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March 27, 2006

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

The Legislature has been very active regarding education legislation during March. We have seen activity on a broad range of issues and I believe we have made excellent progress on most of these issues.

The following is a brief update of key legislative activities:

- 1. High School Graduation Requirements.** Both the House and the Senate have passed their versions of this legislation. The bills are currently in a conference committee, which should meet and report the bills before the end of the month. The devil is in the details regarding what is negotiated in the conference committee and we hope the legislation will continue to resemble much of what the State Board of Education proposed in December. We are hoping the Governor will be able to sign the bills in early to mid April. Staff is trying to work with the Legislature to ensure that the legislation is technically accurate and maintains the integrity of the State Board's plan.
- 2. The Cassis K-3 Intervention Package.** Last year, the Senate passed SB 327-330. This legislation was an effort by Senator Cassis to improve reading and other skills in grades K-3. This legislation is poised to pass the House and will then be sent to the Governor. One bill, HB 327, which ultimately evolved from Department recommendations, is legislation that will require provisionally certified teachers to complete a three-credit course in reading diagnosis and differential instruction. The remaining bills authorize additional reading and other improvement programs in grades K-3. Initially, the proposal was to be funded at \$1 million, however, the plan is not funded with any new revenue at this point. The legislation also offers school districts the ability to use "at-risk" funds, "small classroom" funds, and Durant funds for this program. No doubt funding for this program will be negotiated in the upcoming budget.

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3. **Student Safety Legislation.** HB 5675 is legislation sponsored by Representative Rick Baxter (R-Hanover). This legislation would do the following: ensure the accuracy of school personnel conviction data developed by the Michigan State Police and the Department of Education; specify information that would be exempt from the Freedom on Information Act (FOIA); and address issues faced by contractors. This legislation has gone to a conference committee based on a disagreement between the House and Senate as to exactly what misdemeanors need to be made public through the FOIA law. It is expected this issue will be resolved before the Legislature's spring break.
4. **Fingerprint Legislation.** HB 5609 is legislation introduced by Representative Moolenaar (R-Midland). The bill is in the House Appropriations Committee and would provide approximately \$16 million to reimburse school districts and ISDs for fingerprinting costs for all school employees in Michigan as a result of last year's Student Safety Initiative legislation. It also sets aside \$100,000 for administrative costs for the Department of Education. This issue will probably end up being addressed in the final budget negotiations that will likely occur this summer.
5. **Suicide Prevention.** The House Education Committee reported HB 4375, introduced by Rep. Chris Ward (R-Brighton). This legislation encourages school districts to provide age-appropriate instruction for pupils and professional development for school personnel regarding the warning signs and risk factors for suicide and depression. The Department would have to make model programs and material available to schools. This legislation will probably pass the House and Senate in the next few months.
6. **Infrastructure Hearing.** On Monday, March 20, Senator Jelinek's (R-Three Oaks) Senate Appropriation's Sub-Committee on K-12 held a daylong hearing on school infrastructure. Board Member John Austin began the meeting and introduced the topic for the Senators. Doug Roberts also provided detailed testimony and a proposed plan to begin to address the issue. It was also reported that Ohio has developed a specific plan to address school infrastructure issues. Numerous school officials testified about their efforts to address this problem. It appears Senator Jelinek is going to try to develop a legislative proposal to address the school infrastructure issue in Michigan.

As you can see, a lot is going on in the Legislature. Please do not hesitate to contact Bob Morris or myself with any questions or concerns regarding legislative matters.