



September 25, 2025

Dear Honorable Members of the Michigan Legislature:

On behalf of the superintendents serving Clinton, Eaton, Ingham, and Shiawassee counties, we are reaching out to urge the passage of a responsible education budget by October 1 to avoid a government shutdown. Michigan law requires that both school districts and the Michigan Legislature adopt an education budget by July 1. Even without a state approved FY26 budget, we have ALL completed our jobs to the best of our ability by passing our budgets by July 1. We need you to do your part.

The lack of a finalized FY26 K-12 budget is already being felt in districts through delayed hiring, programs that have been paused or cancelled, and the development of plans to shut down school operations. With this in mind, we respectfully ask for your support in three critical areas:

First, finalize a balanced budget prior to October 1. Schools need stable funding to provide the continuity that families and communities count on and the education our children deserve.

Second, protect the School Aid Fund from diversions to other purposes such as roads or increased operational spending for four-year institutions. Every dollar matters in classrooms, especially smaller and rural districts when funding is redirected away from K-12 education.

Third, ensure essential categorical funds remain intact. These resources are lifelines that allow us to meet the needs of all students. They include but are not limited to:

- **School Safety and Mental Health** – Schools are often the first and only place where children access mental health support. Funding employs school counselors, social workers, mental health specialists, and safety officers who help students cope with anxiety, trauma, and other challenges that affect their ability to learn. Dedicated resources also allow for implementation of school safety upgrades.
- **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** – CTE programs provide direct access to skills that lead to in-demand jobs while strengthening the economic future of the region. Whether it's advanced manufacturing, healthcare, IT, or skilled trades, CTE provides pathways for students who learn best through hands-on experiences.

- **Early Childhood and Before and After School Programs** – Early access to high quality programming is critical to educational outcomes. These include programs such as the Great Start Readiness Programs, Great Start Collaboratives and Parent Coalitions, and Strong Beginnings.
- **Special Education** – Funds for special education are allocated based on student IEP requirements. When special education funding isn't adequate, funds get supplemented from general education classrooms. Funding at appropriate levels supports all students.
- **At-Risk Funding** – Students who are most at-risk often need additional built-in support throughout the year. Needs vary by student and district, and at-risk funding is important to support each student and their individual needs.
- **Transportation** – In mid-Michigan, buses travel hundreds of miles each day across rural back roads, suburban neighborhoods, and city streets. Increasing fuel, maintenance, and labor costs make it nearly impossible for districts to balance budgets without dedicated transportation funding.
- **Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System (MPSERS)** – State assistance to offset mandated retirement contributions ensures financial stability for schools and peace of mind for staff. Maintaining the UAAL cap also honors commitments made to our educators, reinforcing the message that Michigan values those who dedicate their lives to teaching and serving children.

Our communities are resilient, but we cannot do this work without predictable and reliable support from the state. These funds are not extras, they are the foundation for safe, equitable, and high-quality education across Michigan.

We stand ready to partner with you to ensure that every student in our state has opportunities to learn and thrive. Thank you for your service and your continued commitment to Michigan's children.

With respect and appreciation,

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