

News Release

Board of Commissioners increases county school support to \$30 million

\$28 million Oakland Together School COVID-19 Support Fund approved to protect students and support education through pandemic

September 4, 2020, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI. – At its meeting on September 3, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution authorizing \$28 million to establish the Oakland Together School COVID-19 Support Fund. The fund will be used to reimburse Oakland County school districts for costs associated with implementing safety protocols due to the coronavirus pandemic. Costs could include plexiglass, personal protection equipment, creating safety protocols, retrofitting classrooms and implementing remote technology. The action follows an earlier approval of \$2 million to provide public health nurses to help schools reopen.

“We know schools and students need these resources to keep everyone safe and support education during this pandemic,” Chairman **David T. Woodward** (D-Royal Oak), who authored the resolution, said. “We are proud to come together to provide our school districts with these new resources. It’s crucial that we support our kids and their educators during this time, and together we will get through this.”

The initiative was announced by County Executive David Coulter and Commissioner **Gwen Markham** (D-Novi) last week. School districts will be able to apply for items that have not been reimbursed by the state or federal government. Funding for the initiative has been made available from the federal CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Funds received by Oakland County.

“The Board understands that our school districts have always been dedicated to the safety of their students and that this pandemic has brought unimaginable challenges to providing a healthy learning environment,” Markham said. “We are happy to launch this fund to help ensure the safety of all students.”

The Board approved equitable criteria for distribution. Allocation of funding to school districts and public school academies will be based on weighted factors including the total number of students and staff, the number of students receiving special education services and the number of economically disadvantaged students.

“An equitable distribution of these funds to communities like Waterford, hard hit by the pandemic, will go a long way,” Waterford School Board Trustee John Paul Torres said. “These funds will allow us more opportunity to connect kids with learning devices, internet hot spots, and provide personal protection equipment for teachers and staff. These funds are much needed, and we will put them to good use. I want to thank the Oakland County Board of Commissioners and Executive Dave Coulter for their support of Oakland County students.”

The resolution also establishes an oversight committee comprised of commissioners and one representative appointed by the County Executive. The committee will recommend a grant application process, determine eligible applicants and help ensure compliance with federal and state regulations.

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