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## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Berrien RESA waives over \$900,000 in product and service fees to save local districts money**

*Fees being waived to help schools purchase health and safety materials*

**BERRIEN SPRINGS-** During this week's Board of Education meeting, the Berrien RESA Board approved a two-year waiver of service and product fees to save local districts \$906,000, freeing up funds to help schools prepare for the 2020-21 school year and purchase COVID-19 health and safety materials.

"This has been a very difficult planning year relative to school finances," said Berrien RESA Superintendent Eric Hoppstock. "With a yet to be determined School Aid budget and the increasing costs of required COVID-19 health and safety products, schools are trying to meet expectations with fewer financial resources. Recognizing the uncertainty our local districts are experiencing, Berrien RESA wanted to help. By waiving these fees, we thought this was one more way we could support educators and students."

On Monday, the Board approved a reduction of its General Fund balance of \$453,000 for both this school year and next school year to relieve local district budget pressures. Waivers include:

- product fees for Power School Student Information System, \$180,000
- product fees for Skyward business system, \$130,000
- charge backs for 5th year Early/Middle College Mentor, \$19,983
- charge backs for 5th year Early/Middle College Consultant, \$123,000

"Providing personal protection equipment, purchasing additional cleaning products and having to reconfigure classrooms to support social distancing is expensive," said Hoppstock. "Anything Berrien RESA can do to help offset those expenses will only help our local districts be successful. I am glad that we could pass along some savings to our constituents."

In addition to these waived service fees, it has been Berrien RESA's Board of Education policy to direct excess special education funds back 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. The amount of funding that is returned is determined by a county-wide reimbursement formula. While the amount returned each year fluctuates and is not guaranteed, local districts should expect to see a special education reimbursement later this fall.

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