

**By Warren M. Hoyt**  
special writer

The plan — distributing \$4.9 billion to schools — would provide a net property tax cut of \$1.1 billion to homeowners, farmers and businesses. That's out of a tax bill that now approaches \$6 billion.

Nichols' plan would require a constitutional amendment to establish the per-pupil grant, set the uniform statewide property tax, and earmark revenue growth and income tax funds for schools.

"Property taxes are too high, and now is the time to do something about it. We can reduce the property tax burden by shouldering more of the burden statewide. It means we will have to tighten the belt at the state level," Nichols said.

**THE 20-MILL** statewide tax com-

Republicans, who blocked a similar Blanchard plan last session, complained it inadequately addressed the need for property tax relief, unfairly taxed business and made no attempt to improve equity in school financing.

Still, he said it "gives a good place to start working."

Many Democratic legislative leaders declined immediate comment until they had reviewed the plan.

However, aides said one primary concern is the proposed earmarking of more money for schools at the expense of the general fund, particularly in light of a general expectation of an economic slowdown on the

The \$3,000-per-pupil grant — with future increases indexed to inflation — would make the state responsible for virtually the entire cost of basic education.

**CURRENTLY**, per-pupil spending ranges from \$1,800 to \$5,900, a cap

mills or whatever rate is required to maintain current spending levels. Aides said 103 districts now spend

said. But they acknowledge significant cuts could be required in later years.

**THE BASIC** state grant, assuming 1,639,900 pupils in 1989-90, would cost \$4.9 billion, with the 20-mill state property tax raising \$2.4 billion. Other state revenue sources would include:

- \$1.1 billion from the school aid fund and \$578 million from the gen-

payments to teachers retirement.

The writer is executive director of the Michigan Press Association.

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