

MSBO Annual Conference

2022

COVID-19 and the Classroom
Virtual Learning
Governor and Legislature

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April 26, 2022
4:00-4:30 pm

MILLER
CANFIELD



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MASKS IN SCHOOLS

In February 2022, multiple counties across Michigan rescinded health orders requiring face masks in schools:

- Wayne County (Feb. 17, 2022);
- Kent County (Feb. 18, 2022);
- Oakland County (Feb. 28, 2022).

In accordance with CDC, MDHHS, and any school district guidance face masks remain strongly recommended, but not a requirement (i.e., local decision).

- Withdrew public health advisory urging schools to voluntarily impose local mask mandates to aid in slowing the spread of COVID-19.
- Announced a new three-part COVID-19 cycle to help guide when recommendations for preventing the illness should increase or decrease.
 - Michigan was previously in a “Response Phase.”
 - Michigan is now entering a “Readiness Phase,” where a surge in COVID is possible, but not imminent.

Ongoing response to COVID-19 cycle



Readiness (Pre-Surge)

A surge is expected due to a new variant, local outbreak, seasonal changes.

Expect increased illness severity and overwhelmed hospital capacity.

- Educate public regarding new risks.
- Ensure enough supplies of tests, masks and medications.

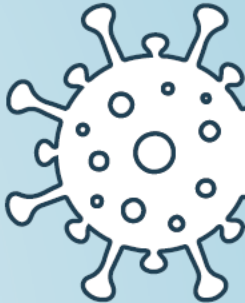
Response (Surge)

A surge means rapid response by local and state public health.

- Increased supplies for testing, masking and medications.
- Increased masking, testing and social distancing efforts.



Visit Michigan.gov/Coronavirus for current COVID-19 information.

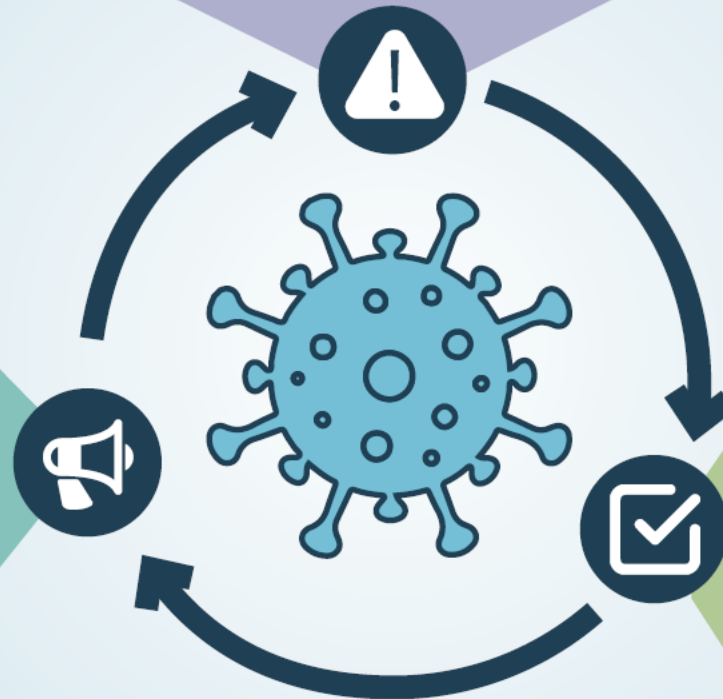


Recovery (Post-Surge)

Expect to remain in this phase for longer periods as COVID-19 evolves.

Monitor conditions that may lead to surges, such as a new variant.

- Encourage vaccines to decrease COVID-19 risks.
- Strengthen community support with local stakeholders.
- Empower community members to make best choices for individual situations.



MDHHS RECOMMENDATIONS

- MDHHS recommends school districts and other organizations work with their local health department to determine which mask policies best align with their needs.
- To support school districts who incorporate COVID-19 testing into their safer school prevention plans, MDHHS is offering to K-12 schools rapid antigen testing through the MI Safe Schools Testing Program.
 - School districts should follow the [MDHHS MI Safe School Antigen Testing](#) process when submitting rapid antigen test orders or emailing MDHHSCOVIDTestingSupport@michigan.gov.

