



June, 2019

### Supporting Thriving Students in the Michigan State Budget

Michigan's children will be our next scientists, entrepreneurs, teachers, parents, laborers, artists and lawmakers, and our future depends on preparing them for education, work, and life. There is universal agreement that a high-quality K-12 education matters for our future, but our results are not meeting the outcomes we need. By the time poor children are in the 6th grade, they have spent 6,000 fewer hours learning, resulting in gaps in their academic success. By the third grade, white students are well above their peers of color in reading, by the eighth grade those gaps are even larger for math outcomes. High school dropout rates remain higher for Black, Hispanic and American Indian students, and for those facing life challenges like poverty, disability and homelessness. Years of research and the lived experience of youth and families have taught us that in order to succeed, students need access to trained school professionals who can recognize and respond to their needs, basic resources that encourage learning, and academic tools and pathways that enable their educational success.

**Current Situation: The Governor, House, and Senate have finalized their budget recommendations in these areas. Both chambers will go to a Conference Committee to iron out differences. Leaders in Lansing are currently negotiating a potential significant state revenue increase, which if realized could significantly affect the available resources in the School Aid budget. It is unclear how long into the summer negotiations between the Legislature and the Governor will last. Informing elected officials about how best to prioritize spending our tax dollars must be a year-round endeavor.**

#### Recommendations

- **Support the Governor's recommendation to increase funds for pupils labeled at-risk or in need of special education, and support the Senate's overall increase to the per-pupil foundation grant.** The Governor's proposal would increase the overall minimum and basic per-pupil grants by between \$120 and \$180 respectively; state reimbursement for special education services by \$120 million; funding for academically at-risk students by \$102 million; and career and technical education funding by \$50 million. The Senate proposes increasing the minimum and basic foundation grants by \$135 and \$270 respectively and but allocates smaller increases for at-risk grants. The House approved a smaller per-pupil foundation increase and no at-risk increase. All parties proposed equal increases for K-12 special education. Michigan must move its investment towards the findings of the School Finance Research Collaborative in order to assure that all students may receive the school resources they need to learn.
- **Support the House's \$2 million increase for School-Based and School-Linked "adolescent" Health Centers in the Health and Human Services Budget.** Michigan's Children recommends a \$1.5 million increase, The Governor and Senate maintained current year funding at \$6.1 million, but the House Health and Human Services budget

proposes \$2 million. School-based and school-linked health services are key access points for students' physical and mental health services, resulting in improved educational and life outcomes, especially for children and youth who have experienced trauma.

- **Urge House and Senate leaders to dedicate some increased School Aid funds to evidence-based afterschool and summer learning programs.** Neither the House nor Senate included any resources dedicated to afterschool and summer learning programs, but increased overall educational investment could be devoted to these programs, and we will be encouraging that attention through the budget process. There has been no dedicated state funding for these programs since 2011, forcing local programs to rely on federal funds, parent contributions and local philanthropy, creating enormous gaps in availability for quality programs around the state.
- **Urge House and Senate leaders to support the Governor's proposal to increase the per-pupil grant for Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) by \$1,250 to \$8,500.** The Senate included a \$5 million increase for GSRP and the House has proposed a slight cut to overall funding. Increasing funding for GSRP is a positive step that will improve the early learning experiences of many young children and expansions to full-day care often better support their parents. However, research suggests that pre-school provides the most benefit to the lowest-income families and children.
- **Support the Senate's proposal to maintain \$30 million dedicated to mental health supports in schools, but ask to allocate ISD mental health service grants based on student population instead of equal grants for every ISD to better direct resources based on student need. Also support the House's increase of funding for ensuring that adolescent health centers can access mental health professionals.** Michigan's Children is supportive of expanding support to schools to ensure access to trained mental health professionals and services on-site and through community partnerships.
- **Support the House and Senate's current proposals to maintain funding for alternative diploma paths,** including Strict Discipline Academies, and Dropout Prevention and Recovery programs.
- **Urge House and Senate leaders to include language and funding in the budget dedicated to improving school district's capacity to coordinate integrated student services** between schools, service providers, parents, and community partners. Neither the Governor's proposal nor either legislative proposal identified this priority, though it is possible that with a significant increase in their per-pupil funding, local systems could dedicate some of that new resource to staff devoted to this integration.