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Legislative Update

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School Safety Bills Receive Hearing in the House

The House Education Committee heard supportive testimony this week on five bipartisan bills focused on student mental health and school safety requirements. The bills are part of a larger 13-bill package introduced in February 2023.

- **HB 5549** would require every public school to have its own behavioral threat assessment and management team; it would also define who is to comprise the team and outline the team's duties.

- **HB 4089** calls for creating a permanent School Safety and Mental Health Commission within the Department of Education to support students at risk of behavioral health issues, work to increase public awareness of mental health issues, and make recommendations to the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs and Bureau of Construction Codes for improving the safety of school buildings.

- **HB 4092** would mandate the Office of School Safety, in conjunction with the Michigan State Police (MSP), to notify a local law enforcement agency and an intermediate school district (ISD) within 24 hours if it receives a tip of potential harm or criminal activity related to that ISD.



- **HB 4096** would require the MSP to develop a standardized response plan that includes terminology (e.g., lockdown, secure mode, shelter in place) and a color-coding system schools should use during emergencies. **HB 4095** would require public and charter schools to adopt and implement the standardized plan.

The committee did not vote on the bills. It is unclear when the other eight bills in the school safety package will be taken up.

The Michigan Legislature is now on spring recess and will return to Lansing the week of April 9.

Mandatory Kindergarten Bill Headed to Senate Floor



The Senate Education Committee passed **Senate Bill 285** on March 20, sending it to the full chamber for consideration. Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, the bill would require school districts to provide kindergarten and children to enroll in school at the age of five instead of six. Half- and full-day kindergarten options would be available, and exemptions for homeschool, private, and religious schools would be allowed for kindergarten as they currently exist for other grade levels. Under current law, kindergarten enrollment in Michigan is recommended but not required.



Cardiac Emergency Planning, AED Bills Pass House

House Bills **5527** and **5528** passed the Michigan House this week, by votes of 55-29 and 55-41, respectively. They now head to the Senate for consideration. If passed, the bills would mandate that schools adopt cardiac emergency response plans and offer training and access to automated external defibrillators (AED). In addition, all coaches (not just head coaches) would be required to be trained on AED usage.