

BACKtoSCHOOL

2015



STATE SENATOR

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DEAR NEIGHBOR:

With summer winding down, there's an air of excitement as families eagerly await the start of school. There's old friends to see, new friends to make and so much to learn and do!

We all share a commitment to see Michigan's children achieve and excel. That's why investing in education is one of our top priorities. By working together, we can make sure our schools are able to prepare students for the many opportunities of the 21st century economy.

I hope this Back to School report, with a special section on school funding, is informative and useful to you.

Best wishes to all those beginning a new school year!

Sincerely,



READY, SET, WALK!

This year, National Walk to School Day will be celebrated on October 7. More than 250 Michigan schools participated in the event in 2014.

Walking to school provides great exercise, a chance to spend special time with older siblings, parents or grandparents, a good way to practice safety, and most of all... it's fun!

GREEN: EDUCATION BUDGET INVESTS IN MICHIGAN'S CHILDREN

Michigan's 1.5 million schoolkids are at the head of the class when it comes to the state budget!

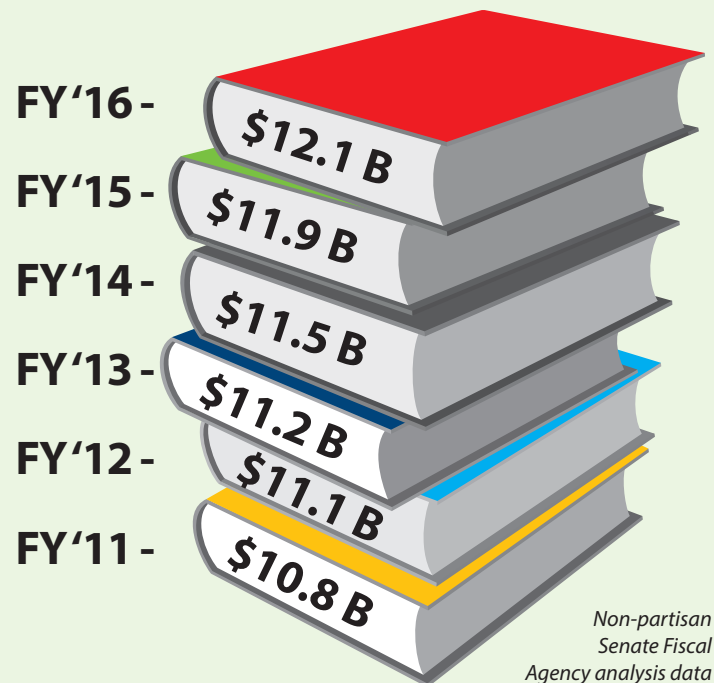
For the fifth year in a row, the Legislature increased funding for K-12 education. *That's more than \$1.3 billion in new state funding for our schools since 2011.*

Along with an increase in per pupil funding, we added money to improve early literacy and expand skilled trades training so all our students—from the youngest to the oldest—are better prepared for success.

We also provided a new \$10 million for Early/Middle College programs. This five-year high school program allows a student to earn a high school diploma and either an associate's degree, technical certification, or 60 transferable college credits at the same time.

An additional \$216 million was allotted to help pay the increasing costs of retiree benefits over and above the district share so more dollars can be focused on the classroom.

K-12 EDUCATION FUNDING STATE FUNDING FROM STATE RESOURCES



I look forward to visiting schools in my district during March is Reading Month as a guest reader to join in the fun!

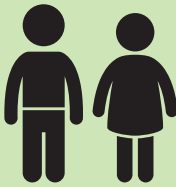
BUDGET FOCUS ON THIRD GRADE READING

Even in today's digital world, the ability to read is important to success in school and the workforce.

By the fourth grade, as students transition from learning to read to reading to learn, those who aren't proficient in reading have difficulty catching up and continue to struggle in school.

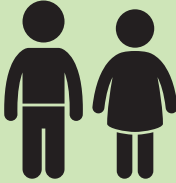
Reading proficiency has been identified as an area of concern for Michigan students. The budget invests \$31.5 million for a third grade reading initiative. The plan focuses on increased classroom time in reading for students in grades K-3, professional development for teachers, literacy coaches and parental support, including home visits.

MICHIGAN GOES BACK TO SCHOOL!



Public School Students:

1.5 million
(2013-14)



Non-Public School Students:

113,128
(2013-14)



Required Days of Instruction

175 days



Public School Teachers:

101,338
(2013-14)



Non-Public School Teachers:

7,571
(2013-14)



School Buses:

14,533
(2013-14)

GREEN SUPPORTS BILLS TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

Many high-paying and essential jobs in Michigan are in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math – the STEM fields. Yet many of these positions remain unfilled.

An increased focus on STEM education will better prepare our students for success in these highly skilled areas. I recently supported legislation that would allow a student to receive a STEM endorsement on his or her high school diploma and transcript by meeting additional requirements in science and math and taking coursework involving technology and engineering activities.

A STEM endorsement will set our students apart as they pursue their educational or career opportunities. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are projected to be more than 250,000 STEM-related jobs in the state in the next few years.

SB 139: A RECIPE FOR FUNDRAISING SUCCESS!

Schools once again have the option to host traditional fundraisers, such as bake sales, that sell sweet treats not on the federally approved "Smart Snack" list.

School clubs, athletic teams and other organizations have been unable to raise money at school by selling food such as brownies or cupcakes under federal rules that went into effect last year.

A new law directs the state Department of Education to ensure local control by giving schools the option of holding two such school bake sales or fundraisers per week. Clearly, these decisions are best left in the hands of the schools, parents and administrators.



BUS SAFETY RULES

Bus stops and crossings can be hazardous, especially for young children. Use extra care around parked cars.

MOTORISTS

- When the YELLOW overhead lights are flashing, prepare to stop.
- Flashing RED lights on a school bus mean one thing—STOP—at least 20 feet from the school bus. Remain stopped until the flashing RED lights are turned off or the bus resumes its travels.
- When the YELLOW hazard lights are flashing, move with caution.

It is not necessary to stop for a school bus stopped on the other side of a divided highway where the road is separated by a barrier, such as a concrete or grass median, island, or other structures that separate the flow of traffic.

Adapted from What Every Driver Must Know (www.michigan.gov/sos)