

MMSBO - Jason Helsen - MSBO Update

Quick recap

This regional school business officials meeting featured Jason Helsen from MSBO presenting comprehensive updates on the 2026-27 state budget proposals and MSBO activities. The discussion covered three competing budget proposals (Governor, House, and Senate) with detailed analysis of foundation allowance increases, educator compensation, and categorical funding changes. Key operational topics included the transition from listservs to MSBO's new Exchange platform, Medicaid reporting changes, purchasing card programs, and various software implementations. The group also discussed planning for the 2026-27 meeting schedule and potential presenters.

Action Items

Jason Helsen (MSBO)

- Research historical dual enrollment funding to compare the proposed \$20-60 million allocation to the previous \$25 per pupil funding from approximately 5 years ago
- Clarify how dual enrollment funding will be calculated—whether based on total student count or number of classes/students taking dual enrollment courses

Nikolas Trefil (Meeting Organizer)

- Send meeting slides with embedded links to all attendees
- Distribute printout of Jason's CREC post via follow-up email
- Translate business office calendar from Excel to Google Sheet and distribute to group
- Plan 2026-27 meeting schedule after MSBO's schedule of events becomes available (after July 1)
- Share contact information for InformEd (online forms system) with interested members

- Share contact information for Plume Health (onsite medical clinic provider) with the group
- Distribute information about Huntington Bank purchase card program and rebate details
- Send information about July 19th joint ISD school finance Zoom meeting
- Assist members with MSBO Exchange platform setup and questions as needed
- Schedule future Zoom meeting to demonstrate pulling audit reports from TCM Full Client for interested members

Detailed Meeting Summary

Opening Discussion: Software and Regional Meetings

The meeting began with members discussing various software implementations and regional meeting attendance patterns:

- **Baker Tilly:** Several districts use Baker Tilly for services. Jesse from Baker Tilly has expressed willingness to present to the group. Beal City Shepherd confirmed they use Baker Tilly.
- **KEV Group:** Kelly Winkler from KEV Group has reached out about presenting. They offer student accounting software and have proposed a working lunch presentation. Some members are in early discussions with them.
- **Munis HCM:** Discussion about implementing Human Resources features within Munis, including job posting and applicant tracking capabilities
- **Skyward:** Some districts have recently switched to Skyward and are learning the system's capabilities

Members acknowledged the value of attending regional meetings outside their own ISD to learn different approaches and best practices.

MSBO 2025-26 Year in Review

Jason Helsen provided a comprehensive overview of MSBO activities for the 2025-26 fiscal year:

Major Events Completed

- Back to School Workshop (August) - strong attendance
- Business Manager Academy (ongoing cohort program)
- Leadership Institute
- CREC Meeting (May) with Noel Benson from House Fiscal Agency
- Financial Strategies Workshop
- Financial Statement Prep Workshop (June 2)
- Business Manager/CPA Workshop (June 3)
- Group Solutions sessions for Transportation, Human Resources, Technology, and Facilities
- Annual Conference - record attendance of 1,979 (highest since 1979, still targeting 2,000)

New Initiatives

- **MSBO Exchange Platform:** Replacing antiquated listserv technology. Listservs will sunset on June 30, 2026 (25 days from meeting date). The Exchange allows for regional groups, special purpose groups, and better member communication.
- **"Back to Basics" Video Series:** Short 3-5 minute videos on school finance topics to provide bite-sized content for quick reference and training. Nancy Hawkins signing up members at Leadership Dimensions to create content.
- **Dynamic Budget Projections:** Available for \$150 for districts wanting high-level budget projection tools beyond their existing software capabilities

Purchasing Card Consortium (MPCC)

MSBO's Michigan Purchasing Card Consortium is transitioning from BMO to U.S. Bank:

- Record rebates of \$938,000 returned to districts in March 2026 (up from \$810,000 previous year)
- Transition involves some headaches but offers clear benefits including increased rebate potential
- Beth Smith at PFM serving as administrator and marketer

- Members experiencing some communication challenges and timeline concerns with the transition

