

The Honorable Rick Snyder, Governor
State of Michigan
State Capitol
Lansing, Michigan

Jan. 23, 2018

Dear Governor Snyder:

On behalf of the Michigan Association of School Boards, I urge you to veto Senate Bill 574, requiring an ISD enhancement millage to be distributed to public school academies in addition to the traditional constituent districts the ISD serves.

Traditional schools face costs that PSAs do not, most notably retirement legacy costs. These enhancement millages allow districts to put more money into the classroom, offsetting some of the funds needed for MPSERS payments. Also, traditional schools have transportation costs that PSAs do not and millages like this can help offset the costs to maintain a bus fleet.

As ISDs consider putting a millage on the ballot, multiple public hearings are held at both the local and ISD levels. The boards considering the tax increase are publically elected and, therefore, are more easily held accountable for decisions made on how to use public dollars. An appointed board, such as those at a PSA, does not have the same accountability or transparency when it comes to the use of taxpayer money.

We also have concerns with future activity. If a PSA closes, there needs to be a clear process for what to do with the assets purchased with the millage revenue. These assets should be treated differently as they are purchased with local taxpayer dollars, not state-appropriated funds.

Finally, we support your idea of funding cyber schools at a percentage of the minimum per pupil. However, this bill also includes cyber schools, though with strict requirements, and would send even more taxpayer dollars to for-profit entities that have very little of the same costs as brick-and-mortar traditional schools and PSAs.

MASB would be happy to participate in a conversation about overall funding of public education in our state, but this bill does not address that issue as a whole.

I strongly urge you to veto Senate Bill 574 and keep taxpayer dollars under the control of entities that are directly accountable to the community.

Sincerely,



Don P. Wotruba, CAE
Executive Director



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