

## **WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?**

- *In 2018, only 3 percent of students were reading at grade level, and zero 11<sup>th</sup> graders were deemed college-ready each of the last five years. The district is more than \$16 million in deb, with \$700 per student being spent to pay back debt every year. We can't set our kids up for failure. It's time to make a real, meaningful change that will get our students on a path to postsecondary success and economic opportunity.*

## **IS THE STATE OF MICHIGAN GOING TO FORGIVE THE DEBT?**

- *If the local school board approves this plan, the governor's office will work with the treasury department and the Legislature on providing transition support that could be used to stabilize their finances.*

## **HOW WILL THE STATE MAKE SURE THE K-8 SCHOOLS ARE BETTER PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS?**

- *The governor's office will work with the Michigan Department of Education and the local school board on an improvement plan that prepares every K-8 student for success. Right now, our kids aren't getting on paths to success. In 2018, only 3 percent of students were reading at grade level. That has to change. We're going to develop a real plan that prepares our kids.*

## **WHAT HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE AREA HAVE AGREED TO THIS PARTNERSHIP?**

- *Seven area high schools have expressed interest in partnering with the Benton Harbor Area Schools to help get high school students on paths to postsecondary education. These are for students who want to seek a more traditional high school experience. For students who want to seek a CTE-focused education or an Early/Middle Colle experience, Lake Michigan Academy at Lake Michigan College has agreed to partner with the district and help our students focus on career pathways and earn college credit while still in high school.*

## **HOW WILL HIGH SCHOOL FAMILIES KNOW WHAT HIGH SCHOOL THEY'LL TRANSFER TO? DO THEY PICK THEM OR ARE THEY SELECTED FOR THEM?**

- *We are still in the planning process. It's likely that families will be able to choose the high school their child will attend. This won't happen until the 2020-21 school year. Transportation will be provided to the area high schools at no cost to families.*

### **WILL TRANSPORTATION BE INCLUDED IN THIS DEAL?**

- *Yes, every high school student will have transportation to and from their new high school at no cost to families.*

### **WHAT ABOUT SPORTS?**

- *Lake Michigan College will support all sports except for football, and the area high schools will support all sports.*

### **WHAT ABOUT THE MASCOT?**

- *LMC has the option to carry the Tigers mascot at Lake Michigan Academy, the CTE-focused high school and early/middle college program on the campus of Lake Michigan College.*

### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING?**

- *The district will still have control of the school building while high school operations are suspended. The governor is ready to work with the district to make sure we find the best long-term use for the high school but this will ultimately be a local decision.*

### **WHAT IF THE SCHOOL BOARD DOESN'T APPROVE THIS PLAN?**

- *This is the best plan to get Michigan high school students on paths to postsecondary education and allowing K-8 students to stay close to home. If the School Board chooses not to pursue this option, state law dictates that either the entire district will dissolve or be converted into a charter school system. These aren't the options we want. That's why we're putting forward a compromise to stabilize their finances and focus on younger students in Benton Harbor.*

### **HAS THIS WORKED IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS?**

- *This a bold, innovative solution. We don't want to see complete loss of districts like what we saw in Buena Vista and Inkster – or converting to a charter school district, like what we saw in Muskegon Heights.*

**WHAT ABOUT THE EDUCATORS WHO WORK AT THE HIGH SCHOOL?  
WILL THEY LOSE THEIR JOBS?**

- *Through the partnership with area high schools, certified teachers will be able to transfer and teach at another school.*

**DO YOU ANTICIPATE A LOT OF PUSHBACK ON YOUR PLAN?**

- *This is the best plan to get Michigan high school students on paths to postsecondary success and allow K-8 students to stay close to home. It has the support of the MEA and the current superintendent of the Benton Harbor Area Schools. This is about ensuring our kids can get a great public education, no matter what community they live in.*

**DISSOLVING THE DISTRICT WOULD REQUIRE A BILL TO GO THROUGH THE LEGISLATURE. DO YOU THINK THE LEGISLATURE WOULD VOTE TO CLOSE DOWN A SCHOOL?**

- *The state has been coordinating with local legislators on this, and legislators may feel they have no other option given the academic and financial distress of the district. Anyone who is committed to making sure our kids can get a great education knows that this is the best option for Benton Harbor families.*

**HOW WILL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO AREN'T AS PREPARED AS THEY SHOULD BE CATCH UP WHEN THEY GET TO OTHER SCHOOLS?**

- *If this plan is approved, we will have a year of intensive planning to make sure kids can get on track when they get to their new school. Community partners are committed to be a part of the solution.*

**WHAT ABOUT PROM?**

- *LMC will have a prom, as will the area high schools.*

**WHAT IF I HAVE A CHILD IN SPECIAL EDUCATION?**

- *It's likely that families will be able to choose the high school their child will attend and we will make sure transportation isn't a barrier.*