa Coons** (Former Virginia State Superintendent)
- **Thomas Ahart** (Former Des Moines, IA Superintendent)

## **EVENTS**

- **Summer Conference**

Last month, we held our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Small-but-Mighty Conference at Treetops Resort in Gaylord. A group of approximately 40 superintendents gathered for a day of information and inspiration with input from the state legislature and lobbyists, followed by a keynote address from Rob Miller of Proactive Coaching. Feedback was extremely positive and we have made plans to return for an even better event next July.

- **School Equity Luncheon at the MASA Fall Conference**

Mark your calendars now for our annual School Equity Luncheon and General Assembly on **Wednesday, September 17, at 11:30 AM**. This event kicks off the MASA Fall Conference and includes important updates for our members and guests. **Look for an invitation and RSVP in your email soon!**

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That's all for now. Stay tuned for Information Alerts as budget news develops, and have a great start to the new school year.

Best Regards,



Brian Keim  
Executive Director, School Equity