MAASE

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# Legislative Update

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## Funding Bill for Additional School Safety, Mental Health Support Awaits Governor's Signature

Following recent passage by the Michigan Legislature, a $126 million fiscal year 2024-2025 supplemental appropriations bill was sent to the Governor's desk. It is anticipated Governor Whitmer will sign the bill in the near future.

**House Bill 5503**:

- Appropriates $125 million in School Aid Fund (SAF) money to Section 31aa for additional one-time per-pupil school safety and mental health grants to districts and intermediate school districts
- Stipulates that if a school district uses the money to hire staff, the district would be responsible for paying the salaries with other district funding next fiscal year
- Requires the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to report by Aug. 1 of each year the number of districts using Section 31aa funding to pay school resource officers
- Appropriates $1 million SAF for establishing a tip line where students can anonymously report improperly stored firearms accessible to a minor
- Requires MDE to develop, and distribute to districts and ISDs, materials educating students about improperly stored firearms and how to report them

HB 5503 passed 98-11 in the House and 23-15 in the Senate. However, it did not receive enough votes in the Senate to take immediate effect; therefore, the bill will go into effect 90 days after the current legislative session concludes at a year-end date yet to be determined. This means the funding won't be available until March or April 2025.

## Fall Legislative Activity Takes Back Seat to Campaign



With the 2024 election just one month away, legislative activity will be minimal leading up to Election Day as campaigning takes center stage. For a list of the Michigan House races, see the Sept. 5, 2024, issue of our newsletter.

## Senate Concurs with House on Dyslexia Package

Last week the House passed a two-bill package that would require dyslexia screening to be part of state-approved reading assessments (**Senate Bill 567**) and teacher preparation programs to include instruction on identifying and addressing dyslexia in students (**SB 568**).

The Senate then concurred with the House, moving the bills to the Governor's desk for her signature.

The votes in the House were 100-8 and 99-10, respectively. The Senate vote was unanimous.

## Absentee Voting Underway

Michigan voters have several options for voting in the upcoming election, one being absentee voting, which is now underway. To request an absentee ballot online, complete the application by Oct. 21. Voters can also request an absentee ballot in person from their local clerk's office; the deadline is 4 pm on Nov. 4. Absentee ballots must be received by the local clerk's office by 8 pm on Election Day. To access the absentee application and learn more about absentee voting, **click here**.

For the first time, **early in-person voting** is now also an option for Michigan voters. The early voting period runs Oct. 26 - Nov. 3.

Of course, you may also choose to vote in-person at your polling place on Election Day. Polls will be open from 7 am to 8 pm.

View a sample of your ballot **here**.

## Governor Approves Permanent MSPERS Rate Reduction and Elimination of Healthcare Contribution Requirement

**House Bill 5803** was approved by the House and Senate (56-52 and 20-18, respectively) on Sept. 25 and signed by Governor Whitmer on Oct. 3.

Among the bill's provisions are:

- Codifying the 5.75% MPSERS rate reduction into law
- Eliminating the 3% retiree health care contribution requirement for public school employees hired prior to Sept. 4, 2012

While the 5.75% MPSERS rate reduction included in the FY 2024-2025 School Aid budget will now be made permanent, school districts will still be required to collect and remit the 3% retiree health care contribution until September 30, 2025.

The 3% contribution requirement will be repealed on October 1, 2025—the start of the state's 2025-2026 fiscal year. In the meantime, the FY 2024-2025 School Aid budget appropriates $181.5 million in one-time School Aid revenue to reimburse eligible public school employees for their 3% contribution, an amount estimated to cover a full year of costs.

The legislation will take effect in Spring 2025, as it was not granted immediate effect.