

School Budgets Doomed to Face Mid-Year Cuts... **A G A I N !**

**SPECIAL
LEGISLATIVE
EDITION!**

Elected officials in Lansing are facing a \$4 billion shortfall in the state budget. Drastic actions *already* taken to reduce spending include:

- Reducing the number of state employees to pre-1973 totals
- \$3 billion cut from state services and programs
- \$250 million slashed from higher education
- Arts and cultural programs funding reduced by 1/3
- K-12 schools cut mid-year two years in a row

Despite Governor Granholm's administration already having cut \$3 billion, severe shortages loom ahead.

In an emergency meeting on January 17 with the Governor's staff, K-12 education leaders were put on notice that another mid year cut was likely. Projections vary but public schools are being told to prepare for cuts to the per pupil foundation allowance (or the equivalent in categoricals) between \$100 - \$220 per pupil. In a district like Huron Valley Public Schools, that could mean additional cuts of nearly \$2.5 million.

PTA and PTSA leaders are encouraged to contact local school district administration to find out how these cuts will impact their children and contact your legislators immediately. Sample letters and talking points are included in this special edition of the *Bulletin*.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION TODAY in order to avoid further cuts to K-12 schools.

 **Michigan
PTSA[®]**
Advocacy Day 2007

Join us!

Radisson Hotel
February 15, 2007
Downtown Lansing

Advocacy Workshops
Powerful Speakers
Lunch with Legislators
Networking with Fellow Advocates

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President's Message

by Barbara Blanchard, President

Dear Parents Who Value the Quality of Their Children's Education,

Now is the time to contact your Legislators and give them factual reasons **NOT** to cut/reduce K-12 Public School Funding this year!

IF YOU DON'T DO IT, IT MIGHT NOT GET DONE!

Call or email your representatives and senators today and talk about your school district and what the fall-out may be if school funding is cut or reduced this year.

Some ideas to consider:

1. Your school district has been fiscally responsible.
2. Program cuts have been made.
3. Michigan needs to give our children the best education possible. **Adequate** won't make them competitive in the work force or enable them to achieve a higher education.
4. Investment in our children's education is an investment in Michigan's economy. We need to continue creating an educated work force.
5. There can never be "make-up" time for lost **QUALITY EDUCATION** for our children.

The PTA Mission is three-fold; to support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools, community, and before governmental bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children; to assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children; and to encourage parent and public involvement in the public schools of this nation. Now is the time to put this Mission into practice! Remember, PTA speaks for Every Child with One Voice. Make YOUR voice heard in Lansing.

Thank you for taking the time to address this very important issue. Your children will also thank you.



Barb Blanchard
MPTSA President

Capitol Connections

by Kevin McLogan, Vice President for Legislative Activity

In my last column I talked about how the future is unclear in the face of the election results, but now the picture is becoming clearer and it is not pretty. In the coming weeks the Legislature and the Governor will have to make some decisions on cuts to the money that funds public schools because of the tough economic times that we are experiencing in this state.

Let's cut to the chase. If our real goal is to move forward in Michigan, which it **MUST** be, we need to pay more than mere lip service to education - we need to fund it.



The economic situation that we face is a direct effect of our over-reliance on the auto industry to fund the finances of the state. If we are ever to break this cycle, we must create a climate in which our citizens are well educated. The idea that just having a high school diploma is "good enough" is not only outdated, but it is dangerous and an impediment to our economic well-being and security.

Have you made that call to your legislator yet? Have you called the Governor's office? Has your unit passed a resolution opposing cuts to education funding? Have you lobbied your school board to pass a resolution? Why the heck not?

I'll finish here so you can get to work. Make sure that you do all of those things and more—our future depends on it!

Need more suggestions? Call me at 248-259-3593 or email me, kmclogan@wowway.com. Happy advocating!

