



STEPHENSON
AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Stephenson Area Public Schools
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Dear Stephenson Area Public Schools Families, Staff, and Community,

I am writing to share an important update regarding the State of Michigan's public-school funding and how it may affect Stephenson Area Public Schools. Many of you have likely seen recent news about the uncertainty surrounding the state budget. Understandably, this raises questions about how schools across Michigan—including ours—will continue to operate in the months ahead.

As your superintendent, together with our Board of Education, I believe it is essential to provide you with clear and timely information. You deserve to know what is happening, what it may mean for our district, and how we can work together to advocate for the resources our students and staff need.

Budget Deadline Missed

By law, the State of Michigan must pass a K–12 school funding budget by July 1 each year to allow districts to plan responsibly. Unfortunately, that deadline has passed without an agreement. If no resolution is reached, a state government shutdown on September 30 could delay the funding schools rely on to operate. This creates uncertainty about whether districts will receive their October state aid payment.

Why This Matters

- A recent statewide survey found that **89% of voters** believe lawmakers should be required to pass a budget before the school year begins.
- The current impasse involves proposals to divert dollars from the **School Aid Fund (SAF)**—money Michigan voters dedicated to K–12 education in 1994—to other areas, such as road repairs.
- According to the same survey, **85.7% of voters** oppose using School Aid Fund dollars for non-educational purposes.

Equally concerning is the growing demand by public universities for a larger share of SAF dollars, despite the fact that they already receive significant funding through tuition, fees, grants, endowments, alumni, donors and private support.

Current Impact on Districts

Many school districts have already taken action due to this uncertainty. According to a statewide survey:

- **11%** of districts reported classroom staff layoffs
- **15%** had non-classroom staff layoffs
- **42%** reduced staffing through attrition
- **27%** made cuts to non-staff areas

At a recent statewide conference, more than 700 superintendents reported districts delaying building maintenance, increasing staff workloads, raising class sizes, and postponing the hiring of critical support staff. These actions directly affect students and learning environments.

Future Impact if a Budget is Not Passed

If the State does not act, schools could miss the October 20, 2025, state aid payment. That payment is essential for:

- Paying teachers and staff who work directly with students
- Maintaining current programs and preventing future cuts
- Operating buses, providing classroom supplies, and supporting student services

Stephenson Schools is working diligently to keep our district fully staffed and ensure students have the support they need. We are planning on continuing to provide the support, resources, and programming we currently provide including the free breakfast and lunch program. **While the food service program is not in jeopardy at this time, without stable state funding, we will not be able to sustain other services and supports.**

We want to give our families additional time to prepare as we continue to strongly advocate to our legislature to appropriately pass a supportive School Aid Fund budget. Additionally, we need our families to complete and return the [Educational Benefits Form](#) (PDF), or the [Online Educational Benefits Form](#). If you have not already completed the Educational Benefits form, please visit our district website at [Stephenson Area Public Schools](#) for more information.

What Needs to Happen

Lawmakers must pass a K–12 budget that protects the School Aid Fund for its intended purpose: educating Michigan’s children.

How You Can Help

We ask our families and community members to join us in urging elected officials to act quickly. Please contact your legislators and let them know why protecting and prioritizing school funding matters to you:

- Michigan Senate: <https://senate.michigan.gov/>
- Michigan House of Representatives: <https://www.house.mi.gov/Index>

Our students deserve a stable, fully funded school year. With your partnership, we can work together to ensure their education continues without interruption.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Stephenson Area Public Schools.

Jerry Sardina



Superintendent
Stephenson Area Public Schools