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Legislative Update

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State Budget the Primary Focus of Legislative Work

With spring recess and the April 16th special elections (see page 2) now in the rearview mirror, state lawmakers have resumed their focus on finalizing the fiscal year 2025 state budget.

Per statute, the Legislature must present budget bills to Governor Whitmer by July 1.

This week marked the beginning of subcommittees reporting their budget bills (see below). Once the bills are approved by the Appropriations Committees and passed by the full chambers, conference committees will be appointed to negotiate points of difference between the bills, teeing up votes on the House and Senate floors in May/June.



Senate Subcommittee Moves $20.3 Billion School Aid Budget Recommendation

This week the Senate PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee reported its initial recommendation for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 School Aid budget. **Senate Bill 751** includes a larger increase (3.1%) in the per-pupil foundation allowance than the executive budget proposal (2.5%), while concurring with the Governor on reducing the state's required annual contribution to the Michigan Public School Employees' Retirement System for retiree healthcare.

Regarding Governor Whitmer's call for every 4-year-old in Michigan to have access to free preschool, the Senate panel instead recommends increasing the income threshold to 400% of the federal poverty rate with accompanying boilerplate requiring a program run by a community-based provider to pay their teacher of record a salary no less than the average teacher salary of the surrounding district.

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House Reclaims Democratic Majority



The 54-54 party split in the Michigan House will soon come to end, after two Democratic candidates were elected during special elections held on April 16 to fill seats in House districts 13 and 25. The seats were vacated in November 2023, when then-Representatives Kevin Coleman and Lori Stone resigned after winning mayoral elections in Westland and Warren, respectively.

Once newly-elected Representatives Mai Xiong (House District 13) and Peter Herzberg (House District 25) are seated after their elections arecertified, Democrats will once again have full control of state government. Xiong and Herzberg will maintain their seats through the end of the year.

Every seat in the House is up for election in November, though some currently serving members have declined to run for reelection and one member will be leaving due to term limits.



Redraw of Senate Districts Getting Underway

Following federal approval of the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission's new remedial maps for Detroit-area House Districts, the commission now shifts its work to redrawing Senate districts 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, and 11.

The timeline is as follows:

- Commissioners must propose a map to the federal court no later than **May 22**.
- Public comment will be collected following that date through **June 21**; Information about how to share comments will be posted **here**.
- The commission is to adopt a final map and send it to the federal panel for final approval no later than **June 27**.
- The court is to approve a remedial Senate plan by **July 26**.

Senate Subcommittee Moves $20.3 Billion School Aid Budget Recommendation

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Other highlights in the Senate proposal:

- Increased funding for at-risk and special education
- Increased state investment in English-language learners by 100%
- Making the Student Loan Repayment Assistance program an ongoing initiative with administrative responsibilities transferred to the Michigan Department of Education
- Continued per-pupil mental health and school safety grants
- Dedicated funding to support school libraries
- Investment in a teacher leadership development pilot program

SB 751 now heads to the full Senate Appropriations Committee for consideration. We expect to see the House School Aid Appropriations Subcommittee recommendation next week.



Senate Passes Mandatory Kindergarten Bill

The upper chamber passed **Senate Bill 285** this week by a vote of 21-15, sending it to the House, where it was referred to the Education Committee for consideration. The bill would, beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, make kindergarten (full- or half-day) mandatory for 5-year-olds and require all school districts and public school academies that offer first grade to provide kindergarten. A parent/legal guardian could delay the enrollment of a five-year-old for one school year if they notify the applicable school in writing.

School Library Bills Heard by Senate Panel

The Senate Education Committee heard testimony this week on a three-bill package that would require every public school in the state to have a library by the 2025-2026 school year.

Senate Bills 741-743 would mandate that libraries be housed in a central location outside of classrooms, serve as hubs for community resources, and contain collections that support students in reading independently and enriching their classroom curriculum.

Additionally, every district would be required to have certified school librarians in every school library it currently operates by the 2024-2025 school year, and schools would have to designate staff to supervise students in school libraries when a certified librarian isn't present.

The committee did not vote on the bills.

Cardiac Emergency, AED Bills Headed to Senate Floor

After hearing testimony largely in favor of House Bills **5527** and **5528** on April 18, the Senate Health Policy Committee unanimously adopted the legislative package. Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, schools would be required to develop a cardiac emergency response plan, place defibrillators in accessible locations throughout campus and athletic facilities, and standardize AED usage certification for all high school athletic coaches, not just head coaches. Both bills now move to the full Senate for approval.

