

# LegislativeUpdate

Michigan Association of Superintendents & Administrators | January 31, 2020



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It was State of the State week in Lansing.

We heard the Governor's budget priorities on Wednesday during her second State of the State address. From that speech and subsequent actions, we've been able to figure out that her February 6 budget address will focus on roads, health care, roads, Michigan Reconnect, roads, weighted funding for schools...did we mention roads?

Ahead of her address, the governor announced she would pursue bonding to finance some state road projects and yesterday the State Transportation Commission met and approved the sale of up to \$3.5 billion in bonds to finance 26 new and 23 modified road construction projects, and they moved to accelerate 73 other projects. These bonds will be issued over a four-year period, with heavy spending emphasis in 2021 and 2022. Combined with the \$3.857 billion already invested in road and bridge construction, the \$3.52 billion will bring the state's spending capabilities to \$7.3 billion for a short-term period. Of note, this bonding is not done using MPSERS, but rather a more traditional route for bonding (like that pursued under Governors Engler, Granholm, and Snyder).

Gov. Whitmer also outlined some of her education related goals (which are detailed below), but we anticipate the budget will be a much more instructive document as far as schools are concerned.

As Always...

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## **State of the State Recap**

Wednesday night, with the annual pomp and circumstance we've come to expect from the annual address, Gov. Whitmer delivered her second state of the state. Although it was brief and to the point, her address touched on many topics, including auto insurance, roads, jobs, health care, and of course, K12 education.

Gov. Whitmer focused in on her key priorities for 2020 in this year's speech. Many noted that her tone was very different from her first address. This year's speech emphasized many of the challenges the state faces and some ways the chief executive would be exploring to take them on with or without the legislature. One such issue relevant to MASA members, was an announced partnership with Michigan foundations to help parents and students navigate the third-grade reading law. Barring any changes to the reading law, this partnership executed without legislative input.

The partnership announced includes the Council of Michigan Foundations and the Office of Foundation Liaison as well as member foundations and nonprofit partners throughout the state. The Governor's plan will take a more focused approach to empower families to make decisions based on what is in the best interest of their children. Foundations committed include the Battle Creek Community Foundation, the Community Foundation of Greater Flint, the Max & Marjorie Fisher Foundation, The Skillman Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

The other education focus during her address was related to expanding access to childcare and pre-kindergarten services. Specifically, Gov. Whitmer spoke about raising the entry threshold for Michigan's child care subsidy and providing additional funding to the Great Start Readiness Program. Ms. Whitmer also mentioned the need for a more equitable funding formula for K12 schools and previewed her work to move Michigan toward a weighted funding formula. She also renewed her commitment to fund the Michigan Reconnect program, designed to provide free skills training and degree programs for adults with the goal of 60 percent postsecondary attainment by 2030.

Ms. Whitmer said in her speech, "We're working to make pre-k universal for kids living in districts where test scores are low, or poverty is high. And we're providing better access to childcare for parents who are in school or working full-time."

As mentioned above, the details of these proposals and so much more will be fleshed out as we head toward the Feb. 6 budget address. MASA will be there and send out updates as needed.

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## House Education Committee

This week the House Education committee referred a bill you've read about before, HB 4739. The bill is sponsored by Rep. Ryan Berman (R-Commerce Twp.) and would require the annual inspection of all public and non-public schools. Under the bill, a board member of an ISD or their designee would be required to conduct yearly inspections of ISD and local school buildings before August 15. Under this definition, a school building would include any building used primarily to provide instruction to pupils as well as recreational or athletic structures used by pupils.

In the bill's current form, the cost of the inspections would fall completely on the intermediate school districts. This obviously an unconstitutional unfunded mandate, and as you know, it will be very difficult for districts do this annually. Many inspections are already performed that are not reflected in this legislation and it's unclear how those will be impacted by this bill should it become law.

The bill requires board members to perform open ended and unspecified/undefined health and safety inspections. In some cases, the bill asks five individuals to be responsible for the direct inspection of hundreds, if not thousands of school buildings who have little to no expertise or knowledge about school building safety inspections.

The timeline for remediation is unrealistic given the reality of school district operations and state-imposed bidding requirements. The bill would require that services be contracted within 14 days. Depending on the work that needs to be done, a district may need a bond, a bid, or at least a budget adjustment to be passed by the board in order to enter into a contract. This may not be possible in the mandated timeline. This would certainly be the case where a bond would require voter approval.