National PTA Position on Funding for Education and Child-Related Programs

National PTA believes that in order to ensure that schools and districts can provide a quality education to all children, meet the high accountability standards set forth in NCLB, and prepare students for employment in today's high-tech economy, greater financial resources must be provided. Most states are recovering slowly from severe budget crises, and schools are strapped for funds to carry out basic educational services, yet demands are being placed on schools to improve student achievement without sufficient resources being provided to hire teachers, expand compensatory education programs, upgrade technology, repair facilities, or address any of the other challenges they face.

Although the position of NPTA takes a federal perspective, Michigan PTSA firmly supports a consistent stand at the state level. Our goal is to obtain the highest advantages in education for our children. Student performance and achievement is top priority, therefore we must strive for adequate funding to facilitate a well-rounded, quality education. The talking points below highlight some key ideas that you can personalize when discussing the issues at hand. Use these to lay the groundwork for shaping your own ideas and reasons why funding for education cannot continue to be cut.



Talking Points

- PTA supports the passage of state and federal appropriations bills providing adequate levels of funding for education and child-related programs, and opposes funding proposals and budget process changes that cut or negatively affect the availability of such funding.
- In order to ensure that schools and districts can provide a quality education to all children and meet the high accountability standards set forth in NCLB, greater financial resources must be provided. Additional targeted federal funds would help schools afford specific interventions designed to improve student achievement, such as reducing class sizes in early grades, providing quality preschool programs, and ensuring that students learn from highly qualified teachers.
- Other federal agencies that assist children, families, schools, and communities (through Head Start, nutrition, juvenile justice, child protection, child welfare, health-care, environmental protection, and youth service programs) are also inadequately funded.

State Superintendent to Speak at Advocacy Day



Michael Flanagan,
Superintendent of Public
Instruction

State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Mike Flanagan, recently agreed to speak at Advocacy Day on February 15, 2007. Not only does Mr. Flanagan direct the Michigan Department of Education, he also advises the State Board of Education, Governor Granholm and Michigan Legislature regarding matters of public education in our state. Superintendent Flanagan was a favorite speaker of last year's attendees and we are fortunate to have him join us again as the closing speaker of the day.

Also set to speak at the event, Tom Clay, Director of State Affairs for the Citizens Research Council. Mr. Clay has conducted day-to-day affairs for CRC since 1997 and is highly respected for his explanations of the chronic state structural budget deficit. Among his many accreditations, he was the first to identify the nature of Michigan's fiscal problem and to help concerned groups and individuals understand its consequences. He also analyzed the financial implications of major state funding issues, notably K-12 capital finance and retired teacher health care benefits.

Another noted speaker will be Roberta Stanley, Director of Federal Relations for the Michigan Department of Education. Ms. Stanley will be joining Michigan PTSA's Brian Whiston during one of the afternoon break-out sessions to bring attendees up to speed on federal issues of which child advocates should be aware. These small break-outs will allow for parents and principals to increase their focus on particular issues. Advocacy Day will offer a variety of important topics in the break-out sessions with respected experts in the field facilitating the session and covering material you want to know about.

Communicating with your elected officials

The more local, state, and national decision-makers you persuade with your message, the better your chances are of achieving PTA priorities or keeping initiatives that PTA opposes from becoming law or policy. Once you develop a message that resonates, you will need to write up a fact sheet on the issue you've chosen and the corresponding PTA's position. Make sure the fact sheet includes:

- The issue and background facts
- The PTA's position
- What you want to happen
- The number of PTA members you represent

Don't forget to forward copies of all correspondence, preferably via e-mail, to Michigan PTSA's legislative chair and PTA's Washington DC office.

Steps to Effective PTA Advocacy

When advocating for a cause you believe in, it's important to have a clear path to achieve your goals. Consider the following steps to focus your efforts and systematically address them.

Determine the Issue

Issues need to be presented in a manner that makes sense to people, thoroughly addresses their concerns, and offers a clear solution that is worth the efforts made.

Check National PTA Positions & Resolutions

Any issue taken up by a local or state PTA cannot be in conflict with the national PTA Resolutions and positions.

