



Annalisa Grunwald
734.709.3024
agrunwald@gomasa.org



Cathy Bacile Cunningham
517.281.2979
ccunningham@gomasa.org



John Tramontana
517.327.5908
jtramontana@masb.org



Chelsey Martinez
517.643.9087
chelseym@michiagnprincipals.org

Press Release

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Education Group Leaders to Snyder: Invest in Public Education

LANSING, Mich. – As Gov. Rick Snyder prepares to deliver his budget on Wednesday, four Michigan education associations that represent leaders and decision makers in Michigan’s 640 school districts and ISDs have a message for him: make a data-informed decision and invest in public education.

The Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference shows the School Aid Fund will grow by about \$338 million dollars this year. Leaders of the **Michigan Association of School Boards, Michigan Association of School Administrators, Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators** and the **Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals** say that with this growth comes a tremendous opportunity for much-needed investment in public education. With Michigan far underspending on education, according to the state-commissioned Michigan Education Finance Study, they strongly encourage Gov. Snyder to not miss this opportunity and make much-needed investments.

“Every day, public schools struggle to find the resources to provide a quality education to every student,” said Don Wotruba, Executive Director of MASB. “We haven’t properly funded public education in this state for decades. We know this from the Drake Report in 2014 and the recent adequacy study. With the SAF growing, we have the opportunity to start reinvesting in our schools and in our kids. The responsible, the prudent, the right thing to do, is to start providing school districts with the money necessary to properly educate students.”

However, as recently as Lame Duck, Gov. Snyder promoted an accounting gimmick that would shift more than \$400 million out of the SAF and into the General Fund—a devastating cut of about \$260 per pupil that public schools can’t afford.

“The cuts approach has already been tried, and we’ve seen the results in our public schools—programs have been eliminated, teachers have been laid off, buildings have closed,” said Chris Wigent, Executive Director of the Michigan Association of School Administrators. “Disinvesting in our schools is not the answer, and we advise the Governor not to revisit the tax-shift accounting gimmick. Governor Snyder



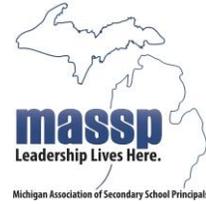
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says he relies on data and evidence to make important decisions. When it comes to school funding, the data and evidence can't be any clearer: We must put our students first and invest in public schools."

Further, Gov. Snyder has spoken at great length about the need to improve our state's infrastructure, and the education groups agree that this is a critical issue. However, this must not be just in the state's physical infrastructure, but also in human capital and in our schools. These investments are necessary to connect careers with education and further our state as a whole.

"We need more staff so students can have more individualized attention to get as much support as they need in the classroom," said William Miller, Executive Director of MAISA. "What happens to the current supports if we have to cut \$260 per student? Talking with educators and district leaders from around the state, I can tell you that there is no place left to cut."

"Without a robust public education system, we can't grow our workforce and our population," said Wendy Zdeb, Executive Director of MASSP. "Our young people will continue to leave the state to find employment elsewhere—making the Governor's goal of having 10 million people in Michigan by 2020 nearly impossible. Michigan used to be a destination state. We need to show that we're going to make the proper investments to secure our state's future, and that means investing in our public schools."

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