UPDATED: MARCH 11, 2022

- MDHHS recommends all eligible students and staff **are** up to date with vaccinations. Current recommendations are aligned with the Michigan entering the “Recovery (Post-Surge) Phase.”
- One of MDHHS’ Public Health recommendations to school administrators:
“Encourage, promote, and provide opportunity for COVID-19 vaccination for staff, students & families. Work with local health department or submit a clinic request to MDHHS here.”
- However, there is no mandatory vaccine requirement for COVID-19 (unlike Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Hepatitis B, Chickenpox, and Meningococcal Conjugate).

CONTINUING SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES IN PROTECTING STUDENTS FROM COVID-19

SCHOOL DISTRICTS ARE RESPONSIBLE TO:


- Perform independent legal authority to protect students who are on school property or under school supervision and control.
- Provide “for the safety and welfare of pupils while at school or a school sponsored activity or while in route to or from school, or a school sponsored activity,” as specified under the Revised School Code, MCL 380.11a(3)(b).
- Report suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases, outbreaks and unusual occurrences to the local health department as specified under Michigan Administrative Code R. 325.173 (9).
- Ensure employees who: (1) test positive, (2) display principal symptoms, and/or (3) had a “close-contact”* to COVID-19, DO not come to work during isolation or quarantine period as required by MCL 419.405.

CDC COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR K-12 SCHOOLS

- Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction continues to be a priority.
- CDC *still* recommends universal indoor masking by all* students (over the age of 2), staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.
- CDC's new guidance has reduced the recommended isolation and quarantine periods to 5 days.
- Localities should continue to monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies (e.g., physical distancing, screening testing).

CDC SCREENING TESTING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR K-12 SCHOOLS BY LEVEL OF COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION

	LOW TRANSMISSION ¹	MODERATE TRANSMISSION	SUBSTANTIAL TRANSMISSION	HIGH TRANSMISSION
STUDENTS	Do not need to screen students.	Offer screening testing for students ⁴ at least once per week.		
TEACHERS AND STAFF	Offer screening testing for teachers and staff ⁴ at least once per week.			
HIGH RISK SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES	Recommend screening testing for high-risk sports ² and extracurricular activities ³ at least once per week.		Recommend screening testing for high-risk sports and extracurricular activities twice per week.	Cancel or hold high-risk sports and extracurricular activities virtually to protect in-person learning.
LOW- AND INTERMEDIATE-RISK SPORTS	Do not need to screen students participating in low- and intermediate-risk sports. ²	Recommend screening testing for low- and intermediate-risk sports at least once per week.		

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MDHHS BACKBACK PROGRAM

- Program providing a limited number of free, at-home COVID-19 antigen tests to students in Michigan's schools during the 2021-2022 school year.
- For Michigan K-12 students, educators, staff, and their families who want an extra layer of protection against COVID-19:
 - At-home COVID-19 test "kit," includes 2 at-home tests.
 - MDHHS will provide the kits and educational materials, and schools will distribute the kits to students and staff who choose to enroll.
 - There is no obligation to participate.
- School districts can indicate their interest in participating in this program, by completing the following survey: <https://forms.office.com/g/is9FYDMRzn>

COVID-19 VACCINES AND THE CLASSROOM

- Biden's OSHA ETS was struck down earlier this year, so unlikely that Michigan school staff will be required to vaccinate.
- No mandatory vaccination for children from COVID 19—yet.
 - A child is exempt from immunization ***IF*** a parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis of the child presents a written statement to the administrator of the child's school or operator of the group program to the effect that the requirements of this part cannot be met because of religious convictions or other objection to immunization. Medical exemptions are also allowed.

MANDATING VACCINES FOR DISTRICT STAFF

- The Detroit Board of Education previously adopted an Employee Mandate imposing discipline and a vaccine deadline for Feb. 18, 2022.
- **Detroit is an outlier among school districts in Michigan requiring a vaccine for its employees.**
- However, on Feb 18, 2022, Superintendent Nikolai Vitti pivoted and will not seek employee termination for those who are unvaccinated.
- No decision has been made by Vitti on whether unvaccinated employees will face any other disciplinary action.
- Previously, the district said it would use a progressive disciplinary process to enforce the mandate following the deadline, moving from a series of reminders to verbal and written warnings, suspension without pay, and termination.