Research the Issue

Framing or shaping an issue for PTA action requires continually remaining on top of the facts.

Build Your Volunteer Network

A key part of advocacy is finding people that are passionate about the cause. Turn members into advocates, provide a variety of ways to spread the message, and don't forget to reach out beyond the PTA circle and give everyone a chance to get involved!



Advocacy versus Lobbying

Many people ask themselves the question, "What is the difference between advocacy and lobbying? Although most people use the words interchangeably, there is a distinction between advocacy and lobbying that is helpful to understand.

Advocacy is the act of mobilizing individuals to spark changes in programs and policies, that benefit children, at the local, state, and national levels. Much of what your local PTA is doing to improve laws, policies, and conditions in your community falls under this category. Lobbying refers specifically to advocacy efforts that attempt to influence legislation. The laws limiting the lobbying done by nonprofit organizations do not govern other advocacy activities such as public rallies and volunteer activities.

Parents play a major advocacy role by being full partners in all decision-making affecting their children. Through this joint involvement, PTA members become energized and engaged. And, with the skills they acquire through local advocacy activities, members can work effectively with PTA state and national leaders to tackle larger efforts to improve the education and well being of all children.

On the local level, there are a number of things that can be done to benefit the community. Such things include talking to parents about the importance of their participation in their children's education, partnering with other parents, school administrators and community leaders to design meaningful after-school and extracurricular programs, and serving on committees that benefit the educational environment nurturing your child—just to name a few!

On the national level, PTA's advocacy efforts have led to positive changes in child labor laws, public health services, federal education laws, parent involvement policies, school lunch programs, juvenile justice protections, and mandatory immunizations. All of these changes occurred because of the consistent hard work and persuasion of PTA members just like you.

Sample Letter to Your Legislator

Dear Honorable _____,

As a parent and PTA member, I am writing today to ask you to provide the financial resources necessary to ensure that all children in Michigan receive a high quality education. Repeated cuts to our K-12 public schools have resulted in cuts to programs that are vital in creating well-rounded, high-achieving students.

There constantly seems to be reports of declining student enrollments and increased proportions of students affected by poverty, special needs, and limited English proficiency; not to mention school facilities problems that affect class size, school safety, and access to educational technology. Cutting funding for education will only make these problems bigger and more impossible to manage.

I do not support these continuous cuts in education funding and I hope you won't, either.

6 Tips on lobbying your legislator

Working with legislators often requires special attention to details and protocol. These policy makers are bombarded everyday with tons of demands, requests, and "friendly" suggestions. With so much information coming at them from so many different viewpoints, it is often difficult for them to focus specifically on the issues of concern to you. Check out these tips to increase your visibility and make the most of your contact with your elected officials:

- Establish your agenda and goals.
- Listen well.
- Be prepared, but don't feel that you need to be an expert.
- Don't stay too long.
- Remember you are there to build a relationship.
- Follow-up, Follow-up, Follow-up!

Sample Letter to Your Legislator

Dear (insert title) _____;

I am writing to you today to express my deep concern for the probable cuts to public education this year. As an active and involved parent in my district I have watched the effects of those cuts on our children over the years.

Now, here we are more than halfway through the current school year and it seems clear that state revenues are not at the expected levels and another midyear cut is unavoidable. When candidates run for office they campaign on the platform of the importance of public education and yet again funding levels that were promised at election time are doomed to be cut even more.

I am tired of the cuts to educational programs that my district has to make. Programs that are critical to the success of my child and caring, quality staff members are becoming obsolete. Class sizes are going up and the children are suffering.

Please stop taking money away from our children and our future.

10 Reasons why to lobby for your cause

At the heart of our democratic system are the everyday citizens who speak up and express their opinions on the things that mean the most to them. Few people are closer to the issues than the general public. Personal stories about the view from the bottom are the true catalyst for change in public policy. Here are some reasons why you should lobby for what you believe in:

- You can make a difference.
- People working together can make a difference.
- People can change laws.
- Lobbying is a democratic tradition.
- Lobbying helps find real solutions.
- Lobbying is easy.
- Policy makers need your expertise.
- Lobbying helps people.
- The views of PTAs are important.
- Lobbying advances your cause and builds public trust.

