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"Attain substantial and meaningful improvement in academic achievement for all students/children with primary emphasis on high priority schools and students."

—Michigan State Board of Education Goal

State Board Update

2008-09 Blue Ribbon Schools Announced

The State Board of Education has announced that 22 elementary schools are being recognized this year as Michigan Blue Ribbon Schools for their outstanding school improvement strategies.

Established in 1982, the Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary School Program recognizes schools that demonstrate a strong commitment to educational excellence and significant academic improvement over five years. Schools must complete a comprehensive report of key criteria for school effectiveness that serves as a basis for an extensive assessment of their building and programs.



"The Blue Ribbon program's advisory committee selected these schools as meeting some very tough criteria in delivering quality education to their students," said State Board of Education President Kathleen N. Straus. "All these schools, their teachers, students, parents, and communities should be very proud of their accomplishment."

Elementary schools were eligible to apply for the Blue Ribbon award this year. To view a list of the 2008-09 Elementary school winners, please visit the [MDE Press Release Page](#).



American Recovery and Reinvestment Act – Title I Allocations

The Michigan Department of Education has received formal notification from the United States Department of Education (USED) of the release of the Phase I, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Title I, Part A state and Local Educational Agency (LEA) allocations and guidance.

These funds will provide an unprecedented opportunity to implement innovative strategies to improve education for academically at-risk students and close achievement gaps for students in Title I schools.

The Department is working to finalize district's allocations. Once calculations are complete, the department will notify LEAs and PSAs of their anticipated allocation. Additional federal guidance is possible, which may vary this allocation amount.

For more detailed information regarding the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, go to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) ARRA website at www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery or the state's primary ARRA website at www.michigan.gov/recovery.

From State Superintendent Mike Flanagan:

Our Kids Are Doing Math!

Scores on the statewide math tests have risen for the fourth consecutive year. Over 75 percent of students in grades 3-8 tested as "proficient or above" on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) math tests given in the Fall of 2008, including 91 percent of third graders. The greatest improvement was among seventh graders, where 83 percent scored proficient or above, compared to 73 percent the year before.



This continued growth is evidence that Michigan students are able to accomplish Michigan's rigorous high school graduation requirements that include Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra II. It is clear that students will respond to high expectations and challenges. We can be proud of our kids and our teachers for not wilting in the face of a challenge.

A greater challenge is to help those students not yet making the grade in math, science, reading, writing, and social studies. As millions of federal Stimulus dollars begin to flow into our schools, districts must focus more resources to Re-Imagine how they reach out to all of their students. Ex-

pecting every student to succeed will take some new thinking on how we educate. We have a tremendous opportunity right now. Let's innovate and explore.

Clarification on Qualifying for the Michigan Promise Scholarship

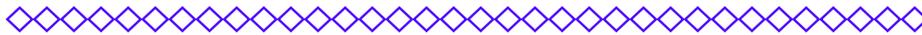
A change in state law last year provides seniors with a second opportunity to be eligible for installment payments for the Michigan Promise Scholarship. Seniors can take only the college entrance portion of the MME (which is at this time the ACT) to qualify for installment payments under the following circumstances:

- They took the complete MME previously
- They received valid scores in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies
- They scored below proficient in one of those subjects
- The ACT score to be considered for installment payments must be from...
 - An ACT test taken after all three previous requirements were met
 - An ACT test taken on a national test date at a national test site
- The ACT score to be considered may not come from the day one MME administration

Note: Students who already have taken the MME and received valid scores in all five subjects are not eligible to participate in any portion of the MME, including the ACT test administered on day one of the MME.

The law stipulates that for these situations, the State Superintendent set a cut score on the college entrance portion of the MME (ACT) that will qualify such students for installment payments. To identify a potential cut score, Michigan Department of Education staff used three different methods of analysis, all of which arrived at approximately the same cut score of 21.

Questions can be directed to Joseph Martineau, Director of the Office of Educational and Accountability, at 517-373-0048 or email to martineauj@michigan.gov.



A Cross-Office Core Team Redefines Michigan High Schools

Since November 2007, the Office of School Improvement has been engaged in a cross-office collaborative effort to assist high-priority schools, particularly high schools, in Michigan. This effort involves representatives from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Michigan State University, Northern Michigan University, Lansing Community College, the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals, the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators, Ingham Intermediate School District, Oakland Schools, the Association of Michigan School Counselors, and Michigan Virtual University. MDE collaborates with the Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center to lead and facilitate this work. Great Lakes East is funded by the U.S. Department of Education to provide high-quality technical assistance to MDE in meeting the goals of the Federal No Child Left Behind Act and is currently in its fourth year of operation.

