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Hall doubles down on a K-12 budget deal by July 1, stresses roads and earmarks

House [Speaker Matt Hall](#) said he believes the Legislature can pass a K-12 budget and announce a roads plan deal by the "aspirational" statutory deadline of July 1.

"That's what House Republicans are trying to do," Hall (R-Richland Township) said at a press conference Wednesday afternoon. "I'm not going to say everything, because there are other people who don't want me to say certain details about negotiations. I'm not going to say who they are, but I will say this: I do think that myself and House Republicans are very optimistic and I believe we can get a July 1 k-12 budget done. I also believe that we can get a roads deal done."

Several sources, speaking on background, said Wednesday evening that the central division has existed for several days: [Governor Gretchen Whitmer](#) and Hall want to get a roads deal and the K-12 budget done by July 1, but the Senate Democratic majority prefers to finalize the entire budget at once.

Whitmer's office issued a statement on the status of budget negotiations on Wednesday.

"As school districts begin to plan for next school year, our students and teachers are counting on state lawmakers to pass a budget in a timely manner that delivers the resources they need to be successful. All along, Governor Whitmer has been clear that the budget should get done by the July 1 deadline in state law to give school districts the certainty they need to set their budgets," said Bobby Leddy, director of communications for the governor's office. "We are encouraged by the progress in recent budget discussions with Senate Majority Leader Brinks and Speaker Hall. It will be important to continue driving toward a framework for the education

budget and a roads deal over the coming weeks even if final passage of the budget follows after the deadline. Governor Whitmer will continue to bring both sides together to find common ground and deliver another balanced, bipartisan budget and long-term road funding solution because Michiganders expect no less."

Hall said there was momentum behind the K-12 education budget because both the House and the Senate had a plan.

"There are no barriers to doing a school budget by July 1. You just have to get serious about talking about those details and working it out," Hall said.

He railed against any earmarks Senate Democrats might want to include.

"We're proposing a 20 percent increase for our local districts, and we're proposing empowering those districts," Hall said about the K-12 budget the House passed two weeks ago. "If you look at people like Darren Camilleri and Sarah Anthony, based on what I've seen in their public comments, they care more about protecting corporate earmarks than they do about shrinking class sizes or funding our local school districts."

The House budget increases the foundation allowance to \$10,025 per pupil and then creates a new \$3.1 billion pot of funds by rolling up categoricals, broken down as \$2.7 billion to districts in an estimated \$1,975 per pupil, \$314.4 million to intermediate school districts in an estimated \$228 per pupil and \$40.8 million in General Fund dollars to nonpublic schools.

Hall said that it was possible to pass a budget for schools and a plan for roads without passing budgets for the rest of state government.

"I think we need to lock those in first, and then we'll have a pretty good idea what the rest of the budget is going to look like, and then we'll be able to answer questions afterward," Hall said.

He went on to say it might be better to wait on passing some of the other budgets until the state understood what kind of effect the federal government funding would have on state government funding.

"If you guys are so concerned that the federal government is going to cut the DHHS budget, then it does kind of make sense to set the

DHHS budget aside for a moment and see what happens with the Big Beautiful Bill," he said. "Now, I've been very supportive of the Big Beautiful Bill... and I've been on the record talking about how important I think a lot of those policies that President Trump has championed in that bill are, but I'm just saying, if there is some uncertainty in the DHHS bill, it makes sense, you can kind of set that aside for a moment and then work on that once we have more knowledge."

Hall said that he and Whitmer had a strong working relationship on the budget and the timeline for passing the budget and declined to comment on how meetings with Senate [Majority Leader Winnie Brinks](#) were going, other than to say that Brinks (D-Grand Rapids) had called the meetings productive.

"According to her, they're productive," he said about meeting with Brinks.

Hall stressed the importance of a roads plan and earmark legislation, but he would not say whether those were his terms of negotiation for passing the K-12 budget by July 1.

"Let me back up and just say I think we should get a K-12 budget passed," he said. "I think that right now, more than ever, would be a good time for the Senate Democrats to support their leader, Governor Whitmer and empower her, and I think that would allow us to find some common ground and get this done."

– By Elena Durnbaugh

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