Advocacy Day 2007 Registration Form

Return to Michigan PTSA by February 1, 2007

PLEASE COMPLETE ONE REGISTRATION FORM FOR EACH REGISTRANT.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
 Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____
 School Name: _____ (if PTA/PTSA) MI ID #: _____
 School District: _____

I am a: (Please check all appropriate boxes)

- Parent Teacher Student
 Principal School Board Member Other: _____
 Support Staff Administrator

Do you have special needs? Yes Please describe: _____

Please list the senators and representatives with whom your party would like to have lunch below.

Michigan PTSA will notify the legislator(s) of your request however you should contact them as well.

To determine your representative, go to: http://house.michigan.gov/find_a_rep.asp

To determine your senator, go to: <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/FindYourSenator/michiganfys.asp>

Representative Name:	District:	Senator Name:	District:

Workshop Selections:

Number:	First Choice	Second Choice

NOTE: Workshop tickets will be assigned in the order registrations are received. Seats are limited.

Lunch Options (Please check box next to your selection)

- Regular Meal Vegetarian Meal

Registration

Registration	Rec'd by 2/1/2007	Amount
Single Adult/Student	\$50.00	On site \$55.00

TOTAL: _____

Payment Information

Credit Card Information: Visa Master Exp: ____/____
 Card # : _____
 Card Holder: _____ Signature: _____
 Card Holder's Address: _____

Please make checks payable to:
 Michigan PTSA
 7402 Westshire Drive, Suite 115
 Lansing, MI 48917-8687

Only credit card payments may be faxed to 517-622-4788. We are unable to refund processed registrations.

Advocacy Day 2007...

principals & parents making it happen!

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 9am-3pm

Large Group Sessions* Include:

The State Budget for Dummies ☺...

Your school's budget has been seriously cut, Proposal 5 failed and with the demise of the Single Business Tax, the state budget is down nearly \$2 billion. What now?

Bullying in the Digital Age...

We'll learn about the latest in bullying from the experts and get a status update on Michigan's anti-bullying legislation.

Beating the Bullies; Successful Strategies...

Panel members will share their tried and true strategies for keeping all children safe.

**These discussions will take place before lunch*

Small Group Sessions* Include:

#101 Implications of High School Reform for Principals

#102 Implications of High School Reform for Parents

#103 Principals & Parents...A Winning Team

#104 Finding Your Voice, Advocacy for Students

#105 The National Scene; Federal Issues You Need to Know About!