During the committee hearing, Minority Vice Chair Darrin Camilleri (D-Brownstone Twp.) proposed two amendments that both failed on party lines. One would revise this bill to only require the inspection of Great Start Readiness Program facilities only, the other would have required the legislature to appropriate sufficient funds from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to reimburse school districts for the cost of inspections.

The bill was reported to the House Ways and Means committee on a 9-4-1 vote. MASA, along with several other education groups will continue to advocate for changes to the bill to make this feasible for our membership or ensure its defeat.

One other bill was on the committee's agenda this week, HB 5236. The bill is sponsored by Rep. Sarah Anthony (D-Lansing) and provides a waiver of application, renewal, and reinstatement fees for teachers and other school employees requiring certification if those applicants are veterans or military spouses. Military spouse would mean the spouse of an active duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces, including the reserve components.

The bill is part of a large package of House Bills that is currently in the House Military Veterans and Homeland Security committee. At the request of the bill sponsor, the House Education committee rereferred the bill to that committee. MASA does not have a position on the bill but will continue to monitor it in the House Military Veterans and Homeland Security committee.

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## ICYMI: MDE Updates

### Survey Opens for Public Input on Updating Top 10 Strategic Plan

An online [survey](#) is being offered for the public to help review and update Michigan's Top 10 in 10 strategic education plan, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). Since February 2016, the current strategic education plan for making Michigan a Top 10 education state in 10 years has been the guiding document for Michigan's education efforts. During the September 2019 State Board of Education meeting, Dr. Rice expressed the need to review and update that plan.

Based on recent interviews with State Board of Education members, education stakeholders and partners, tribal partners, and MDE staff, potential goals were explored and are included within the survey for input. A strategic plan drives priorities; concentrates energy and resources; strengthens operations; and sets measures of success to ensure all stakeholders are working together toward common goals.

The survey will close on February 7, 2020. The link can be found on the MDE website at [www.michigan.gov/Top10in10](http://www.michigan.gov/Top10in10). A draft of the updated plan is expected to be presented to the State Board of Education in late spring of 2020.

### MEMO #020-20

#### *Additional Forgiven Time and Professional Development*

Section 101 of the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1701) requires that school districts offer at least 1,098 hours of instruction as well as provide a minimum of 180 days of instruction each school year. If a district needs to cancel an instructional day, Section 101(4) of the State School Aid Act allows districts to count up to six days (and the equivalent hours) of "forgiven time" toward the day and hour requirements, if instruction is not provided because of conditions not within the control of school authorities, such as severe storms, fires, epidemics, utility power unavailability, water or sewer failure, or health conditions. The common term for this type of cancellation among Michigan school districts is "snow day."

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Forgiven\\_Time\\_679826\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Forgiven_Time_679826_7.pdf)

### Gearing up for the 2020 Census - More Information and How to Engage

Schools and districts are encouraged to support the state's efforts to assure that ALL Michigan residents are counted in the 2020 US Census. You can assure that families in your community are aware that participation in the census is convenient, confidential, and critical to assure that Michigan receives its share of federal tax dollars returning to support our schools and other important federal programs. More information and resources can be found online:

- State of Michigan's Census 2020 website: [www.michigan.gov/census2020](http://www.michigan.gov/census2020)
  - The [Toolkit](#) on this site has sample messaging and graphics to include in newsletters to families in your community
- Be Counted Michigan 2020 (statewide census resources): [www.becountedmi2020.com](http://www.becountedmi2020.com)
  - This site includes contact information for [regional census hubs and local agencies](#) coordinating census activities – contact the one nearest you to engage in local efforts
  - See the ["resources"](#) page for downloadable materials to share in your community
- US Census Bureau Census 2020 website: <https://2020census.gov/en>

### Statistics in Schools

The US Census Bureau is kicking off 2020 with recruitment for the Statistics in Schools Ambassador Program. Please share the messaging below with teachers in your schools and districts.

- The U.S. Census Bureau is looking for teacher ambassadors to join the Statistics in Schools Ambassador Program. Are you a Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade teacher or know someone who is? Email [CLMSO.SISambassador@census.gov](mailto:CLMSO.SISambassador@census.gov) for more information and how to apply to represent your school and community on a national scale.

Use census resources in the classroom – lesson plans, data, and more available for free at: [www.census.gov/schools](http://www.census.gov/schools).