Board of Directors Election

- Rick Webb (Kenowa Hills IT Director) elected as newest board member
- Michelle Sine (Charlotte) re-elected
- Addition of IT/technology perspective seen as important given current landscape

Other Resources

- Hiring Solutions Survey 2026 released - shows continued salary escalation in competitive job market
- Business Manager Academy applications due June 30 (earlier deadline to plan cohorts more efficiently)

Upcoming MSBO Events for 2026-27

Fall 2026

- **Back to School Workshop:** August 4-5-6, 9-11 AM each day (webinar format). Topics include updates from legal, ORS, facilities, and insurance. Recordings available for several weeks after.
- **MDE/MSBO Workshop:** Thursday, September 10 (all-day online event with bonus video content)
- **Intro to School Business Workshop:** September 11
- **Up North Workshop:** October 1-2 at Crystal Mountain
- **Facilities Conference:** October 4-6 at Crystal Mountain (very popular, attendance limited)

Winter 2026-27

- **Navigating Grants Webinar:** December (Tuesday afternoons, similar to previous year). Note: Attendance in 2025-26 was lower than inaugural year; seeking feedback on format.


Other Activities

- **TFM Market Updates:** Final one for fiscal year 2025-26 scheduled for week of June 12. Attendance consistently 75-100 people monthly. Will continue in 2026-27.
- **Joint ISD School Finance Committee Meeting:** June 19 at 9:30 AM (Zoom). Will discuss budget situation, potentially include Jen Smith from MASB.

FY 2025-26 Budget Review

Jason reviewed the challenging 2025-26 budget process and key items affecting districts:

Budget Process Issues

 **Critical Timeline Problem:** Governor Whitmer didn't sign the school aid budget until Tuesday, October 7, 2025—a clear sign of the dysfunctional budget process. There was no school aid fund appropriation until then, creating significant uncertainty for districts.

Major Budget Items - FY 2025-26


Item	Amount/Change	Notes
Foundation Allowance	\$10,050 (+\$442, 4.6% increase)	No cyber cut applied
Section 31A (At-Risk)	+\$258 million (25% increase)	Priority of Senate leadership
Section 30D (School Meals)	\$200 million continued	Major confusion; some districts went to paid status, others stayed free
Higher Ed Funding	+\$400 million from SAF	Diverted from K-12 school

		aid fund
Section 147A1 (MPSERS offset)	-\$100 million (eliminated)	Last-minute cut, significant impact to district bottom lines
Section 147A3 (ISD MPSERS)	-\$12 million (eliminated)	Hit to ISD budgets

MPSERS (Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System) Changes

Several changes affected retirement costs in 2025-26:

- **Section 147A2:** Reduced by \$28.9 million (but had \$50 million positive prior year adjustment)
- **Section 147A4:** Eliminated (-\$598 million). Jason noted this was equivalent to \$400 per pupil, contrary to claims it wasn't a real cut since districts got rate reductions.
- **Section 147G:** Employee health care cost reimbursement eliminated (-\$181.5 million), but partially replaced by Section 27L
- **Rate Reduction:** 5.75% rate cap reduction implemented (from 20.96% to 15.21%)
- **MPSERS Stabilization Rate:** 15.02% for 2025-26
- **Net Impact:** Districts experiencing approximately 3% blended rate reduction after accounting for normal cost increases

 **Important:** Districts should carefully evaluate their 147 budget lines to avoid rolling over eliminated funding into 2026-27 budgets.

Section 31AA (Mental Health and School Safety)

This section created significant controversy and confusion:

- **Total Funding:** \$321 million (\$300M SAF + \$21M GF)
- **Subsection 9 Waiver:** Required districts to waive privileges and agree to comprehensive investigation in event of mass casualty

- **Opt-in Deadline:** December 4, with ability to rescind by December 30
- **Legal Challenges:** Court case released week before Christmas; federal lawsuit still pending
- **Allocation Growth:** Per-pupil amount grew approximately 3x original estimates as fewer districts opted in
- **Recommendations:** Districts that opted in should spend original bucket but may want to set aside extra dollars pending lawsuit outcomes

Components of 31AA funding:

- 31AA(3): ~\$200 million per-pupil grants
- 31AA(4): \$53.5 million competitive grants for SROs and safety dogs
- 31AA(5): \$53.5 million competitive grants for mental health professionals
- Additional allocations to non-public schools totaling \$21 million

Jason confirmed that all subsections (including 31AA4) appear to require the same waiver to receive funds.

