




Michigan Association of Superintendents & Administrators

MASA Legislative Update

Brought to you by: 

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Summary

Game on! As we're sure you're aware, **winter sports are set to return to Michigan schools on Monday**. A lot of conversation took place this week and last on the topic, and it appears that issue is now resolved. More details are below, but

it's important to note, **there are many restrictions and protocols in place and districts should expect further guidance to be issued this coming Sunday, February 7, 2021.**

Many have already noted that while numerous changes to the gathering order have been made, **there is still not an exemption for in-person board meetings. Board meetings, as of now, should take place virtually.**

On the national level, the Senate education committee held a hearing for education secretary nominee Dr. Miguel Cardona on Wednesday. Nominee Cardona vowed to help schools reopen safely and work to provide students and teachers with the support they need.

Finally, the Governor will present her Executive Budget Recommendation next Thursday at 11 a.m. Be on the lookout for an update in your inbox following her remarks.

As always, please [contact MASA](#) with any questions or concerns.

Governor Creates Student Advisory Council

Yesterday, the governor signed E.O. [2021-02](#) to create the Student Recovery

Advisory Council of Michigan. The Council is composed of 29 members appointed by the governor and will serve to provide guidance and recommendations to the governor, state superintendent, and state budget director regarding student recovery. E.O 2021-02 outlines more of the specifics of the Council, but briefly they will be tasked with addressing topics such as academic supports for students who experienced learning loss due to COVID-19, improvements for mental and physical health systems and for students transition into postsecondary education. The Council will also recommend actions to improve out-of-school time supports including summer school, before and after school programs, and extended school years.

Housed within the Department of Technology Management and Budget, the Council will be composed of 29 members. Recommendations from the Council will surround student health and academic recovery in light of COVID-19. The Council will serve until December 31, 2021.

The Council will be chaired by Kevin Polston, the superintendent of Godfrey-Lee Public Schools. Other appointed members include:

- Angela Blood Starr of Kalamazoo, the regional school health coordinator for the Calhoun Intermediate School District, to represent school leaders;

- Nicole Britten of St. Joseph, the health officer for the Berrien County Health Department in Benton Harbor, to represent individuals with expertise in public health;
- Craig Carmoney of Sanford, the superintendent of Meridian Public Schools, to represent school leaders;
- Johanna Clark of Frankenmuth, the principal of Frankenmuth High School, to represent school leaders;
- Mary Gebara of Okemos, a trustee with the Okemos Public Schools Board of Education and chair of staff outreach for the Okemos Education Foundation, to represent school leaders;
- Dominic Gonzales of Lincoln Park, a current high school senior in the Detroit Public Schools Community District, to represent students;
- David Hecker of Huntington Woods, the president of AFT Michigan, to represent community members;
- Paula Herbart of Lansing, the president of the Michigan Education Association, to represent community members;
- Melissa Isaac of Mount Pleasant, the director of education for the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan, to represent school leaders;
- Elizabeth Koschmann of Ann Arbor, a licensed psychologist and an assistant research scientist in psychiatry at the University of Michigan, to represent individuals with expertise in mental health;
- Stephen McNew of Monroe, the superintendent of the Monroe County Intermediate School District, to represent school leaders;

- Vic Michaels of Detroit, the assistant superintendent of student services and athletics for the Archdiocese of Detroit Catholic Schools and director of the Catholic High School League, to represent school leaders;
- Justin Michalak of Grosse Pointe Woods, the assistant superintendent for special education for the Macomb Intermediate School District, to represent school leaders;
- Faye Nelson of Grosse Pointe Woods, the director of Michigan programs for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, to represent community members;
- Nicholas Paradiso III of Grand Rapids, the vice president of government relations for National Heritage Academies, to represent school leaders;
- Lisa Peacock of Traverse City, the health officer for the Health Department of Northwest Michigan, to represent individuals with expertise in public health;
- Angelique Peterson-Mayberry of Detroit, the president of the Detroit Public Schools Community District Board of Education, vice chair of Detroit Youth Sports Commission and a member of the Detroit Public Schools Foundation Board of Directors, to represent school leaders;
- Bill Pink of Ada, the president of Grand Rapids Community College, to represent school leaders;
- Gwendolyn Reyes of Grand Blanc, the assistant clinic director at the Hurley Children's Clinic, director of the pediatric residency program at the Hurley Children's Hospital, medical director for the Flint Community Schools Wellness Program and a clinical assistant professor in the Michigan State

University Department of Pediatrics and Human Development, to represent individuals with expertise in pediatrics;

