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Contact: Mark Guastella, Executive Director
517-337-1757 mark@marsp.org

Pension systems shouldn't be tapped for road funding, says MARSP

Although finding a funding solution for infrastructure upgrades is a critical priority, the state should avoid weakening other entities, such as the state's pension systems, in the process, says the Michigan Association of Retired School Personnel (MARSP).

"We understand the challenge of Lansing policymakers working to fix Michigan's roads and bridges and we applaud their search for viable funding strategies," says **Mark Guastella**, MARSP executive director. "But we are concerned about discussions that propose delaying pension fund debt repayment or securitizing pension funds as a way of financing infrastructure needs."

MARSP represents the largest group of school pension fund recipients, retired teachers and other education personnel, and has praised efforts made during the last decade that put the state's pension fund debt on a solid repayment plan. Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System (MPSERS) pension fund debt is on track to be paid off in 2038.

"We have been steadily reducing the debt and we need to stay the course," Guastella explains. "Delaying the repayment schedule kicks the proverbial can down the road, which is one factor in how the existing pension fund debt accumulated in the first place."

MARSP is a statewide association of more than 40,000 public school retirees who rely on state provided pensions and health care.