Whitmer

Gov. Whitmer Announces Expansion of MI Classroom Heroes COVID-19 Grants

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New Grant Program Provides $2.5 Million for Specific Program Teachers

LANSING, Mich. – Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and State Treasurer Rachael Eubanks today announced the expansion of the MI Classroom Heroes COVID-19 Grants to include a new grant program for Great Start Readiness Program (GRSP), Head Start, adult education and young adult (ages 18-26) special education classroom teachers.

“The MI Classroom Heroes COVID-19 Grants are just a small token of our gratitude to educators for going above and beyond during the pandemic,” Governor Whitmer said. “When COVID-19 hit, teachers worked around the clock to quickly transform from in-person teaching to remote instruction to ensure that their students could continue learning. It is simply the right thing to do to expand these grants to include all specific program teachers across the state.”

The GRSP, Head Start, Adult Education and Young Adult Special Education Teacher COVID-19 Grant Program enables these specific program teachers to receive up to $500 for extra hours worked and costs incurred during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic last spring.

A state budget appropriation signed by Governor Whitmer at the end of 2020 provides $2.5 million to make specific program teachers eligible to receive a MI Classroom Heroes COVID-19 Grant, who were not eligible under previous programs.

"The Classroom Heroes COVID-19 Grants provide funds that our educators so richly deserve for their outstanding work during the pandemic," said David Hecker, President of the American Federation of Teachers Michigan. "In addition to the money, these grants are a sincere showing of respect for our teachers and support staff, and what they do for Michigan's students."

Full-time and part-time GRSP, Head Start, adult education and young adult special education teachers in a school district or nonprofit nonpublic school classrooms during the 2019-2020 school year prior to moving to remote learning are eligible.

To receive up to $500, specific program teachers must have performed at least of 75% of their standard instruction workload in brick-and-mortar classrooms to moving to remote instruction on April 2, 2020.

"My staff has been working with school districts and other stakeholders to help ensure that all eligible teachers and support staff receive the MI Classroom Heroes Grants," State Treasurer Eubanks said. "We will work urgently to ensure these specific program teachers receive their much-deserved grant payments."

The state Treasury Department is working with the Michigan Department of Education, school entities and other education partners to implement MI Classroom Heroes COVID-19 Grants. Eligible specific program teachers should consult the school entity where they worked during the 2019-2020 school year to ensure they receive a grant.

Grant funding checks for the GRSP, Head Start, Adult Education and Young Adult Special Education Teacher COVID-19 Grant Program are anticipated to be sent directly from the state Treasury Department to teachers in June.

“Expanding the MI Classroom Heroes Grant to GSRP staff is a tremendous acknowledgement of the value of the work that they do every day,” said Scott Koenigsknecht, Deputy Superintendent of the Michigan Department of Education. “These educators are committed to helping our earliest learners develop the social emotional and academic skills that will help them be prepared to successfully enter kindergarten. We appreciate them being recognized for the heroes that they are.”

Under the Teacher and Support Staff COVID-19 Grant Programs – the first two grant programs under the MI Classroom Heroes COVID-19 Grants umbrella – more than 138,000 K-12 teachers and support staff payments were sent MI Classroom Heroes Grants checks. More than $51 million is being distributed to eligible K-12 public school teachers and support staff and nonpublic school teachers.

For more information about MI Classroom Heroes COVID-19 Grants, go to www.Michigan.gov/MIClassroomHeroes.

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