Section 27L (Educator Compensation and Health Care)

This supplemental funding was added for FY 2024-25 but paid in 2025-26:

- **Section 27L(2):** \$203 million for educator compensation
 - Districts must bargain increases with unions
 - Allocated on per-pupil basis
 - "Educator" broadly defined but not limited to certain categories
 - MSBO survey showed most districts:
 - Included non-union employees (75-80%)
 - Included administrators (75-80%)
 - Netted FICA and MPERS costs (75-80%)
 - Excluded superintendent or paid from General Fund
 - Developed unique allocation methods
- **Section 27L(4):** \$147.3 million (remaining balance of MPERS reserve fund)

- Intended to offset normal costs for retiree health benefits
- Allocation based on proportion of prior 147G funding
- Districts under NO obligation to pay this alongside 27L(2) to unions
- Designed to offset health normal cost increase from 1.25% to 3.83% and elimination of 3% employee deduction

School Aid Fund Revenue Sources

Jason reviewed the composition of school aid fund revenue (per House Fiscal Agency):

Source	Amount	Percentage
Sales Tax	\$8.06 billion	42%
Income Tax	\$4.36 billion	23%
State Education Tax	\$3.01 billion	16%
Lottery Transfer	\$1.14 billion	6%
Use Tax	\$943 million	5%
Real Estate Transfer	\$582 million	3%
Online Gaming/Sports Betting	\$590 million	3%
Other	\$460 million	2%
Total	\$19.1 billion	100%

Jason noted that while lottery contributes \$1.14 billion, even more goes out to universities from the school aid fund, raising questions about whether K-12 truly benefits from lottery revenue.

School Aid Fund Appropriations

How the school aid fund is distributed (does not include one-time funding):

- **Foundation Allowances:** \$10.6 billion (50%) - down from 64% pre-pandemic
- **Special Education:** \$2.8 billion (13%)
- **MPSERS:** \$2.0 billion (9%)
- **Federal Programs (non-Special Ed):** \$1.8 billion (9%)
- **At-Risk Programs:** \$1.3 billion (6%)
- **Other Foundation Programs:** \$1.2 billion (6%)
- **GSRP (Great Start Readiness Program):** \$639 million (3%)
- **Other Ongoing:** \$888 million (4%)


Key observations:

- Foundation allowance share has decreased significantly (from 64% to 50%)
- Special education funding has grown substantially with implementation and full funding of Section 51E
- MPSERS funding has increased as rates rose in recent years
- Early childhood investments (GSRP) have grown steadily under Whitmer administration

FY 2026-27 Budget Proposals

Jason provided detailed comparison of three budget proposals released during MSBO's annual conference week:

Budget Timeline and Context


 **Election Year Impact:** Because 2026 is an election year with gubernatorial and all legislative seats up for election, there's strong motivation to complete the budget earlier. Legislators want to campaign at July 4th parades with the budget done. However, Speaker Matt Hall stated publicly at Mackinac Policy Conference he doesn't think there will be a deal by July 1 (possibly posturing). Expect details late June or early July.

May 2026 Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference (CREC)

The May CREC showed:

Fund	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	Growth Rate
School Aid Fund	\$19.6 billion	\$19.6 billion	\$20.0 billion	2.0-2.3%
General Fund/GP	\$14.2 billion	\$14.5 billion	\$14.6 billion	-0.4% to 2.9%

- **School Aid Fund:** Positive adjustments of \$80-100 million per year; slow but steady growth of 2.0-2.7% annually
- **General Fund:** Adjustments of \$75-228 million per year, but with year-over-year declines in FY 26 and FY 27

 **Budget Challenge:** The January 2026 CREC showed huge negative adjustments to General Fund (-\$980.5 million for FY 2026). This makes the school aid fund look attractive as a resource for the overall state budget, not just K-12 schools. This context is critical for understanding higher education funding discussions.

Balance Sheet Comparison (Baseline, before budget proposals)

School Aid Fund: Healthy position

- Beginning balance FY 2026-27: \$1.0 billion
- Projected ending balance: \$2.1 billion (if no cost increases)

General Fund/General Purpose: Significant deficit

- Current year (2025-26): -\$155 million (needs immediate fix)
- Next year (2026-27): -\$1.0 billion deficit

Solutions discussed for General Fund deficit:

- Revenue generation (marijuana, other taxes)
- Using budget reserves (including budget stabilization fund built up over last 5 years)
- Making cuts (including using school aid fund dollars for universities—though not characterized as "cut")

Foundation Allowance Proposals

Proposal	Foundation Allowance	Increase	Cyber School FA
Governor	\$10,300	\$250 (2.5%)	\$8,240 (80%)
House (HB 5628)	\$10,300	\$250 (2.5%)	\$10,300 (100%)
Senate (SB 858)	\$10,300	\$250 (2.5%)	Agrees with Governor (80%)

All three proposals agree on \$250 per pupil increase (2.5%). Jason noted some advocacy for \$400-450 increase would be more popular with membership.

Weighted Pupil FTE Approach

Governor's Proposal:

- Defines "weighted pupil" establishing weights greater than 1.0 FTE for:
 - English Language Learners (ELL): 1.019 - 1.1687

- Economically Disadvantaged (31A): 1.01692 - 1.2273
- This complicates pupil count vs. actual student count calculations

House: Did NOT include this provision

Senate:

- Agrees with Governor's weighted approach
- Adds 15-year phase-in for weights to increase
- Allows districts to use higher of actual count or 3-year average count
- Addresses declining enrollment (70% of districts affected; state down 330,000+ students since early 2000s peak)

MASA and MASSP testified supporting weighted foundation allowance concept. Jason expects some version will likely be in final budget, though not the full 15-year phase-in.

Other Key Funding Areas - All Three Proposals

Areas of Agreement:

Area	Funding Range	Notes
Dual Enrollment (Sec 21B)	\$20-60 million	Reimburse districts for costs; calculation method unclear
Transportation	\$125-150 million	Current amount is \$125M
Universal Meals (Sec 30D)	Continued funding	House adds restrictions on soda, candy, chemicals, dyes
GSRP & Early Childhood	Continued increases	Sec 32D, 39, 32P, 54D all funded
Literacy (Sec 35A)	\$102-117 million	Major priority; includes LETRS training in all three

High-Impact Tutoring (Sec 35P)	\$50-100 million	All three include
Literacy Dashboard	New MDE initiative	Sec 35O or 35Q depending on proposal

Declining Enrollment:

- Governor & House: Include Section 29 at \$125M (Governor) or \$71M (House). Current proration at 60-65%.
- Senate: Addresses through expanded use of 3-year average count (see weighted FTE above)

Section 31AA (Mental Health & School Safety) 2026-27

Proposal	Amount	Ongoing/One-time	Waiver Language
Governor	\$300 million	\$50M ongoing intent	Retains waiver unchanged
House	\$300 million	\$200M ongoing intent	Retains but limits "mass casualty" definition
Senate	\$300 million	One-time	Retains but limits "mass casualty" definition; adds requirements

Key Differences by Chamber

House-Specific Provisions (HB 5628):

- Section 16A: Withholds 20% of funding for violating statements on race, DEI, gender initiatives

- Section 35Q: \$40 million for parents to pay private tutors (limited to 20 districts)
- Section 67: FAFSA requirement repealed (others retain)
- Did NOT include Section 164M (because no weighted FTE approach)
- Universal meals: Prohibits soda, candy, chemicals, dyes to students (could affect concessions at sporting events)

Senate-Specific Provisions (SB 858):

- Section 21F: Allows 6 days virtual learning (3 for testing, 3 for weather/emergency)
- Section 27L: \$150 million educator compensation—explicitly structured as bonuses, NOT MPSERS reportable (response to districts deducting MPSERS costs from prior educator compensation funding)

Jason characterized Senate proposal as:

- More aligned with Governor than House
- Goes further in some areas supporting education and teachers
- Includes clear union priorities that may not be popular with business officials
- 15-year phase-in for weighted FTE priorities

House proposal characterized as:

- Did not include expected weighted FTE approach
- Some infighting/confusion on House side regarding leadership
- Least like the other two proposals but still many similarities
- Possibly less for traditional K-12 to support

MPSERS Funding (Section 147) - FY 2026-27

All three proposals concur with Governor:

- **Section 147A1:** Eliminated (remains eliminated from 2025-26, -\$100M to districts)
- **Section 147A3:** Eliminated (remains eliminated from 2025-26, -\$12M to ISDs)
- **Section 147A2:** Slight decrease (~10% reduction). Alex Holmden at State Budget Office provided explanation on Exchange—relates to pre-FY18 vs post-FY18 changes.

- **Section 147C:** Slight decrease as UAAL rate decreases

FY 2026-27 MPSERS Rates:

Plan Type	Pension Normal	Pension UAAL	Health Normal	Health UAAL	Total Rate	Capped Rate
Basic/MIP w/Premium Subsidy	10.87%	15.21%	1.43%	0.00%	27.51%	27.51%
Basic/MIP To DC w/Premium Subsidy	10.87%	15.21%	1.43%	0.00%	27.51%	27.51%
Pension Plus w/Premium Subsidy	6.13%	15.21%	1.43%	0.00%	22.77%	22.77%
Pension Plus to DC	0.00%	15.21%	1.43%	0.00%	16.64%	15.21%
Basic/MIP w/PHF	10.87%	15.21%	0.00%	0.00%	26.08%	26.08%
Basic/MIP To DC w/PHF	10.87%	15.21%	0.00%	0.00%	26.08%	26.08%
Pension Plus PHF	6.13%	15.21%	0.00%	0.00%	21.34%	21.34%

Key observations:


- Health normal cost drops from 3.83% to 1.43% (retiree health plan ~150-160% funded)

- Pension normal cost 10.87% expected to remain stable (has contribution floor)
- Employer cap rate decreases from 29.91% to 27.51% (2.4% decrease)
- Stabilization rate: 15.02% to 13.51% (1.51% decrease)
- Overall contribution rate varies by plan—don't assume 2.4% savings across entire payroll
- Districts should evaluate demographics and staffing longevity to accurately estimate savings

Higher Education Funding from School Aid Fund

This emerged as a major concern due to General Fund deficit:

Proposal	Community Colleges	Universities	Total Higher Ed from SAF
FY 2025-26 (current)	\$493M	\$851M	~\$1.34B
Governor 2026-27	\$525M (+\$32M)	\$1.38B (+\$528M)	\$1.77B
Senate 2026-27	Moderate increase	Moderate increase	\$1.43B
House 2026-27	Moderate increase	Cuts to MSU & U of M	\$1.34B

 **Impact Analysis:** Governor's proposal diverts approximately \$1.8 billion from school aid fund to higher education—equivalent to about \$1,400 per K-12 student. This means foundation allowance could theoretically be \$11,700 instead of \$10,300 if these funds remained in K-12 education. Jason noted this is the "wrong solution" but practically will likely be part of the final budget deal given state fiscal situation.

House proposal keeps higher ed funding close to current levels but achieves this by cutting MSU and U of M funding (unpopular with other chambers).


Health Insurance and PA-152

PA-152 Hard Cap Update

- 3.0% increase in caps for 2026 (memo released end of March)
- Gallagher presentation in February Human Resources Committee provided good overview
- Link to presentation available in Jason's slides

House Bill 6058 - Critical Concern

This "zombie bill" from lame duck December 2024 remains a significant threat:

 **Background:** HB 6058 was intended to address health insurance rate increases of 12-16% while PA-152 caps weren't increasing proportionally, causing employee cost share to skyrocket. However, the bill has serious procedural and substantive problems.

Current Status:

- Passed House, Senate made changes, but House went home without fixing technical issues
- Never presented to Governor (possible constitutional concern)
- Currently in courts; Michigan Supreme Court hearing expected
- No guarantee Governor would sign even if it reached her desk (significant state cost increase)

Potential Impact if Enacted:

- Could be retroactive to January 1, 2025
- Single/double/family category increases would be substantial
- Family cap could exceed \$27,000 annually
- Statewide two-year cost increase: ~\$625-650 million
- For districts of any size: \$1 million+ in increased costs
- Creates health insurance "floor" rather than "cap"

Additional Concerns:

- Mandatory subject of bargaining—how to implement retroactively?
- Potential requirement for retroactive payments to employees (W-2 corrections, 941 corrections)
- Legal challenges likely even if signed into law
- Some employees who would benefit are deceased (morbid but true complexity)

Nikolas asked about potential obligation to reimburse employees retroactively. Jason confirmed this is a major concern that would likely trigger additional legal challenges due to mandatory bargaining requirements.

Recommendations:

- Use Gallagher's projected 2027 costs to estimate potential impact
- Compare family cap projections (\$27,000+) to your current caps or 80/20 cost share
- Have quick estimate ready "in your back pocket" for superintendent/board
- Monitor court proceedings

Jason noted a more logical approach would have been to:

- Rebase PA-152 caps
- Provide state funding for 2 years of the rebased increase
- Districts take over in year 3
- But this approach is "much too logical"

Other Legislative Items

House Bill 5797 (now Public Act 15 of 2026)

Allows additional funding forgiveness for missed days due to inclement weather. Districts in affected counties should review if applicable.

Property Tax Cut Proposals

Package of House bills (HB 5872, 5873, 5874, 5878):

- Would cost \$4+ billion from school aid fund

- Pop-up tax elimination not yet costed
- Election year proposals—hot-button topic nationally

Other Bills

- **HB 4583-4584:** Would limit all school elections to November ballots only
- **HB 5032:** Would ban use of state funds to pay for millage election costs (must be paid by donations)

Federal Funding

Latest bipartisan L-HHS-ED bill shows mostly flat funding:

- **Increases:**
 - IDEA-B: +\$20 million
 - Title I Impact Aid: +\$5 million
 - Rural Education (REAP): +\$5 million
 - Title VI Indian Education: +\$2 million
 - Head Start/Early Head Start: +\$85 million (non-USED)
 - Child Care Development Block Grant: +\$85 million (non-USED)
 - Special Olympics: +\$2 million
 - Edtech/media/materials for IDEA-D: +\$1 million
- **Cuts:**
 - Education Innovation & Research grants: -\$24 million
 - Title School Safety National Activities: -\$26 million
 - Special programs for migrant students (HEP/CAMP): -\$1 million
 - USED program administration: -\$21 million
- **Level funding:** Title III-A, IV-A, and other programs not specifically listed

Jason noted flat funding is "a major advocacy win in the current climate" and expressed concerns about whether funds will actually be allocated on time given USED & DOL's new

interagency agreements. He anticipates continued "chaos" from current administration's approach to U.S. Department of Education, though hopefully impact felt more by state agencies than districts.

Important Dates and Reference Materials

Annual Reminders

- Competitive Bid Threshold FY 2025-26: \$31,321
- 2026 IRS Mileage Rate: 72.5 cents/mile
- 2026 HSA Contribution Limits: \$4,400 individual (note: 2027 limits now available at \$9,000 family)
- Michigan Minimum Wage 2026: \$13.73/hour
- 2026 Income Deferral Limit: \$24,500
- Tech bids coming in MUCH higher than FY 2025-26 (REMC bids from March showed significant increases)

Budget Resources

- May 2026 CREC page
- School Finance Committee page
- FY 2026-27 Budget page
- MDE Update (February 20, 2026)
- Dan Behm update from AC 2026 (side-by-side comparison of proposals)
- MSBO/Hiring Solutions Labor Market Survey 2026 (available in MSBO Member Resources)

Operational Topics and Regional Discussion

Medicaid Reporting Changes

Statewide change from quarterly to semester submissions:

- July-December semester
- January-June semester
- Possible short summer month reporting (details pending)
- Staff pool lists and calendars required certification by May 29th
- Watch for notifications from AOP site

Nikolas noted this will involve some trial and error with potential challenges around staff pool lists and calendar management.

Purchasing Card Programs

Extensive discussion about various P-card programs and challenges:

MPCC (Michigan Purchasing Card Consortium) - Transitioning BMO to U.S. Bank:

- Some districts experiencing communication challenges with transition
- Cards expected not to have logos initially (contrary to expectations)
- Implementation date uncertainty (June 22nd potentially pushed back)
- No administrative access to system yet for some districts
- Working with Beth Smith (PFM) as administrator

Huntington Bank (Alternative Program):

- Used by Ottawa ISD with positive reviews
- Amber Hinterman at Ashley-Breckenridge reports great experience
- Features:
 - Take photo of receipt immediately for upload
 - More immediate transaction visibility
 - Can temporarily increase card limits (e.g., \$500 to \$5,000 for 3 days for conference)
 - Has rebate program
 - Rebate reportedly significantly higher than consortium rates

Integration with Financial Systems:

- Some districts fully integrated BMO transactions into Skyward with automated uploads
- Approval workflows can be set up within Skyward
- Account code restrictions can limit users to their specific accounts
- Posting frequency matters—weekly recommended vs. monthly to keep GL current and prevent lingering transactions
- Question whether to approve in bank system or financial system (training consideration)

Amazon Credits Issue:

- Some districts receiving random small credits from Amazon dating back to 2020-2022
- Credits don't include full order numbers
- Requires downloading all credits from 2020 forward in Excel to match
- Susanya at Central Montcalm was helpful resource on resolution

Policy and Procedures:

- Districts working to strengthen cardholder agreements
- Card usage has grown 3-5x over past four years in some districts
- Wide distribution in some districts (special ed staff, itinerants, teachers, admin assistants, administrators)

Nikolas will share Huntington Bank information with the group once compiled.

Food Service

Providers in the region vary:

- Some districts in-house
- Some use Chartwells
- Alma uses Southwest
- ISD contracts with Greenville for delivery

Reconciliation Challenges:

- Ginger sent email to several business officials about reconciling food service reimbursements to meals reports

- Significant discrepancies reported (e.g., reports show 650 meals/\$30,000 expected, but only \$25,000 received)
- Members report inability to balance for 2-3 years
- State not responding to inquiries or spreadsheet submissions
- One business manager shared spreadsheet on listserv showing state owes money; planning to invoice
- Some members unclear if "fall catch-up" payments resolve discrepancies

Group expressed interest in having someone from state-level food service present to the regional group to explain reconciliation process and address ongoing discrepancies.

TCM Full Client - Audit Report Capabilities

Nikolas offered to set up Zoom demonstration for interested members:

- Can pull legal invoices for auditors in approximately 10 seconds
- Much improved from earlier versions of TCM
- Can pull all purchase orders for vendor
- Helpful for FOIA requests

FOIA Requests

Discussion about Data Branch FOIA requests:

- **Frequency:** Multiple members receiving several requests per week
- **Strategy:** Some responding with cost estimates; most requesters don't respond or pay
- **Legal Update:** Case law from Grand Rapids (discussed at MSBO School Finance pre-conference) clarified obligation is for response, not fulfillment, within timeframe. One case took 9 months for fulfillment—legally acceptable as long as initial response was timely and district provided reasonable timeline based on workload.
- **Automation Concern:** Belief that requests are completely automated; responses not monitored unless Excel file sent back
- **Purpose:** Data Branch appears to compile vendor usage data across state, potentially selling to vendors (e.g., identifying which schools use specific products to sell lists of non-

users)

- **Recent Example:** CVWG vendor request requiring data back to 2022

Software and Online Systems

InformEd (Online Forms System):

- Used by some districts for mileage reimbursements and other business office forms
- Eliminates paper loss issues
- Can set up approvals and routing
- Fisher has created numerous forms for various purposes
- Reported as "huge improvement" by users
- Nikolas has contact information to share

Shepherd confirmed using Baker Tilly for unspecified services.

