



NEWS RELEASE

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Berrien RESA returns nearly \$3.2 million to local school districts this year, over \$38.8 million over past 10 years *District also receives clean audit report*

BERRIEN SPRINGS-This week, the Berrien Regional Education Service Agency's (Berrien RESA) Board of Education authorized the reimbursement of \$3,181,220 in special education funds back to local school districts. The dollar amount is determined using a county-wide reimbursement formula authorized by the Board.

It has been Berrien RESA's policy to direct excess special education funding to area public school districts to reimburse a portion of their unfunded special education expenditures from the prior year. The surplus derives from two sources, Fund Equity and Act 18 dollars levied through a county Special Education millage. Over the past 10 years, the cumulative total of funds returned was over \$38.8 million.

"This is really exciting – it is not every day that Berrien County schools get over \$3.1 million dollars returned to them, let alone \$38 million over the past 10 years," said Berrien RESA Superintendent Eric Hoppstock. "We are pleased to have the flexibility to return funds back to our constituents which can then be used to offset special education costs – providing even more students with the critical resources they need to learn and thrive."

Also shared during the meeting was Berrien RESA's audit report prepared by Plante Moran. The district received a clean and unmodified opinion.

"Earlier this fall, in the midst of dealing with a pandemic, Berrien RESA successfully completed its annual financial audit," said Hoppstock. "The unmodified opinion represents the work of everyone in the organization. Even though departments had to make a number of unique and unexpected COVID-related purchases, everyone was careful to not exhaust resources. This attention to our bottom line is reflected in our positive audit report. I am very proud of our team for their efforts."

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