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December 7, 2015

Dear Chairman Pscholka:

The purpose of this communication is to provide written testimony in support of HB 4388 (Rep. McCready) and the expansion of the sinking fund language to include school security and technology.

Thanks to a successful bond proposal in 2011, Fraser Public Schools has enjoyed the fortunate position of being one of the few “have’s” in the acquisition and use of mobile devices to support learning with every student in our district in grades K-12 being equipped with an iPad for their personal use on a 24x7 basis. The availability of these devices combined with a robust wireless infrastructure has allowed our district to transform our learning processes for every child, every day.

As you can see from watching this video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eijl7S3kbb>, our students have benefited greatly in their daily learning through the redesigning of our instructional strategies and the opportunity to extend their learning beyond our regular school day. This is a luxury few school districts across the State of Michigan enjoy. In Fraser, our students are fortunate to have personal mobile devices that allow them to access resources wherever they may go and learning is occurring in the “now” rather than during a set time when our school doors are open. This is a benefit all students in the State of Michigan should enjoy. Our students are growing up in a digital world. Unfortunately, their access to digital resources often stop when they enter our school buildings due to a lack of operational dollars to support the digital transition in our schools.

The greatest challenge our state faces isn’t the transformation process to move beyond our traditional model of school and learning. Our greatest challenge is the sustainability of the needed technology resources to continue our journey towards providing students with the opportunity to learn on any time, any where, any path, any pace basis. In order to make this vision a reality, school districts like Fraser, need the opportunity to gain support from our community to ensure the

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needed financial resources will be available to develop a purposeful plan to purchase and replace devices on a consistent and ongoing basis.

The growth of genuine 21st century learning practices is greatly inhibited in our current funding structure where districts have to rely upon capital bond projects to fund large-scale acquisitions. Even for the districts who are able to successfully pass a technology bond, the clock begins ticking on when the funding source will be depleted.

The opportunity to leverage a sinking fund for the purchase and ongoing sustainability of technology resources in our school districts is critical if we are going to make Michigan a Top 10 state in the quality of education we provide to our students.

We understand HB 4388 reflects compromise language that Rep. McCreedy and others have worked hard to secure, which both allows for a modernization of allowable expenditures as well as restraining the scale and length of sinking funds, in general. We strongly support this bill and would encourage all committee members to do so, as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill. If we can be of any further assistance on this topic, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

David M. Richards, Ph.D.

Superintendent

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