The High School Core Team is an important element of MDE's comprehensive effort to strategically redefine the vision of future Michigan high schools. It is an active advocate for all students, supporting initiatives to increase their achievement and meet the Michigan Merit Curriculum high school graduation requirements. Currently, the team meets monthly to engage in facilitated conversations and collaborate on specific issues, such as English language learner achievement. Collectively, the members explore topics and identify opportunities for cross-office and partner collaboration. They create a plan for collaborating and addressing the challenges. Each office representative takes the responsibility to share the information with their units and follow through the action steps. To learn more about this comprehensive effort, please contact MaryAlice Galloway, Interim Director of the Office of School Improvement, at gallowaym@michigan.gov.



“Be the change that you want to see in the world.”

~ Mohandas Gandhi

Public Comment on the Part C of IDEA Application FFY2009

The Michigan Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood Education and Family Services, requests public comment on the draft Michigan Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (known as Early On ® Michigan) federal application.

The period of public comment extends from **Wednesday, March 4, 2009 through Tuesday, May 5, 2009.**

DRAFT [Part C of IDEA Application FFY2009](#)

Comments may be made in writing to:

Vanessa Winborne,
State Part C Coordinator
Michigan Department of Education
Office of Early Childhood Education & Family Services
Infant/Toddler and Family Services
P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, Michigan 48909

or by e-mail to: MDE-ECEPubComment@michigan.gov.

STATE AND FEDERAL GRANTS ASSISTANCE

The Field Services Unit (FSU) in the Office of School Improvement has historically conducted spring workshops to introduce state and federal programs personnel to the Michigan Electronic Grants System (MEGS), to announce changes to the system and to provide updates to grant applications. This year the FSU has developed and produced a series of video presentations, accompanied by printed support materials, to replace the spring workshops. Here is the link to the videos, related slide presentations and handouts:

http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530_30334-173380--,00.html.

These presentations make it possible for anyone in a Local Educational Agency (LEA) to learn how to apply for grants and obtain the most recent information at a time convenient to the individual. Managers of state and federal grant programs, business officials, and any other staff involved in the Consolidated Application will find them helpful and timely. The presentations are broken into short segments of 15 minutes or less, so they can be viewed anytime at your own pace, also allowing you to return to segments at a convenient time.

These videos are required training for anyone in an LEA working with the Consolidated Application and MEGS. We encourage you to view them now.

Here are some of the topics covered:

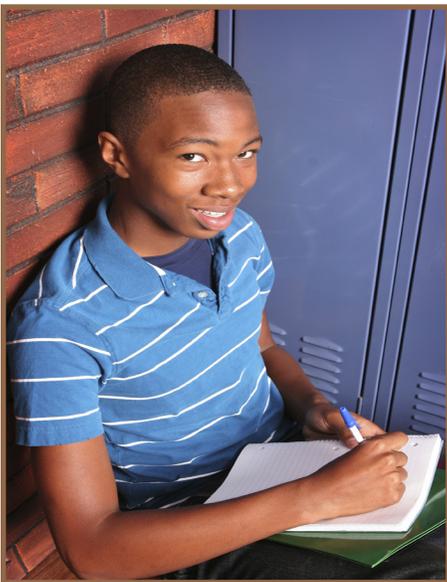
- Consolidated Application
- Overview of MEGS
- Management Activities
- Budget Pages
- Program Information
- Submitting the Application and Contacting MDE
- Title I School Selection Application
- LEA Planning Cycle Application

The FSU is recording additional video conferences and will release each “just in time” for the work involved. The presentations will guide applications for both regular grants and grants related to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in the Consolidated Application.



PERSONAL CURRICULUM UPDATE

In December 2008, [Public Act 316 \(Senate Bill 834\)](#) was signed into law, detailing several changes to the original Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements. This bill, combined with additional clarification of certain sections of the original legislation, [Revised School Code \(380.1278b\)](#), regarding the personal curriculum, has necessitated some revisions to the original Michigan Department of Education personal curriculum guidelines.



These revisions include:

- School personnel may initiate a request for a personal curriculum for a specific student. The parent must still agree to the personal curriculum in order for it to take effect. A school may not implement a personal curriculum for a student without his or her parent’s consent.
- Algebra II may be taken over two years for two credits without a personal curriculum.
- Districts must offer the personal curriculum option to students. The law states that parents have the option to request a personal curriculum for their child, and districts must have the capacity to respond. A district is not, however, obligated to approve all requests for a personal curriculum.
- A principal has the authority to determine the “counselor designee qualified to act in a counseling role” under section 1233 or 1233a of the school code.

• The intent of the legislation is that the personal curriculum is a **“pathway”** to a diploma. The personal curriculum is a tool to individualize the Michigan Merit Curriculum in order to make it accessible and achievable for all students without undermining the rigor of the Michigan Merit Curriculum or the integrity of the diploma.

Questions should be directed to Mary Head at headm1@michigan.gov.

