



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING



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GOVERNOR

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SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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**TO:** State Board of Education  
**FROM:** Michael P. Flanagan, Chairman   
**SUBJECT:** Education Legislation Update

The Legislative Session is beginning to gear up. Last week, the Legislature was back to work. The big issue regarding Education legislation has been the State Board's proposal on High School Graduation requirements. Both the House and the Senate have begun hearings regarding this proposal. I had an opportunity to testify before the Senate Education Committee on January 19. I am hoping that many of you will be able to find time to testify at future hearings.

The following provides more specific detail regarding committee activities on the High School Graduation requirement issue as well as other matters before the Legislature.

**High School Graduation Requirements.** As indicated, hearings have begun and will continue in the Legislature. The House and the Senate, however, are taking different approaches.

- **The House Education Committee.** Chairman Brian Palmer (R-Romeo) has begun hearings on the concept. It is anticipated Representative Palmer will make his own proposal public during the week of January 23, 2006. It appears there will be more public testimony in Lansing through February 8, 2006. By mid-February, it is anticipated that the committee will begin to focus on specific proposals, with a goal of reporting a bill out of committee by February 15. Representative Palmer has indicated that while his proposal may be quite different from the State Board's proposal, he recognizes that his proposal is likely to change as discussions continue.

**The Senate Education Committee.** Chairman Wayne Kuipers (R-Holland) has taken a different approach. He has spoken highly of the State Board's proposal, but has indicated that he wants to have time to understand the proposal and listen to what others are saying about it. To that end, the Senator has scheduled a series of statewide public hearings. These hearings are scheduled as follows:

January 30 at 3:00 p.m. at 630 Harvey Street in Muskegon  
February 9 at 7:00 p.m. at the Kent County ISD, 2930 Knapp St. NE in Grand Rapids

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February 16 at 4:30 p.m. at the Midland County ESA at 3917 Jefferson in Midland  
February 20 at 10:30 a.m. at the Kalamazoo RESA at 1819 East Milham Road in Kalamazoo  
March 3 at 10:00 a.m. at the Macomb ISD at 44001 Garfield Road in Clinton Township.  
March 3 at 3:00 p.m. at the Port Huron High School at 2215 Court Street in Port Huron.

It is entirely possible that Senator Kuipers will schedule additional public hearings. A hearing scheduled in the Upper Peninsula is also anticipated.

While Senator Kuipers is on a different time frame than what the Department or the State Board would prefer, he made it clear at the January 19 committee meeting that he supports a rigorous high school graduation requirement package to pass the Senate.

After testifying and having numerous discussions with legislators and other opinion leaders, I continue to be optimistic about our proposal. Obviously, this issue has many more hurdles to achieve before it becomes law, but I am convinced that the December proposal will pass largely intact.

**International Baccalaureate Assistance.** HB 4835, introduced by Rep. Stakoe (R-Highland), has raised a lot of discussion. This legislation has passed the House and is currently in the Senate Appropriations Committee. The Department has some concerns regarding administrative costs and funding specific programs outside the traditional appropriations process. Additional concerns have been raised regarding the use of the School Aid Fund as a funding source. I strongly believe in the concept of International Baccalaureate programs and I have instructed Bob Morris to work with the supporters of this legislation to see if we can find an appropriate way to provide some assistance.

If you have any questions regarding these or other legislative issues, please do not hesitate to contact Bob Morris or myself.