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Gov. Whitmer announces school funding priorities to transform K-12 education
Plan eliminates funding gap between schools

LANSING, Mich. — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced today her funding priorities for K-12 education as the state readies for major investments in our schools and teachers. Due to the American Rescue Plan and the recently announced state revenue increases, a surplus in funding now exists to make unprecedented investments in our schools, with enough funding to eliminate the funding gap that has existed between schools for many years.

“Right now, we have an unprecedented opportunity to help each and every student recover academically, mentally, and physically,” said **Governor Gretchen Whitmer**. “As we emerge from the pandemic and begin our economic recovery, we must work together to provide equitable school funding, attract and retain top talent, facilitate post-secondary transitions, and build stronger, safer schools. With the resources we have available to us thanks to federal aid and a state surplus, we can making lasting, transformative investments in our kids and schools that will have positive impacts for generations.”

In just a year, Michigan has gone from a nearly \$3 billion deficit to a \$3.5 billion surplus, with a state budget that is primed for investment.

“There isn’t a governor in the country who could have predicted the challenges that lay ahead just over a year ago, but Governor Whitmer has helped lead Michigan through a difficult time and we are now emerging from the public health crisis in a very strong financial position,” said **State Budget Director David Massaron**. “We have a unique opportunity to make investments in education that are lasting and that can better support our teachers and improve outcomes for our students.”

“A once in a century pandemic calls for an unprecedented response,” said **Student Recovery Advisory Council Chair Kevin Polston**. “This historic investment into our education system will support a brighter future for Michigan’s children. The Student Recovery Advisory Council Blueprint for a Comprehensive Recovery lays out evidence-based plans for school leaders and policymakers to make the best use of funds.”

The framework announced today by Gov. Whitmer puts hundreds of millions of dollars toward student academic recovery and mental health, with funding to attract and retain talented teachers, school psychologists, counselors, social workers, and nurses. It also delivers on a decades-old goal of equitable funding so that every district receives the same per-pupil amount to ensure equality regardless of what school a student happens to attend.

“Governor Whitmer has had the backs of educators throughout the pandemic and now is the time for educators to have the Governor’s back with her efforts to release the necessary funding to help teachers educate our students next school year,” said **Rick Meeth**, president of the Bay City Education Association.

Major highlights of the framework include:

- Closing the funding gap between schools in lower and higher-income communities with a \$262 million investment. This goal was put forward as part of Proposal A in 1994.
- Investing funds in students who need them the most through a weighted funding formula which distributes education dollars more equitably.
 - This model supports at-risk students (\$20.4m), special education (\$60m), and English language learners (\$12.2m).
 - For special education specifically, we are allocating \$6 million for pre-employment training, expanding a remote learning library, and hiring more qualified personnel for children with disabilities.
- A combined \$500 million for districts to hire and retain more educators, psychologists, social workers, counselors and nurses, and provide student loan debt relief for mental and physical health professionals who work in high-need districts.
- Substantial investments to help students plan for life after high school by facilitating post-secondary transitions:
 - \$50 million to double funding for CTE, vocational, and skilled trades programs.
 - \$55 million to expand dual enrollment and early middle college programs.
 - And \$100 million to hire more guidance and career counselors.
- \$500 million for school infrastructure.

Other notable pieces include:

- \$402 million to increase the foundation allowance by 4% (\$163/\$326 per pupil)
- \$350 million to stabilize enrollment over 2 years for districts after COVID related unpredictability and pupil losses.
- \$41.5 million for literacy coaches, an increase of \$10 million from current law.
- \$50 million for ongoing student mental health programs.
- A 2% operational funding increase for community colleges.

The plan utilizes the surplus to propose over \$1.7 billion in one-time funding and allocates over \$900 million for ongoing investments, representing Michigan's most significant investment in public education to date.

“As a dad with young kids, I know how stretched thin working parents are especially as COVID has brought to light so many underlying economic, health, and social issues in Michigan,” added **Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist**. “And as I think about my own children’s future, I want them to have the best possible education with all of the resources and support they need. With the billions we have available to us we can make that goal—one shared by every parent—a reality here in Michigan. We can make the necessary investments in our kids and future generations.”