June 14, 2024

Legislative Update

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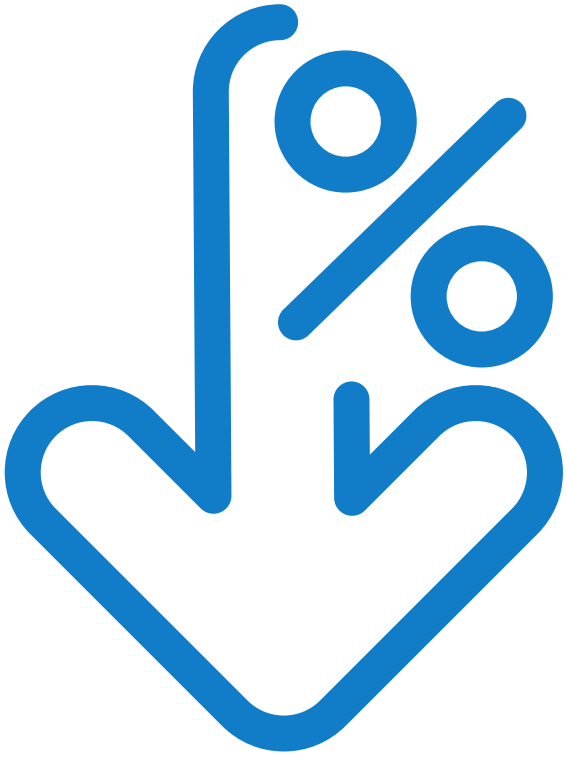
New Bills Introduced to Reduce District MPSERS Contribution Rates, Eliminate School Employees' 3% Contributions

House Bill 5803 and **Senate Bill 911** were introduced this week in the House and Senate, respectively, to revise the amount of funding schools and teachers are required to contribute to the Michigan Public School Employees' Retirement System (MPSERS).

Specifically, the bills would decrease by 7% the rate schools must contribute as a percentage of employee salaries to MPSERS (from 20.96% to 13.96%) and eliminate the 3% retiree healthcare contribution requirement for public school employees hired through 2012.

Each bill was referred to its respective chamber's Appropriations Committee.

We strongly encourage members to reach out to the bill sponsors—Representative Matt Koleszar (D-Plymouth) and Senator Kevin Hertel (D-St. Clair Shores)—to thank them for introducing this important legislation that would free up hundreds of millions of dollars in district-level funding for use in the classroom and on other student-focused supports. Enactment of this legislation would represent one of the most important structural changes to funding for K-12 education in Michigan in a dozen years.



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Education Groups Oppose House SOAR Fund Extension



MAASE joined other education leaders across the state in sending a letter to House members expressing opposition to the Strategic Outreach and Attraction Reserve (SOAR) fund extension proposal (**House Bills 5768-5770**).

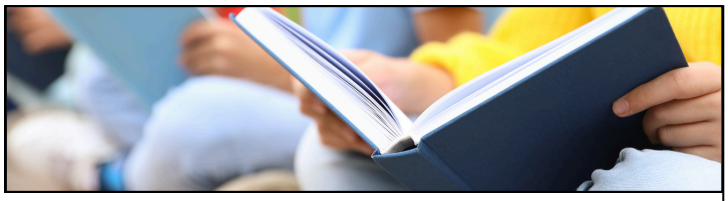
The SOAR Fund extension package calls for investing $600 million annually over 10 years to enhance housing, transportation, and other forms of community development.

While we respect the need for the state to invest in economic development, we believe that investment cannot come at the expense of properly funding K-12 education. We have seen a continued troubling trend over the years of the state shifting billions of School Aid Fund dollars away from K-12 education to other priorities whenever General Fund dollars are tight, and that practice needs to end.

The letter also urges policymakers to allow districts to retain the entirety of the savings now that MPSERS retiree healthcare benefits (OPEB) are fully funded and requests support for the newly introduced House Bill 5803 and Senate Bill 911 (see page 1).

Governor Signs Bill Extending Interim Special Ed Teaching Certificates

Senate Bill 518 was signed into law (Public Act 49 of 2024) by Governor Whitmer on June 6 and given immediate effect. The bill extends the deadline—from July 21, 2024, to July 21, 2027—for teachers to earn an interim special education teaching certificate through an alternative certification program. It also allows individuals who have received their interim teaching certificate to continue teaching special education after the new deadline as long as they meet the other provisions of the law.



Dyslexia Screening Bills Receive Additional Hearing

For the second consecutive week, the House Education Committee heard testimony on bills requiring schools to add dyslexia screening to state-approved reading assessments and provide teachers with prescribed professional training on how to identify and address dyslexia in students.

Requirements contained in **Senate Bills 567 and 568** would go into effect starting with the 2027-2028 school year:

- Screen all students in kindergarten through third grade for characteristics of dyslexia three times per school year.
- Screen students in fourth through 12th grades who demonstrate certain behaviors for characteristics of dyslexia.
- Ensure that a reading intervention program is provided to any student showing characteristics of dyslexia on a screening assessment and provide intervention using a Multi-Tiered System of Supports.
- Provide professional training for all literacy consultants, literacy coaches, and other staff providing reading intervention or instruction; the training would include characteristics of dyslexia and instructional accommodations, among other things.

The committee did not vote on the bills.

Instruction in First Aid Response Kits; Bleeding Control 'Good Samaritan' Act

The House Judiciary Committee heard testimony this week on **House Bill 5741**, which would require the recommended model core curriculum for health education in grades 7-12 include hands-on first aid training using kits comprised of a tourniquet, dressings, and bandages.

The committee also heard testimony on a subsequent bill (HB 5743) that would amend the Good Samaritan Act to provide liability protection for individuals who voluntarily apply bleeding control. The committee did not vote on the bills.

State Board of Ed Passes Librarian Prep Standards

At its meeting on June 11, the State Board of Education approved a **new set of standards for the preparation of school librarians** that would go into effect by Fall 2025, replacing the current standards that have been in effect since 2012. These new standards recognize the wide scope of librarians' duties and services and require that they be specialists in evaluating information, using emerging technologies to advance students' learning, and facilitating access to library resources.