**These breakout discussions will take place from 1:00 – 2:15 pm
Agenda is tentative and may be subject to change.*

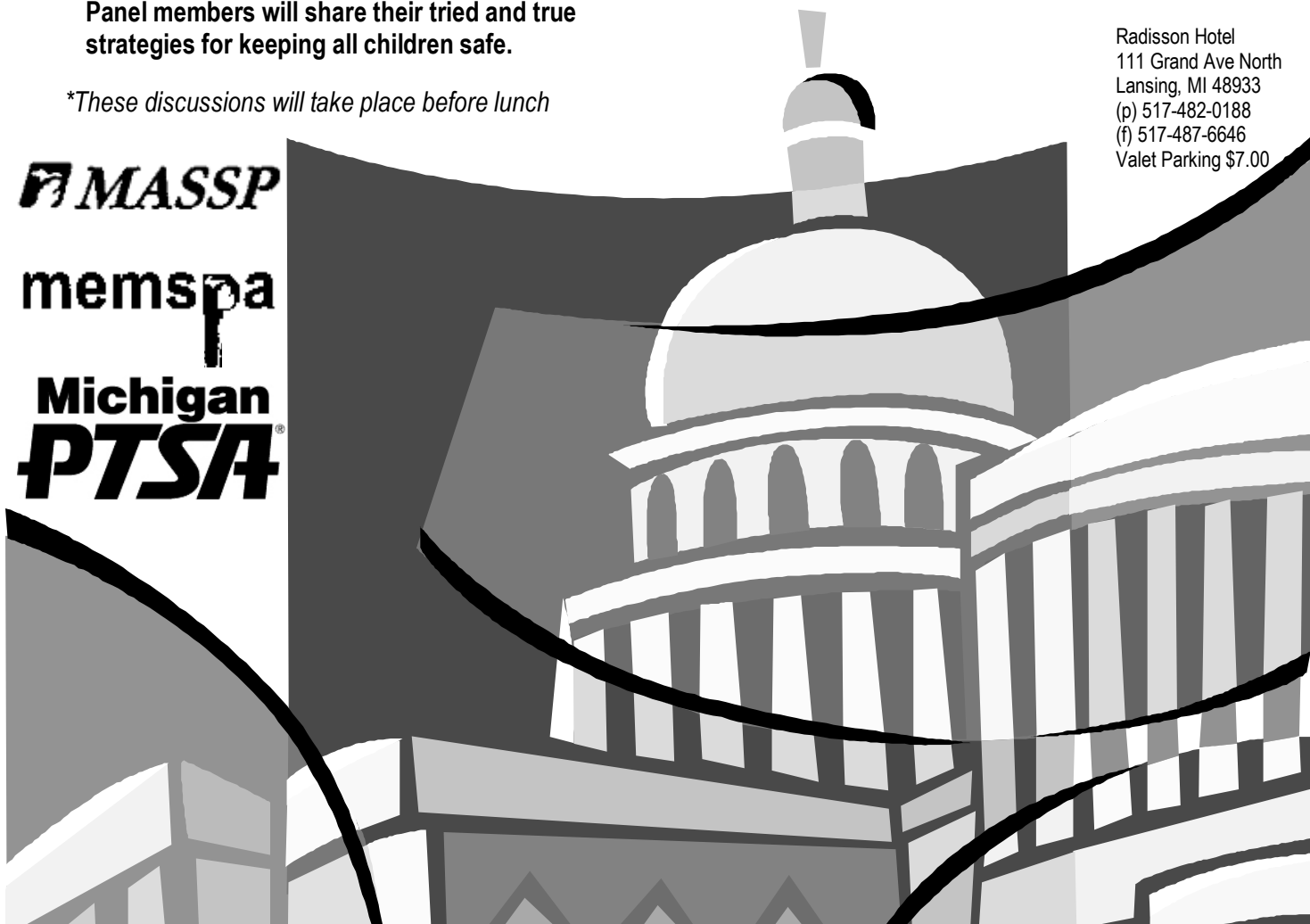
**Advanced registration is just \$50.00
includes continental breakfast and lunch!**

Radisson Hotel
111 Grand Ave North
Lansing, MI 48933
(p) 517-482-0188
(f) 517-487-6646
Valet Parking \$7.00

MASSP

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Contact your Representative*