MICHIGAN
VIRTUAL

Benefits of Virtual Learning

- Self-paced instruction, but with the greater support of daily live, face-to-face instruction
- Ability to learn from home
- Personal Health and Safety
- Ability to travel with family

In 2013, the Michigan Legislature expanded student access to digital learning options through Section 21f. As a result, students in grades 6-12 enrolled in a public school academy (PSA) or public local district (including students enrolled through a district on a part-time basis, such as those participating in a shared-time program) are eligible to enroll in up to two online courses during an academic term.

(2) The Michigan Virtual University shall operate the Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute. The Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute shall do all of the following:

(a) Support and accelerate innovation in education through the following activities:

(i) Test, evaluate, and recommend as appropriate new technology-based instructional tools and resources.

(ii) Research, design, and recommend virtual education delivery models for use by pupils and teachers that include age-appropriate multimedia instructional content.

(iii) Research, develop, and recommend annually to the department criteria by which cyber schools and virtual course providers should be monitored and evaluated to ensure a quality education for their pupils.

MCL 388.1698 of the State School Aid Act

(x) Create and maintain a public statewide catalog of virtual learning courses being offered by all public schools and community colleges in this state. The Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute shall identify and develop a list of nationally recognized best practices for virtual learning and use this list to support reviews of virtual course vendors, courses, and instructional practices. The Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute shall also provide a mechanism for intermediate districts to use the identified best practices to review content offered by constituent districts. The Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute shall review the virtual course offerings of the Michigan Virtual University, and make the results from these reviews available to the public as part of the statewide catalog. The Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute shall ensure that the statewide catalog is made available to the public on the Michigan Virtual University website and shall allow the ability to link it to each district's website as provided for in section 21f.

ALTERNATIVES TO VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION

- Section 5-O-A of the Pupil Accounting Manual remains an option for students learning remotely from their teacher(s) in 2021-2022.
 - Students attend instruction through a synchronous platform, such as Zoom.
 - Instructional times remain the same as the bell schedule identified by the school district for in-person learning.
 - Students are expected to be in attendance during the prescribed instructional time(s). Attendance is recorded in the same manner as in-person learning absences are noted.
 - Teachers are to remain available through the synchronous platform for the entire class period.
 - The teacher may dismiss students to complete individual or group assignments once the lecture period is complete.

VIRTUAL K-12 INSTRUCTION IS HERE TO STAY

- Identify a content provider if the school district has not already created a virtual curriculum.
 - A school district may choose to use their own content, provided that the curriculum is approved by the local school board of education.
- Identify how the content will be provided, whether it be asynchronous, synchronous, or hybrid/blended.
- Create an appropriate staffing plan for all virtual courses.
 - Courses require an appropriately certified teacher of record and a mentor; the teacher of record can serve as the mentor if the person is both properly certified and an employee of the school district.

OTHER THIRD-PARTY TEACHERS

- If a district plans to use third-party teachers from an entity other than Michigan Virtual, a permit may be required.
- School districts should develop a plan for measuring student participation during the count period.
- School districts can either choose to use two-way interactions, one per week during the count period, or the completion of an activity in each course on count day (or within 10 school days for an unexcused pupil or 30 calendar days for an excused pupil).
- More detail regarding the participation requirement can be found in Section 5-O-D of the Pupil Accounting Manual.
- Develop a plan on how weekly two-way interactions will be tracked for the duration of the virtual placement. Two-way interactions will be used for your end-of-year reporting in MSDS.

Virtual Learning– Discretion and Flexibility to Districts

- Post COVID-19 world, districts currently working to develop a model for distance learning should decide what makes sense within their communities and include feedback from teaching and support staff, and MDE.
- The Michigan Association of Computer Users in Learning (MACUL) provides a set of online learning guidelines that support districts through creation and implementation of their distance learning plans
- The National Standards for Quality Online Learning offers great guidelines.

