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*Partners in building full potential*

COLLABORATION INTEGRITY INNOVATION SERVICE ACCOUNTABILITY DATA-DRIVEN

## Board Report — July 10, 2025

- **Hiring Update:** The Ionia County Intermediate School District has filled two administrative vacancies. We welcome back to the ISD family Mrs. Jody Pung, who will be replacing the recently retired Cyndi Geiger as Special Education Supervisor. Jody was a literacy coach and rural school administrator with us before accepting an administrative position with Lakewood Public Schools.

We also are pleased to announce the hiring of Mr. Marvin Van Nortwick as our Director of Finance. Marvin comes to us with several years of financial leadership experience with Kent County, most recently as the county's Deputy Finance Director for the past several years. He will begin his tenure with the ISD on July 21.

- **Property Transfer Update:** The Administrative Law Judge overseeing this appeal to the denial of the multi-intermediate and local school district property transfer request has formally dismissed the case. This concludes the situation for Lowell, Belding, ICISD and Kent ISD.
- **Legislative Update:** The following statement was released July 1 by the Michigan Alliance for Student Opportunity, Michigan Association of School Boards, Michigan Association of Superintendents & Administrators, Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators, Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals, Michigan Elementary & Middle School Principals Association, Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education, Michigan Association of Pupil Transportation, K-12 Alliance of Michigan, School Equity, and the Education Advocates of West Michigan regarding the end of the school fiscal year and lack of state budget:

"July 1 marks the statutory deadline for presenting a budget to the Governor, and the state has failed to meet its legal obligation. Once again, Michigan's schools are left to face the consequences rather than the Legislature and Governor being held accountable. Public school districts across the state were required by state law to adopt their local budgets by July 1. This year, however, they had to do so in a climate of deep uncertainty, forced to make critical decisions based on guesswork about state funding. This is unacceptable.

Despite differing political priorities, the House and Senate agree on nearly 89% of School Aid Fund spending—representing more than \$19 billion in consensus. Yet progress

toward putting a negotiated budget on the Governor's desk has stalled. Lawmakers seem caught in a false choice between finishing a budget in a timely manner and crafting a responsible one. The truth is, they can—and must—do both.

With nearly \$23 billion in School Aid Fund revenue available, there is no fiscal reason why a responsible K- 12 budget cannot be completed now. But doing so requires adherence to a few basic principles:

**Spend School Aid Fund dollars only on K-12 education.** Diverting these funds to higher education or general fund programs undermines the very purpose of the School Aid Fund and shifts the burden of the state budget onto the backs of students.

**Protect the integrity of the public school retirement system.** MPSERS is stable and on track to eliminate its remaining debt. Changes to this system for short-term savings risks destabilizing retirement security for hundreds of thousands of school employees and could reverse hard-earned progress.

**Prioritize both per pupil increases and weighted funding for high-need students.** With resources available and costs rising, schools and students should expect a meaningful increase in the foundation allowance. At the same time, Michigan's at-risk youth, English language learners, students in special education, rural communities, and CTE programs depend on targeted support. Meeting the moment requires both across-the-board increases and a funding model that accounts for the varying needs of students.

**Avoid structural deficits by funding ongoing programs with ongoing revenue.** Using one-time funds for per pupil spending or draining the rainy day fund for recurring expenses creates long-term instability and threatens the future of Michigan schools.

Each of the competing budget proposals contains components of a strong plan. They all envision meaningful increases to the foundation allowance and make commitments to support students with the greatest needs. But it's time to stop treating the School Aid budget as a bargaining chip in larger negotiations. Lawmakers have the tools, the resources, and the framework to finish this job. Michigan's students cannot—and should not—wait any longer.

In another development, this time in regards to federal education funding; the Michigan Department of Education issued the following statement on the U.S. Department of Education notifying states that they would not be receiving appropriated federal Title funding that support students and schools:

"The U.S. Department of Education, said State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice, is hurting students in Michigan and across the country by withholding federal dollars that were appropriated by Congress and signed by President Trump on March 15, 2025. Based on past practice, local school districts were rightly counting on this approved funding by July 1 for programs to support migrant education, services for English learners, staff professional development, before- and after-school programs, and academic enrichment. These federal dollars support some of our most economically disadvantaged and vulnerable students. The U.S. Department of Education should provide the approved funding immediately. The Michigan Department of Education is working with colleagues across the country and with legal counsel to reflect upon the adverse impact to students, staff, and schools of this withholding."

The withheld funds in Michigan include:

- More than \$5.4 million in Title I-C funds for migrant education.
- More than \$12.8 million in Title III funds for English learners.
- More than \$63.7 million in Title II funds for staff professional development
- More than \$36.7 million Title IV-B funds for before- and after-school programs.
- More than \$38.3 million in Title IV-A funds for academic enrichment.