Michigan School for the Deaf To Compete in the National Academic Bowl Competition

A team of four students from the Michigan School for the Deaf (MSD) will be competing in the finals of the National Academic Bowl at Gallaudet University, Washington D.C., from April 25-28, 2009.



The MSD Academic Bowl Team members are:

- Ray McCall, sophomore, from Clawson, MI;
- Asia Riedinger, junior, from Hart, MI;
- Catie VanBroekhoven, senior, from Grand Rapids, MI;
- Christian Young, senior, from Romeo, MI.

MSD earned the right to compete in the National Academic Bowl by placing third at the Midwest Regionals. Young was selected the Most Outstanding Player at the Midwest Regionals.

“We are very proud of our staff and students at the Michigan School for the Deaf for their academic excellence, and especially proud of the Academic Team for competing at a high skill level to earn a place in the national finals,” said state Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan. “We know they will represent Michigan well.”

The subject areas for Academic Bowl are: History and Government; Language and Literature; Science and Technology; Geography; Mathematics; The Arts; Deaf Studies; Current Events; and Popular Culture, Leisure, and Sports.



(L to R) Back row: Kathy Vessey, Assistant Coach Laura Patton, Ray McCall (10th grade), Head Coach Angela Laguardia, Gallaudet University President Davila Front row : Catie VanBroekhoven (12th grade), Christian Young (12th grade), Asia Riedinger (11th grade)

Coach Angela Laguardia, MSD high school English language arts teacher, and Assistant Coach Laura Patton, MSD high school Science teacher, are preparing the MSD Academic Bowl Team for the national competition at Gallaudet University.

The Academic Bowl for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students is a program of the College of Professional Studies and Outreach at Gallaudet. For information about the Academic Bowl competition, visit <http://ab.gallaudet.edu>.

KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK TARTARS



Michigan Model for Health

Experts believe our young children are engaging in risky behaviors earlier than ever before. A recently state-funded study of more than 2,500 Michigan and Indiana students found that nearly five percent of fourth grade students have smoked cigarettes and nearly seven percent drank more than a few sips of alcohol.

The Michigan Departments of Education and Community Health have collaborated to design a proven program to address this serious problem: The Michigan Model for Health®.

The Michigan Model for Health® is a comprehensive health curriculum for students in grades K-12. The program is taught by teachers who receive training and support from the Comprehensive School Health Coordinators network. The Michigan Model for Health®, also used in 32 other states, uses age-appropriate lessons to provide students with the health knowledge and skills aimed to prevent them from engaging in risky behaviors.

The Michigan Model for Health® targets the most serious health challenges students face, including social and emotional health; nutrition and physical activity; alcohol, tobacco and other drugs; and safety. Over the past 15 years, several studies have shown the effectiveness of the Michigan Model for Health®. These studies, which have been on a smaller scale and of older students, have shown a significant decline in alcohol and other drug use, unhealthy eating, and other risky behaviors by those who received the curriculum.

This year's study represents the first large-scale effort targeted at elementary grades. More than 2,500 students and 300 teachers in grades four and five in more than 50 schools across Michigan and Indiana participated in the study. Funded by the Michigan Departments of Community Health and Education, the study was conducted over two years and measured whether the Michigan Model for Health® improves student health knowledge, attitudes and behaviors.

"The survey results make the case for comprehensive health education," said Michigan's State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan. "Health education is a vital component in our quest to help our students become successful in the classroom and healthy, productive adults."

For more information about the Michigan Model for Health® curriculum and the School Health Coordinator network, go to www.michiganmodel.org.



LEARN and SERVE MICHIGAN

The Michigan Community Service Commission, in partnership with the Michigan Department of Education and the Corporation for National and Community Service, is pleased to announce the availability of approximately \$420,000 in federal funds. These funds are to support Learn and Serve-Michigan School-Based programs to begin September 1, 2009.

The Learn and Serve-Michigan grant program is part of the Learn and Serve America program for school age youth supported by the Corporation for National and Community Service. The Learn and Serve America program funds and assists in the development of high quality service-learning programs in K-12 schools districts. Grants provide funding for service-learning programs that address local needs in the areas of education, public safety, human needs, homeland security, and/or the environment.



Service-learning is a teaching and learning approach that connects meaningful service to the community with classroom instruction that enriches learning, teaches civic responsibility, and fosters personal growth. Service-learning helps youth see beyond the classroom and into the community where they learn math, science, language arts, and other required subjects by addressing community needs and solving real-life problems.

Please register now for one of three technical assistance sessions. Complete application guidance can be found at <http://michigan.gov/mcsc>.

Curtis Granderson Announces “Scoring For Schools” Initiative To Raise Money For Inner City Schools

Detroit Tigers star centerfielder Curtis Granderson has announced a new fundraising initiative for his Grand Kids Foundation called “**Scoring For Schools**,” which will help raise money for Michigan’s inner city public schools.

