



# *News Release*

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## **STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION URGES STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATORS TO PRESERVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN**

May 12, 2020

LANSING – The State Board of Education today adopted a resolution urging Michigan’s state legislature and the Michigan Congressional delegation to support – actively, individually, and collectively – any bill to preserve educational services to Michigan school children that have been threatened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The resolution noted that this public health emergency has had adverse economic and educational impacts on states across the country and on countries across the world, especially on those states and countries with significant numbers of individuals who have gotten sick from and/or died from the virus.

“The state board has a constitutional responsibility to advise the legislature about the financial requirements for public education, so that is why we have adopted this resolution: to encourage folks to work with both state and federal legislators to ensure a reasonable budget for our children and our schools,” said State Board of Education President Dr. Casandra Ulbrich.

Ulbrich explained that the administration’s preliminary revenue estimates indicate that there will be shortfalls of \$1 billion to \$3 billion this year and \$1 billion to \$4 billion next year in the state’s general fund and school aid fund combined. These numbers will be updated at the May 15 revenue estimating conference. A revenue shortfall of \$1.5 billion would require a cut in excess of \$1,000 per pupil, all else being equal.

### **STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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No state with significant numbers of individuals who have gotten sick from and/or died from the virus can address the attendant effects without federal support, the resolution said. Congress has acknowledged this fact with the enactment of COVID-19 relief bills in the last two months, and while helpful and appreciated, these measures are insufficient to shield our children and families from profound harm.

As of Sunday, May 10, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in 4,081,970 confirmed positive cases and 281,399 deaths worldwide; 1,323,028 confirmed cases and 79,124 deaths in the United States; and 47,138 confirmed cases and 4,551 deaths in Michigan.

When the first confirmed positive cases of the coronavirus were identified in Michigan, Governor Gretchen Whitmer acted promptly to protect the health and welfare of Michigan's students and educators by closing schools for in-person instruction for the remainder of the current school year, and issued a Stay Home, Stay Safe order for the entire state to help stem the spread of the coronavirus throughout the state.

"No child asked to grow up in a pandemic and, to the absolute extent possible, no child should be harmed in his or her education by the fact that he or she did grow up in part during a pandemic," said State Superintendent Dr. Michael F. Rice. "Our job is to protect and to educate children, and we need to preserve substantially education funding to do so."

Rice noted that six studies in the last six years have all indicated the same thing: Michigan underfunds its public schools. Though the state board and state superintendent have advocated for greater adequacy and equity in Michigan school funding, the resolution approved by the state board today does not seek to address this historic inadequate and inequitable funding system. Rather, the resolution attempts to protect children from profound cuts to Michigan's public schools during a pandemic.

The state board resolution also urges members of the state education community to share their related thoughts with members of the state legislature and with members of the Michigan Congressional delegation.

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Link to State Board of Education Resolution:

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Resolution\\_on\\_Funding\\_to\\_Preserve\\_Educational\\_Services\\_for\\_Children\\_FINAL\\_690373\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Resolution_on_Funding_to_Preserve_Educational_Services_for_Children_FINAL_690373_7.pdf)

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