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SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 30, 2004
TO: State Board of Education
FROM: Tom Watkins 
SUBJECT: Update on Educational Legislation

The August legislative report closely mirrors July's report due to the fact that there have been few legislative days. Originally, the Speaker had indicated that the State House would meet at least once a week through July, however, with the budget discussions not making any progress, the Democratic Convention, and other distractions, Speaker Johnson decided to cancel session until August. Pressure to address the budget and other outstanding issues may change at the start of August, as both Houses are tentatively scheduled to return to session on August 4, 5, and 6. The following is a brief update on some of the outstanding issues facing the Legislature.

ISD Legislation In mid-July, Governor Granholm signed the first phase of ISD legislation. The highlights of this legislation include recall provisions for ISD boards and a more accountable budgeting process for ISDs.

At the July State Board of Education meeting, it was mentioned that discussions were just beginning between the ISD community and members of the State House of Representatives regarding the second phase of ISD legislation. It appears that these two groups are working towards acceptable language. If an agreement develops, it will likely include language addressing conflicts of interest among ISD board members and employees, higher levels of audit requirements, and the posting of ISD travel and other information on the MDE website.

Department of Education Budget The Department's budget is currently in a conference committee. Department staff has met with all members of the committee and discussed key issues facing the committee as they make final decisions. It is anticipated that no action will occur in the conference committee until budget negotiations are finalized between the Governor and the legislative leaders.

MEAP/ACT Legislation As discussed in the July meeting, the Senate Education Committee did not address the ACT legislation. It is anticipated that major changes to the MEAP will not occur until the Cherry Commission (which has just begun its work) makes recommendations regarding these issues.

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August and September will bring conclusions to some of the key legislative issues facing the Department of Education. Additionally, staff will pursue several Department initiatives, including amendments to the Pupil Transportation Act (PA 187) and teacher certification enforcement legislation.

If you have any questions regarding these or other legislative issues please do not hesitate to contact myself or Bob Morris by telephone at 517-241-4993 or by e-mail at morrisrk@michigan.gov).