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4	Young II	Coleman	D	517-373-1008	colemanayoungii@house.mi.gov
5	Johnson	Bert	D	517-373-0144	bertjohnson@house.mi.gov
6	Cheeks	Marsha	D	517-373-0844	marshacheeks@house.mi.gov
7	Smith	Virgil	D	517-373-0589	virgilsmith@house.mi.gov
8	Cushingberry Jr.	George	D	517-373-2276	georgecushingberry@house.mi.gov
9	Jackson	Shanelle	D	517-373-1705	shanellejackson@house.mi.gov
10	Leland	Gabe	D	517-373-6990	gabeleland@house.mi.gov
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13	Farrar	Barbara	D	517-373-0845	barbarafarrar@house.mi.gov
14	Clemente	Ed	D	517-373-0140	edclemente@house.mi.gov
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17	Dillon	Andy	D	517-373-0857	andydillon@house.mi.gov
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19	Pastor	John	R	517-373-3920	johnpastor@house.mi.gov
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25	Bieda	Steve	D	517-373-1772	stevebieda@house.mi.gov
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27	Meisner	Andy	D	517-373-0478	andymeisner@house.mi.gov
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33	Meltzer	Kim	R	517-373-0820	kimmeltzer@house.mi.gov
34	Clack	Brenda	D	517-373-8808	brendaclack@house.mi.gov
35	Condino	Paul	D	517-373-1788	paulcondino@house.mi.gov
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38	DeRoche	Craig	R	517-373-0827	craigderoche@house.mi.gov
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43	Amos	Fran	R	517-373-0615	franamos@house.mi.gov
44	Stakoe	John	R	517-373-2616	johnstakoe@house.mi.gov
45	Garfield	John	R	517-373-1773	johngarfield@house.mi.gov
46	Marleau	Jim	R	517-373-1798	jimmarleau@house.mi.gov
47	Hune	Joe	R	517-373-8835	joehune@house.mi.gov

* Log on to http://house.michigan.gov/find_a_rep.asp to determine your state representative.

Representatives Continued...

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48	Hammel	Richard	D	517-373-7557	richardhammel@house.mi.gov
49	Gonzales	Lee	D	517-373-7515	leegonzales@house.mi.gov
50	Hammon	Ted	D	517-373-3906	tedhammon@house.mi.gov
51	Robertson	David	R	517-373-1780	davidrobertson@house.mi.gov
52	Byrnes	Pam	D	517-373-0828	pambyrnes@house.mi.gov
53	Warren	Rebekah	D	517-373-2577	rebekahwarren@house.mi.gov
54	Smith	Alma	D	517-373-1771	almasmith@house.mi.gov
55	Angerer	Kathy	D	517-373-1792	kathyangerer@house.mi.gov
56	Ebli	Kate	D	517-373-2617	KateEbli@house.mi.gov
57	Spade	Dudley	D	517-373-1706	dspade@house.mi.gov
58	Caswell	Bruce	R	517-373-1794	brucecaswell@house.mi.gov
59	Shaffer	Rick	R	517-373-0832	rickshaffer@house.mi.gov
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61	Hoogendyk	Jacob	R	517-373-1774	jackhoogendyk@house.mi.gov
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63	Wenke	Lorence	R	517-373-1787	lorencewenke@house.mi.gov
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65	Simpson	Mike	D	517-373-1775	mikesimpson@house.mi.gov
66	Ward	Chris	R	517-373-1784	chrisward@house.mi.gov
67	Byrum	Barb	D	517-373-0587	barbbyrum@house.mi.gov
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69	Meadows	Mark	D	517-373-1786	markmeadows@house.mi.gov
70	Emmons	Judy	R	517-373-0834	judyemmons@house.mi.gov
71	Jones	Rick	R	517-373-0853	rickjones@house.mi.gov
72	Steil Jr.	Glenn	R	517-373-0840	glennsteil@house.mi.gov
73	Pearce	Tom	R	517-373-0218	tompearce@house.mi.gov
74	Agema	David	R	517-373-8900	daveagema@house.mi.gov
75	Dean	Robert	D	517-373-2668	robertdean@house.mi.gov
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77	Green	Kevin	R	517-373-2277	kevingreen@house.mi.gov
78	Nitz	Neal	R	517-373-1796	nealnitz@house.mi.gov
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80	Schuitmaker	Tonya	R	517-373-0839	tonyaschuitmaker@house.mi.gov
81	Pavlov	Phil	R	517-373-1790	phillipavlov@house.mi.gov
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83	Espinoza	John	D	517-373-0835	johnespinoza@house.mi.gov
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87	Calley	Brian	R	517-373-0842	briancalley@house.mi.gov
88	Sheen	Fulton	R	517-373-0836	fultonsheen@house.mi.gov
89	Meekhof	Arlan	R	517-373-0838	arlanmeekhof@house.mi.gov
90	Huizenga	Bill	R	517-373-0830	billhuizenga@house.mi.gov
91	Valentine	Mary	D	517-373-3436	maryvalentine@house.mi.gov
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93	Opsommer	Paul	R	517-373-1778	paulopsommer@house.mi.gov
94	Horn	Kenneth	R	517-373-0837	kennethhorn@house.mi.gov
95	Coulouris	Andy	D	517-373-0152	andycoulouris@house.mi.gov
96	Mayes	Jeff	D	517-373-0158	jeffmayes@house.mi.gov

Representatives Continued...

