

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Legislature Pulls Bait and Switch on State's K-12 Students

Education Community Implores Legislators to Balance the K-12 Budget

When the Legislature passed this year's K-12 budget last week, the House and the Senate okayed a \$165 per pupil cut to the state's school districts, a deep cut that will reduce services that children need to succeed. But the School Aid Act that was passed included \$100 million in new revenues in order to balance the budget. The Legislature has not come to an agreement on those revenues, and without further action, the cut to the state's school districts will skyrocket.

On Wednesday, the state's Treasury Department sent a memo to Gov. Granholm indicating that the projected shortfall in the School Aid Fund (SAF) is much larger than was earlier predicted. State Treasurer Bob Klein now estimates the budget shortfall will be approximately \$264 million for Fiscal Year 2009-10 if the School Aid budget is enacted in its current form, which could result in a total cut of more than \$300 per pupil this year.

"Not only has the Legislature kept us in the dark for over a quarter of our fiscal year, now they have passed an underfunded budget. A \$165 per pupil cut was damaging enough, but a potential cut of more than \$300 per pupil because they couldn't come to an agreement about revenues is very disappointing," stated David Martell, executive director of Michigan School Business Officials. "The House and the Senate need to stop playing politics with Michigan's children."

Schools have already been forced to reduce services, increase class sizes and cut programs, including early childhood. Sports and arts programs have been cancelled across the state as well, but those measures may not be enough to keep many districts in the black. The Legislature's delay and deep funding cuts will surely mean even more drastic reductions for the state's 1.6 million students midway through the school year.

"This is a clear example of a bait and switch. The Legislature passes a budget late in the year with significant cuts, then does not properly fund the budget, leaving schools holding the bag," said Kathy Hayes, executive director of the Michigan Association of School Boards.

The education advocates listed below are calling on legislators to enact revenue measures immediately in order to fund the budget they have already passed. Most are also urging both chambers to address the state's structural deficit, which has caused a continuous cycle of budget gaps year after year.

“The House and the Senate need to get serious about addressing both the short- and long-term budget issues we face. How can they expect our children to compete in the 21st Century global economy without 21st Century educational opportunities, with such drastic reductions in K-12 and higher education funding? Legislators need to stop playing political chicken and commit to serious funding reform,” stated David Hecker, president of the American Federation of Teachers - Michigan.

AFT Michigan

Calhoun County Intermediate School District

Genesee County Intermediate School District

Grand Rapids Public Schools

Kent County Intermediate School District

Michigan Association of School Administrators

Michigan Association of School Boards

Michigan School Business Officials

Michigan Association of Secondary School Administrators

Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators

Michigan Education Association

Michigan Elementary & Middle School Principals Association

Michigan Small and Rural Schools Association

Middle Cities Education Association

M&M Governmental Consultants

Oakland Schools

Tri-County Alliance

Van Buren Legislative Consortium

Wayne County RESA

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