- Robert Shaner of Shelby Township, the superintendent of Rochester Community Schools, to represent school leaders;
- Anupam Chugh Sidhu of Canton, the instructional technology manager for Wayne RESA and president of the Plymouth-Canton School Board, to represent parents;
- Erin Skene-Pratt of Haslett, the interim network lead for the Michigan After-School Partnership, to represent community members;
- Joshua Smith of Jackson, a school counselor for Western School District in Parma, to represent individuals with expertise in mental health;
- Travis Smith of Marquette, an elementary school principal in Marquette Area Public Schools, to represent school leaders;
- Stephanie Sutton of Commerce Township, a central clinical infection preventionist for the Beaumont Health System, to represent individuals with expertise in public health;
- Gregory Talberg of Williamston, a high school teacher with Howell Public Schools, to represent educators;
- Ridgway White of Fenton, the president and CEO of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation in Flint, to represent community members; and
- Kymberli Wregglesworth of Onaway, a teacher with Onaway Area Community Schools, to represent educators.

- The council will include four participating members of the Legislature: Sen. Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City), Sen. Dayna Polehanki (D-Livonia), Rep. Lori Stone (D-Warren), and Rep. Brad Paquette (R-Niles).
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ICYMI- State to Resume Contact Sports

Yesterday, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced a revision to the MDHHS Epidemic Orders concerning winter sports for Michigan K-12 students. **Beginning Monday, winter sports at all levels will be permitted with strict and specific protocols to ensure student and staff health and safety.** However, **each district may choose whether to allow students to participate in sports.**

Student athletes will be required to wear masks in contact sports, with exceptions for sports where masking poses a threat to safety (e.g., wrestling and competitive cheer). Masks are not optional for sports where they can be worn safely, such as basketball. In sports where masking is not possible, testing will be required for inter-squad competitions, but not for intra-squad practice. **MHSAA also released an [update](#) yesterday that indicates some additional information regarding specifics on testing and masks.**

We encourage all members to review **MDHHS's Guidance for Athletics that is expected to be available on Sunday, February 7 and will specify the**

enhanced testing regimen.

As mentioned above, **yesterday's order does not make any changes to the epidemic order to permit in-person board meetings.** We share your frustration on this topic and have expressed the importance of allowing local districts to have the option to meet in-person.

House Passes Supplemental

On Thursday, the House reported spending bills, on majority party lines, that will allocate federal Coronavirus Relief Funds. HB 4048 is the school aid supplemental and contains \$2.14 billion to schools for COVID funding, which includes mostly federal money, but also includes \$363 million in state dollars.

A few highlights from the spending bill include:

- **Summer Instruction:** Provides **\$21.3 million federal GEER Fund** dollars for teachers and school staff who provide services for a K-8 summer program or high school credit recovery program under Sec. 23b. Each eligible teacher receives \$1,000 and each eligible school staff member receives \$250. Payments may be prorated if funds are insufficient.
 - Provides \$5.9 million federal GEER Fund and \$4.1 million federal ESSER Fund for parents or legal guardians whose child(ren) are

enrolled in summer programming in 2021. Summer programming may include programs under Sec. 23b or other educational enrichment programs. An eligible parent or guardian receives \$50 per enrolled child plus reimbursement for expenses incurred, not to exceed an additional \$200 per child.

- **In-person Instruction Incentive:** Provides **\$363.0 million SAF** for districts that offer in-person instruction by February 15, 2021 and through the remainder of the 2020-21 school year. An eligible district receives \$250 per membership pupil that participates in 100% in-person instruction.
- **Benchmark Assessments:** Provides **\$11.7 million federal GEER Fund** for districts to begin implementation of a benchmark assessment system for the 2021-22 school year. An eligible district receives \$12.50 per FY 2020- 21 membership pupil in grades K-8. A district receiving funding must agree to administer one or more benchmarks to all pupils in grades K-8 within the first 9 weeks and again by the last day of the 2021-22 school year. Recipient districts must submit grade-level benchmark data to MDE and MDE must provide a report by December 31, 2021 based on the benchmark data.

During session on Thursday, the House adopted an amendment sponsored by Rep. Mark Huizenga (R-Walker) to **allow COVID testing money to be used so students can participate in sports**. The amendment did not specify an amount, other than to say, "not less than \$100." It allows for COVID epidemiology and

laboratory capacity to provide testing for sporting events. The amendment includes testing for high school practices and collegiate events.

