

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to propose \$507 million for classroom spending

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LANSING, Mich. (WLNS)-- - Over the last 25 years, the funding for Michigan education has been scarce, but Governor Gretchen Whitmer is hoping to help fund K-12 public schools with a new proposal.

Gov. Whitmer is planning to propose a plan tomorrow, that includes \$507 million to help boost K-12 spending. It includes a \$180 per-pupil raise to help fund with special education needs, vocational schooling and low-income communities and students.

"If you want to provide equity, you have to take a lot of other factors into consideration, before you just say here's a dollar amount for each kid and that can look so much different in different parts of the state," said Mason Public Schools superintendent, Ronald Drzewicki.

The School Finance Research Collaborative has done research on costs per student, including food services, transportations, etc. Matt Gillard is the CEO of Michigan's Children and a member of the collaborative and says Gov. Whitmer's plan is a step in the right direction but we have a lot of work to do to get where we need to be.

"It costs more to educate a special education student and poor families, economically disadvantages students need more attention and Michigan's finance, education finance structure has done a bad job of recognizing that, and we've fallen behind other states," said Gillard.

The proposal will also include tripling the amount of literacy coaches provided to schools. President of the Michigan Education Association, Paula Herbart, says it's a necessity and something that has been really lacking.

"Not every teacher has had the opportunity to have the ability in literacy coaching that they need and these coaches would support those educators and ensure that our students are ready to go by 3rd grade," said Herbart.

For Mason Public Schools, Drzewicki says he plans for the money to be used for making sure basic needs are kept, but not every school district will be the same.

"Additional staffing, the curriculum and other things like to make sure we have enough lunch aids and custodial maintenance support, all the things that make up a very effective school districts and it's operations.," said Drzewicki.

Money will be spent differently for schools and will fund whatever resources need the most attention.

It will also impose a new law to eventually must third-graders to be held back if they are behind in reading.

6 News will continue to follow the story for you tomorrow.

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