Considerations for Virtual Learning Program– FHPS 22-23 School year

K-5

- Elementary students receive instruction in all core subjects; mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts.
- Instruction is live and synchronous, similar to a typical in-person school day.
- Students also receive live remote instruction in Art, Music, and Physical Education from certified Farmington teachers.
- Even though students are engaged in a full day of instruction, that does not mean students are on a computer screen all day.
- Just like in-person instruction, students may have independent or small group work time, where a teacher is still available to support as needed.

Grades 6-8

- Students work with a team of remote teachers and receive live instruction throughout the school day in all core areas; mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts.
- Students also have remote elective options, which are either taught remotely by certified Farmington teachers or virtually through the Edgenuity learning platform.
- Students are able to take instrumental music classes, choir, world language classes, and other electives as well.
- Elective availability varies based on enrollment.
- Sports and other after-school activities should remain available.

- Students attend a traditional 6-period day schedule of classes taught by certified Farmington teachers.
- Students receive live instruction in their four core subjects — Mathematics, Science, English Language Arts, and Social Studies.
- Two electives are completed through the Edgenuity learning platform.
- All students have a dedicated counselor to ensure that their schedule and course plan will help them meet their academic and future goals.

Virtual Learning and Students with Disabilities

- Distance learning brings new challenges to special education. One of the biggest challenges is how to implement accommodations for students who have an IEP.
- In addition to parents and school staff, providers of online and blended programs are the subject and content experts. As such, they should be able to discuss the ways that they have met the individualized educational needs of students in the past and recommend appropriate, student-centered programs and services necessary to meet the specifically-designed instructional supports developed for the student under consideration.

VIRTUAL K-12 INSTRUCTION IS HERE TO STAY

- If a school district is planning to use a virtual option as an alternate method of providing instruction, MDE expects school districts do the following now to assist with a future transition:
 - Identify the technological needs of each student.
 - Create a plan to distribute appropriate technology if students are required to learn virtually.
 - Obtain the required consent from parents or guardians to permit students participation in virtual instruction. (MCL 388.1621f)
 - Create EDPs for all students.
 - An Educational Development Plan (EDP) is a document showing a student's current interests, abilities, and career pathways. It is more comprehensive than a schedule of classes because it includes information a student can use to make wise choices about post secondary options. State law requires beginning in 7th grade be given the opportunity to develop one, and amended when needed in HS.

SEAT TIME WAIVERS

The State School Aid Act allows the Michigan Superintendent to waive required days and hours of student instruction for alternative educational or innovative programs.

The alternate program must be approved by MDE.

100% ONLINE SEAT TIME WAIVER

- This type of waiver allows a school district to deliver all of a student's instruction online, with no requirement for the student to attend instruction on-site, face-to-face.
- School districts may choose to include a drop-in, lab component, with courses as needed.
- A school district may enroll up to 25% of its pupils in grades 6-12.

BLENDED LEARNING SEAT TIME WAIVER

- This waiver is a hybrid of frequent face-to-face instruction and computer-based or an internet-connected learning environment. Students are allowed some degree of choice over time, location, and pace of instruction.
- For students in grade 6-12 there is no limit on the percent of student population participation. Students must receive at least 50% of their course through on-site, face-to-face instruction. Please see section 5-O-B of the Pupil Accounting Manual.

ONLINE LEARNING WITHOUT A WAIVER

- Students in grades 6-12 may take up to 2 courses per year without a seat time waiver.
- The State School Aid Act, since 2013, has expanded student access to digital learning options such that students in grades 5-12 are eligible (with parental consent) to enroll in up to 2 online courses during an academic term.