Additionally, the House **tie barred HB 4049 to the supplemental spending bill. HB 4049 would restrict the director of the Department of Health and Human Services from closing a public or nonpublic school to in-person instruction or prohibiting a qualified sporting event during an epidemic involving coronavirus.** The bill would permit a local health officer to close a public or nonpublic school to in-person instruction or prohibit a qualified sporting event if certain criteria are met.

Joint House and Senate Education Committee Meeting

State Superintendent Dr. Michael F. Rice presented before the House and Senate Education committees this week on several topics regarding the successes and challenges of distance learning, underscoring that **while the need for distance learning is a must during the ongoing pandemic, nothing will fully replace in-person schooling.** MDE sent out a [memo](#) from Dr. Rice that outlines many of the comments made during committee this week.

During testimony, Dr. Rice discussed the possibility of expanding the number of days in the school year. While MASA supports a minimum number of days, we also recognize the very real challenges associated with such a change. Any

increase in days would require a change in law, most assuredly negotiations, and additional funding.

On Thursday, Dr. Rice as well as other experts from MDE, and various mental health service providers testified before the Senate K-12 Appropriations subcommittee on student mental health. Discussion was focused on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected students and what further supports they need to continue engaging in learning.

Chairman Sen. Wayne Schmidt (R-Traverse City) stated that the intent of the meeting was to begin conversations on specific budget sections.

Senate Energy Committee Discusses Broadband

On Tuesday, the Senate Energy and Technology Committee heard introductory testimony on SB 46. This legislation is sponsored by Sen. Aric Nesbitt (R-Lawton) **creates a personal property tax exemption for eligible broadband equipment.**

The bill would retroactively exempt certain equipment from the collection of taxes as of December 31, 2020, if that equipment is part of a broadband service capable of delivering high-speed internet access at speeds of at least 10 megabits per

second download speed and one megabit per second of upload speed.

The bill sponsor testified that the intent of the bill is to **encourage the private sector to begin investing the significant amount of dollars that is needed to finish connecting Michigan**. However, the bill does not incentivize underserved areas.

Unfortunately, according to the Senate Fiscal Agency, the bill would impact growth in personal property taxes for local communities and schools and those same communities and schools would lose revenue when new equipment replaced currently taxed equipment. Any revenue reduction at the district level is made up by the School Aid Fund to keep that district at its specified per-pupil allowance, **which means the entire state sees a reduction in funds available as those districts are made whole**.

This Week's Introduced Bills:

[HB 4074 \(Brann\)](#) Encourages school boards to ensure that a district's social studies curriculum for grades 9 to 12 includes a program of instruction in free enterprise and entrepreneurship. The bill outlines requirements for the instruction program.

[HB 4156 \(Brabec\)](#) Requires a district to employ or contract at least 1 school counselor for every 450 pupils enrolled in the school district, ISD or public school academy. The counselor must meet the qualifications outlined in MCL 380.1233(2).

[SB 107 \(MacDonald\)](#) Requires by February 1, 2020 that the department shall develop or adopt and make available an instructional video regarding the dangers of prescription opioid drug abuse. By the 2022-23 school year, boards shall ensure that the video is implemented in grade 9 health education curriculum.

[SB 102 \(Ananich\)](#) A board of a district shall not publicly identify or stigmatize a student who cannot pay for a meal or who owes meal debt by requiring a student to wear a wristband, handstamp, or any other means.

[SB 68 \(McCann\)](#) Revises compulsory attendance requirements, and reporting of suspensions, expulsion, truancy and absenteeism.

[SB 69 \(McCann\)](#) Creates an advisory committee with MDE related to excused absences.

[SB 83 \(Schmidt\)](#) K-12 School Aid Budget

ICYMI: MDE Updates:

MDHHS To Provide COVID Tests to Educators to Keep Staff, Students and Community Safe as Schools Offer In-Person Learning

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is moving forward with plans to offer a voluntary COVID-19 testing program that will provide weekly tests to educators. [JIC News Release 427 School COVID-19 Testing.pdf](#)

Reminder: Virtual College Financial Aid Night

Students and families looking for help paying for college are encouraged to register for an upcoming Virtual College Financial Aid Night hosted by Michigan Department of Treasury's MI Student Aid team. Sessions will be available from 6:30-8 p.m. EST every Tuesday and Thursday in February. All sessions are free and open to the public. Participants will be able to gather information on the following financial aid topics:

- FAFSA application information
- Federal financial aid programs
- State financial aid programs
- Scholarship searching
- MiSSG Student Portal Accounts

Due to limited space, participants are encouraged to sign up for one session only.

Registration can be completed by visiting the MI Student Aid website
at www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid.