



Friends of Kent County Schools

**URGENT**  
**Please take**  
**action today**

**TO:** Supporters of Public Education  
**FROM:** Dr. Michael Shibler, Chairperson  
**DATE:** October 26, 2009

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On Friday, October 23, I attended a meeting with Governor Granholm, area educators, and parents. The Governor is urging us to join her in a two-phase assault on Lansing to fix public education funding.

### **Phase 1 (Within the next 30 days)**

Within the next 30 days,, legislators must find an immediate solution to the \$212 million budget shortfall that forced the Governor to increase cuts this year to a total of \$292 per student. Her proration, which was necessary because the Legislature sent her an unbalanced school aid budget, would further reduce funding by \$127 per pupil on top of the recent \$165 per-pupil reduction. Remember, school districts are nearly four months into their fiscal year.

***What you need to do immediately...***  
***(Sample letter and contact information below)***

Contact your Senator: they have opposed these common-sense revenue increases; let them know they must support our children if we are to build a better future in Michigan.

Contact your State Representative: ask for his/her support; if they voted for these types of reforms earlier, thank them.

And contact the Governor: thank her for presenting these proposals to the Legislature, and tell her she **MUST** achieve a long-term solution to these problems before she leaves office in 14 months.

Below is a suggested message to legislators which lists three recommendations, none of which represent a general tax increase. If all three are not implemented, the cost to Kent County alone will be \$30 million in school aid revenues, which is equivalent to the salaries of 600 first-year teachers!

### **SUGGESTED MESSAGE**

Dear <Senator/Representative>:

Following is a list of what you need to do to prevent an additional \$127 reduction in per-pupil funding which is scheduled to occur this school year. School districts cannot withstand another funding reduction. You need to support our children so they can provide a better future for Michigan.

None of these result in a general tax increase!

1. Freeze the scheduled cost-of-living increase in the individual income tax deduction and dedicate those dollars to education, which would contribute another \$55 million to the school aid fund;
2. Shave just 15 percent off of the special interest tax breaks that have been instituted over the years, such as the tax breaks created for the oil and gas industry when oil was \$18 a barrel, which now represent a windfall for producers enjoying prices of \$78 per barrel and more in recent years; and
3. Support other revenue producing recommendations the Governor made to the Legislature, such as increasing the number of liquor licenses available in communities or charging a premium for extended-hour licenses.

Senators: <http://senate.michigan.gov/FindYourSenator/michiganfys.asp?lookup=>

House of Representatives: [http://house.michigan.gov/find\\_a\\_rep.asp](http://house.michigan.gov/find_a_rep.asp)

The Governor: <http://www.michigan.gov/gov/0,1607,7-168-21995---,00.html>

## **Phase 2 (Within 120 days)**

Legislators must work together to develop a long-term fix the structural deficit in the State of Michigan. More information to follow.