BALANCED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM - VIRTUAL LEARNING ASSESSMENTS

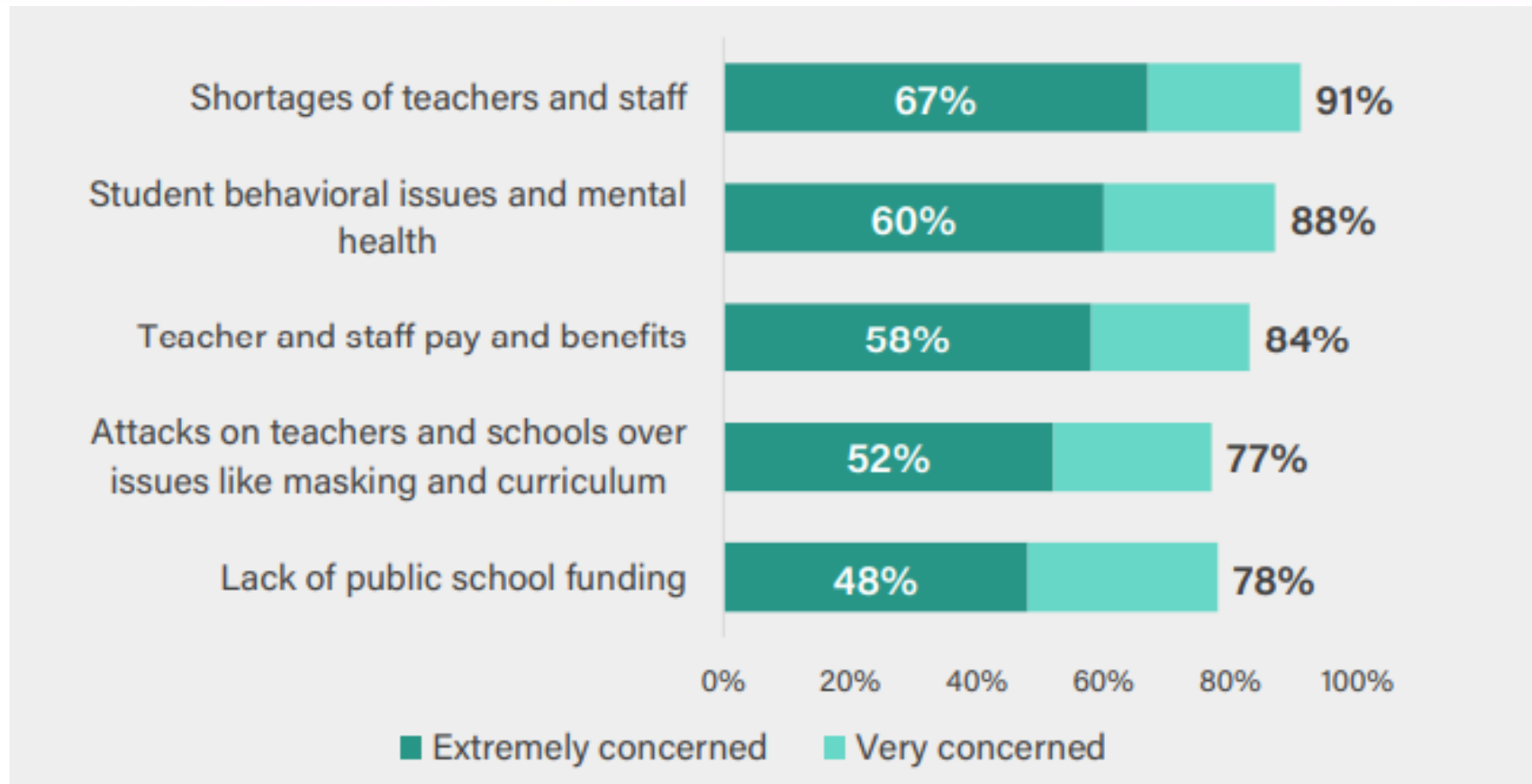
MDE suggests school districts develop a Balanced Assessment System, which includes components that are:

- **DIAGNOSTIC**
 - Measures students' knowledge and skills before instruction.
- **FORMATIVE**
 - Adjusts instruction based on student progression toward learning targets.
- **INTERIM**
 - Measures progress toward academic goals and standards.
- **SUMMATIVE**
 - Measures student mastery of standards and drives local district decision making.

IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON TEACHING STAFF

- Teaching shortage exacerbated by pandemic.
- Substitute teachers without certification.
- Retirement of teachers has increased according to MPSERS.
- Lack of aspiring teachers to become educators/reducing certifications required for aspiring educators.
- Modification to educator evaluation requirements.
- Decrease in educational funding.

