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# Whitmer proposes eliminating longtime school funding gap



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By: [AP Newsroom](#)

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Michigan overhauled the financing of public education.

Under the Democratic governor's revised proposal, all districts and charter schools would receive \$8,692 in base per-student aid from the state.

That is \$581, or 7%, more for most.

An existing \$418 gap between lower- and higher-funded schools would be fully closed.

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Whitmer also proposes spending \$1 billion to upgrade school infrastructure and to hire more teachers and psychologists, counselors, social workers and nurses who work in schools.

Michigan Education Association President Paula Herbart said Whitmer's recommendations are in line with what her organization believes is necessary for student to recover from the pandemic.

*Investing more in our students – especially those who need greater support – is the right move at the right time, as are targeted programs to ensure the mental and physical health of our kids. Improving funding equity between districts, addressing declining enrollment and providing greater investment for school infrastructure will all help improve safety and stability of schools for Michigan's children.*

*“This is a massive opportunity to address decades of chronic underfunding in our schools and we cannot squander it. I’m pleased Republican legislative leaders have committed to working with the governor on next year’s budget – together, we can ensure decisions that value our students and educators by funding a quality public education in every community.*

*“The first step in that process must be the immediate allocation of more than \$4 billion in federal school relief funds that have hung in the balance for too long. It’s time for Republican legislative leaders to work with the governor to get that money where*

*are safe places for learning and provide the support students need to keep achieving despite COVID-19.”*

Paula Herbart, MEA president

State Rep. Thomas Albert wants the school funding plan focuses on in-person learning for the coming academic year.

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*“Support for our kids should always be a shared top priority – and it is particularly important after the challenges of the past 15 months. My primary focus is on helping students catch up on learning lost during the COVID-19 pandemic, and making sure that in-person instruction is prioritized moving forward. Most kids learn better in the classroom, and the school setting is also critically important to their social and emotional growth. I hope the governor shares that priority.*

*“The House budget prioritizes mental health, special education and continuing to close the funding gap between districts. I am encouraged to see the governor recognize these priorities and*

*regard to pension costs. Our broken retirement system now eats up roughly 25 cents of every school aid dollar collected from Michigan taxpayers. The additional money available for this budget cycle provides a great opportunity to restore the funding the governor raided from the pension system last year.*

*“The House has a track record of bipartisan support for its education plans – earlier this month, initial versions of school aid budget bills were approved by large margins. Our budget plans will evolve but their primary missions will remain the same because they are in the best interests of Michigan.”*

Rep. Thomas Albert, House Appropriations Chair

Michigan's Children "enthusiastically" supported the school funding plan, saying it helps ensure K-12 education in the state will be student-centered.

*Michigan’s Children enthusiastically supports the Governor’s funding strategy for K-12 students as a needed approach to ensure that the individual learning needs of the state’s 1.5 million K-12 students are met so that each can prosper and secure a strong future.*

*Michigan’s K-12 students come from various backgrounds – half are economically disadvantaged - and tens of thousands are experiencing homelessness, foster care, or a diagnosed disability. A weighted formula allows for additional funding to pay for these costly and specialized education needs.*

*This is a big part of what we talk about when we say education must be student-centered.*

*Early On, a state program that addresses developmental delays in Michigan's infants and toddlers, by offering critical evaluation and services to mitigate future learning issues. This sizable investment will dramatically help reduce disparities in early special education outcomes, helping put more young children on the road to success in school and later, work and life.*

*Both are important investments in our state's children, youth, and families. We call on the state Legislature - both Democrats and Republicans - to support these investments in Michigan's kids and families.*

Matt Gillard, president & CEO of Michigan's Children

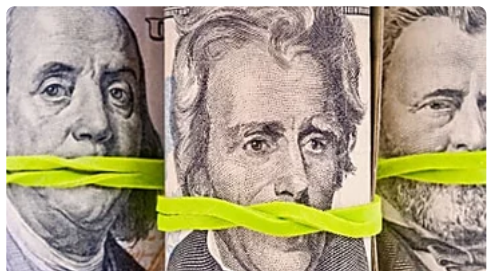
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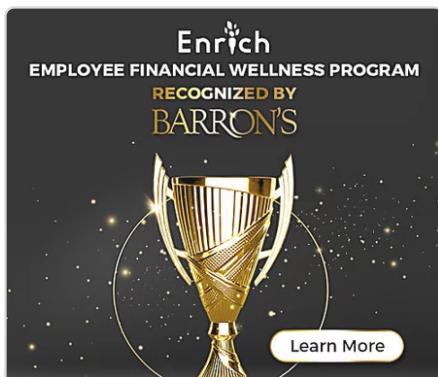
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