



Feb. 3, 2021

Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee
MI House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Representative:

On behalf of public-school boards and superintendents from across the state, we write to you regarding the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds and House Bill 4048.

As you know, the 116th Congress passed, and President Trump signed, a bi-partisan relief package that included more than \$1.6 billion in ESSER funds for schools in Michigan. Ninety percent of this money is required to be distributed through the federal Title IA formula with the remaining 10% of funds left with some state discretion.

Our members appreciate the willingness of this committee to appropriate the full amount of federal funds to our districts, however we do have concerns with the proposal before you. First, we do not support these funds being tied to policy affecting the Public Health Code. While we understand the desire to see in-person opportunities available to as many students as possible, this policy discussion must not delay the disbursement of federal funds. In creating this relief package, Congress did not include barriers to appropriation, only stipulations on allowable uses.

MASA and MASB support the goal providing an in-person opportunity to every student in Michigan by March 1. We continue to encourage our districts to meet this goal and offer support for them as they create plans. We must continue to take aggressive steps to mitigate spread of the virus through the safety measures and guidance from public health experts, including quality ventilation, personal protection equipment and increased sanitation of school buildings. This federal funding will directly help districts implement protocols that protect student and staff health and safety. Additionally, districts need the maximum amount of time to plan for the rest of the school year, as well as to determine and establish what programs will be needed over the summer to address learning loss.

We strongly urge you to remove the tie-bar in this legislation and send these much-needed dollars to classrooms as quickly as possible. Addressing the needs of our students and staff in this pandemic environment requires flexibility and certainty of resources. We trust our members to make decisions in the best interest of their students, staff and communities.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to continuing to work with you to support our students and schools across the state. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

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