THINKING ABOUT THE CHALLENGES FACING EDUCATORS TODAY, HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING WHERE YOU WORK?



WHITMER SIGNS BILL SO NON-TEACHING STAFF CAN WORK AS SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS



- Michigan public schools can use non-teaching staff as substitute teachers for the remainder of the academic year under a law designed to address a shortage during the coronavirus pandemic.
- Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, in Dec. 2021, signed “temporary stopgap” in a letter to lawmakers. It lets secretaries, paraprofessionals and other school employees without a teaching certificate — such as library aides, bus drivers, cooks and office workers — work as subs if they have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate.
- Normally, Michigan law requires schools to hire substitute teachers who have at least 60 semester hours of college credit. The Bill—HR 4294—allows districts, for the current school year only, to hire any school employee as a substitute as long as the person has a high school diploma.
- Any decisions about the employment of an individual as a substitute teacher would not be subject to collective bargaining.

FY 2023 BUDGET FISCAL YEAR FOR EDUCATION

- \$18.4 billion in education spending.
 - \$1.5 billion in retention bonuses.
 - \$150 million for student teacher stipends.
- Base funding will be \$9,135 for every student in Michigan, a 5% increase.





STATE OF THE BUDGET

- With Gov. Whitmer facing reelection, Republicans are unlikely to assist the governor with giving her a big political win.
- We can expect Gov. Whitmer's proposed budget to go through various iterations as negotiations continue to finalize a plan before July.

PROPOSED FUNDING FOR FY 2022-2023

- Michigan's fiscal year begins Oct. 1, but the Michigan Legislature normally aims to pass the education part of the budget before July 1, the start of the fiscal year for school districts.
- According to a summary of education spending from Gov. Whitmer's office, \$18.4 billion in education spending is included in the 2022-2023 Michigan budget.
- 7.6% increase over the current fiscal year's education budget.

ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION

- All full-time K-12 public employees would receive bonuses of \$2,000 this year, and more in subsequent years.
- Teachers and other certified staff (e.g., counselors) would qualify for \$3,000 in 2024, and \$4,000 in 2025.

PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS DUE TO THE COVID 19 SHORTAGE

For prospective teachers, Gov. Whitmer would:

- Create a \$250 million fund for scholarships for individuals pursuing teacher certification in grades pre-K-12.
- Create \$50 million in scholarships for graduate programs for school leaders and mental health professionals.
- Scholarship recipients would have to give back 2 years of service for each year of the scholarship.

STIPENDS FOR STUDENT TEACHERS

Gov. Whitmer also plans to propose stipends for student teachers, who currently are not guaranteed pay as well as college fellowships for those pursuing education careers.

THE GREAT START READINESS PROGRAM (GSRP)

- Free preschool to eligible 4-year-olds, would grow to \$456.4 million.
 - \$21 million to increase how much funding school districts receive per student.
 - \$5 million for new home-based pilot programs and other scheduled increases written into the law.
- Would increase \$38 million from the 2022 budget, continuing a planned 3-year expansion supported by COVID relief dollars and the State School Aid Fund.
- The expansion is entirely funded with State School Aid Fund dollars in fiscal year 2023.

MENTAL HEALTH COMPONENT

- Invests \$361 million in student mental health, by:
 - Hiring hundreds more school mental health professionals.
 - Building on the 720 nurses, counselors, and social workers hired with new money in the current budget, according to Gov. Whitmer's office.
 - Staffing 40 new school-based clinics serving the needs of 20,000 students.
- Seeks to:
 - Increase funding for programs to identify developmental issues in children under 3 years old (\$7.1 million).
 - Provide home visitation and early childhood collaboratives efforts (\$9.5 million).

TRANSFORMING RESEARCH INTO ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES OF STUDENTS (TRAILS)

Would expand the TRAILS program operated by the University of Michigan in partnership with school districts across Michigan to address symptoms of anxiety and depression using mindfulness and cognitive behavioral therapy.

Questions?

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