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98	Moolenaar	John	R	517-373-1791	johnmoolenaar@house.mi.gov
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100	Hansen	Goeff	R	517-373-7317	goeffhansen@house.mi.gov
101	Palsrok	David	R	517-373-0825	davidpalsrok@house.mi.gov
102	Booher	Darwin	R	517-373-1747	darwinbooher@house.mi.gov
103	Sheltrown	Joel	D	517-373-3817	joelsheltrown@house.mi.gov
104	Walker	Howard	R	517-373-1766	howardwalker@house.mi.gov
105	Elsenheimer	Kevin	R	517-373-0829	kevinelsenheimer@house.mi.gov
106	Gillard	Matthew	D	517-373-0833	matthewgillard@house.mi.gov
107	McDowell	Gary	D	517-373-2629	garymcdowell@house.mi.gov
108	Casperson	Tom	R	517-373-0156	tomcasperson@house.mi.gov
109	Lindberg	Steven	D	517-373-0498	stevenlindberg@house.mi.gov
110	Lahti	Michael	D	517-373-0850	mikelahti@house.mi.gov

Contact Your Senator*

* Log on to <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/FindYourSenator/michiganfys.asp> to determine your senator.

President of the Senate

Lieutenant Governor John D. Cherry
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Jason Allen, Republican of District 37
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E-mail: SenLBrater@senate.michigan.gov

Cameron Brown, Republican of District 16
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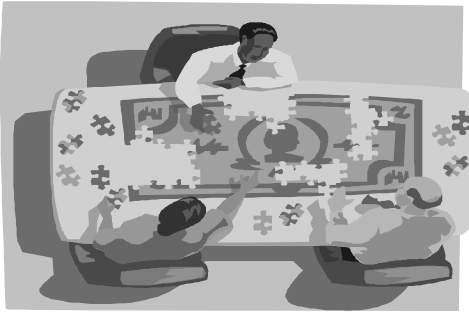
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Replacing the SBT Must Be Top Priority

Michigan's policymakers need to make replacing the Single Business Tax a top priority. The state's financial crisis was already a reality when the legislature voted to eliminate this tax and remove an additional two billion dollars from the General Fund. There are lots of proposals out there but PTA/PTSA members need to communicate one very important point:

THE SINGLE BUSINESS TAX MUST BE REPLACED DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR, INCLUDING MONIES THAT GO TO THE SCHOOL AID FUND.

Governor Granholm recently announced her proposal to replace the state single business tax and a portion of the personal property tax. The personal property tax portion of the governor's plan would eliminate the 24 mills that businesses pay to schools either locally or through the state education tax. This generates approximately \$600 million for schools in Michigan. To compensate schools for this loss, the plan would earmark 24.4 percent of the new Michigan Business Tax to the school aid fund, resulting in full replacement of that revenue.

The new tax would be made up of a tax on assets, gross receipts and business income. It's unclear at this time whether getting a portion of this tax, as opposed to the personal property tax, is better for schools, but early indications are positive. The personal property tax would still be assessed for the purposes of millages and bonded indebtedness to maintain that revenue at a local level.

The number of general fund items that have been transferred to the School Aid Fund has grown in recent years because of weak revenues for the general fund. This proposal goes a long way to stabilizing the general fund, thus stopping the continuing raids on the state school aid fund. It is imperative that we have stable funding streams for both the general fund and the school aid fund or schools could suffer.



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