Planning for 2026-27 Regional Meetings

Scheduling

- Waiting for MSBO schedule of events (available July 1) before setting dates
- Want to avoid conflicts with TFM market updates and major MSBO events
- Likely continuing Friday 8:30 AM start time (works best for group)
- Open to exploring different options if strong preference emerges
- Will consider district meeting schedules when possible
- Planning to maintain current meeting frequency (minimum 6 per year; 75% attendance required for PD credit)

Topics and Presenters - Ideas Raised

Confirmed Interest:

- Baker Tilly presentation (Jesse willing to present; Beal City Shepherd uses them)

- KEV Group working lunch (Kelly Winkler; student accounting software)
- State Office of Special Education (Sean McLaughlin or team) - especially regarding 4094/4096 form changes and increased scrutiny
- State Food Service staff - reconciliation process and discrepancy resolution

Under Consideration:

- Plume Health (onsite medical clinic) - though concern about bigger commitment and limited applicability to all districts
- Diane Golzynski presentation (mentioned as excellent)

Preferences Noted:

- Strong preference for informational over sales-focused presentations
- Value presentations from state officials (humanizes email correspondents, they don't often get to present to business officials)
- Members appreciate learning from recent presentations like Jason's budget update and prior state presenters

Nikolas encouraged members to suggest vendors, presentations they've enjoyed, or topics they're struggling with. He monitors listservs/Exchange for common themes but may not always be aware of local district challenges.

Business Office Calendar


- Currently in Excel; needs translation to Google Sheet
- Goal: create living document accessible to all members
- Will be sent to group with explanation once ready
- Some delays due to office issues

Professional Development Credits

- MSBO requires minimum 6 meetings per year
- Members must attend 75% (4 meetings) for credit
- Nikolas maintains sign-in sheet including online attendees

- Final meeting info sent to Lily at MSBO for processing
- MSBO sends certificates directly to individuals (similar to workshops/classes)

MSBO Exchange Transition

 **Critical Deadline:** Listservs will sunset on June 30, 2026 (25 days from meeting date). All members from the listserv have been added to the Exchange. Nikolas no longer posting to listserv to encourage Exchange adoption.

Exchange Features and Notes:

- Not exclusive to region—anyone can join regional groups
- MSBO staff, associate members, and members from across state are in the group
- Be cautious about confidential information
- Use for regional group sharing, minutes, agendas, one-off questions
- Library function still being refined for optimal organization
- Search function works well for finding previous discussions
- How-to video tutorials available without logging in
- Nikolas available to assist with navigation, profile setup, thread creation

Other ISDs (like Facilities group) still using listserv heavily; transition will be interesting to observe.

Recent Notifications

- FY 2026-27 Title II estimated allocations released on meeting day
- Consultants should be sending notifications

New Member Introduction

Jeremy Brown introduced himself:

- Incoming business manager at Newaygo
- Taking over for Kim Bidwell
- Kim recommended he join the meeting and introduce himself
- Plans to sign up for MSBO membership and begin certification classes
- Looks forward to getting to know the group

Nikolas welcomed Jeremy, added him to distribution list, and offered assistance with MSBO Exchange setup or any questions. Noted in-person attendance was lower than typical due to busy time of year and budget season.

Closing Items

- Jason available for ~10 more minutes for questions after presentation
- Jason's contact: (517) 376-3087, jason@misbao.org
- Next TFM market update: June 12 (final for fiscal year), 75-100 typical attendance
- Joint ISD School Finance meeting: June 19, 9:30 AM via Zoom
- Next regional meeting: September (exact date TBD after July 1 when MSBO schedule available)
- Have a safe summer; try to relax and get away from office