Individuals or companies will be able to donate money for every run Granderson scores during the 2009 regular season and playoffs. Those donating can spend as little as one cent for every run Granderson scores. Registration information can be found online at www.CurtisGranderson.com or www.GrandKidsFoundation.org.

“I am calling on the entire state of Michigan to get involved with this initiative,” Granderson said. “I always tell people that every dollar can make a difference, and this is a chance to prove that. I know the economy is tough, especially in Michigan, but if even just half of the state donated a penny for every run I score, imagine the difference we could make in our state’s schools and educational system. It’s extra incentive for me to go out there and help the Tigers win games this year.”

There are benefits for those donating a minimum of \$5 per run scored, and those benefits increase as the donation increases.

Those donating will have the option of which inner city area they would like their donation to be used, as well as whether they want their donation to be used for educational initiatives in those school systems or for college scholarships for graduating high school students.

Granderson hopes that a high number of the donors will be individuals getting involved since they can donate as little or as much as they want.

“So many people want to help out in their communities, but they think they need to be rich to help. This is not just a Detroit initiative, but a Michigan initiative. I want to get those other communities more involved with their educational system, and what is happening in them, whether it is Flint, Saginaw, Grand Rapids or any other area. Now is the time to make a difference, even if it is just with a single dollar,” he said.

The Grand Kids Foundation will work with the school systems in the cities receiving donations to determine the best use of the funds, which will then be dispersed directly to the initiative or program. College scholarship requirements will be determined by the Grand Kids Foundation.

In 2008, Granderson scored 112 runs even though he missed 21 games due to injury. In 2007, he scored 122 runs.

The Grand Kids Foundation, an IRS-approved 501(c)(3) non-profit, has no operating costs, and 100 percent of donations from the Scoring For Schools initiative will go directly to their cause. All donations are tax deductible.



2009 Equipment Assistance Grants for School Food Authorities

Public Law 111-5, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, authorizes the expenditure of approximately \$2,555,000 for equipment assistance grants to School Food Authorities (SFA) within Michigan. The purpose of this competitive grant program is to purchase food service equipment that will replace existing old or worn out equipment and/or purchase equipment that will expand and enhance the agencies' food service operation. The SFA grant funds must be used for food service equipment that meets one or more of the following function(s):

- Improves the quality of school food service meals that meet the dietary guidelines.
- Improves the safety of food served in the school meal programs.
- Improves the overall energy efficiency of the school food service operations.
- Allows the SFA to expand student participation in a school meals program.



The 2009 Equipment Assistance Grant for School Food Authorities applications are expected to be submitted using the Michigan Electronic Grants System (MEGS) no later than May 29, 2009, with grant award announcements in June 2009. Procurement for all equipment is encouraged to be completed as soon as possible and payment for purchases should be completed no later than December 2009. A grant announcement and additional instructions will be published by April 16, 2009. The resource manual Equipment Purchasing and Facility Design for School Nutrition Programs (<http://www.nfsmi.org/documentLibraryFiles/PDF/20090312115009.pdf>) will provide information that will help you and your Food Service Director make decisions regarding the purchase of food service equipment.

Item of Interest from the Johns Hopkins University School of Education

Website Rates Effectiveness of Educational Programs

Educators looking for useful, educator-friendly reviews of the evidence supporting math, reading, and other programs including textbooks, technology, and professional development approaches -- can find effectiveness ratings on the Best Evidence Encyclopedia (BEE) (<http://www.bestevidence.org>).

The website synthesizes the results of hundreds of studies by numerous researchers to rate the effectiveness of educational programs and practices.

Recently published on the site is a review of beginning reading programs.

The BEE is produced by the Johns Hopkins University School of Education's Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education (CDDRE), under funding from the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education.





New Disney and Ad Council Campaign Promotes “Bright Future” for Kids

On February 25, 2009, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the launch of a new healthy lifestyle campaign, in partnership with the Ad Council and Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, to promote good nutrition and physical activity for families and reduce the incidence of child obesity.

Timed to coincide with the re-release of Disney’s classic Pinocchio in March, the “Bright Futures” campaign uses the movie’s beloved characters and music to convey key nutrition messages to parents and children. The television and radio PSA’s and other campaign materials encourage parents to visit www.MyPyramid.gov and use the USDA’s Food Pyramid to help their children make healthy choices. This new campaign builds upon the success of USDA’s recent nutrition education collaboration with the Ad Council and Disney, using Disney’s Jungle Book characters.

The “Bright Future” PSAs highlight the importance of balancing good nutrition and physical activity. They reinforce the idea that healthy lifestyle habits are fuel for a child’s mind and body.

To view the PSAs and other campaign materials, go to: <http://www.adcouncil.org/> and click on the Pinocchio image.

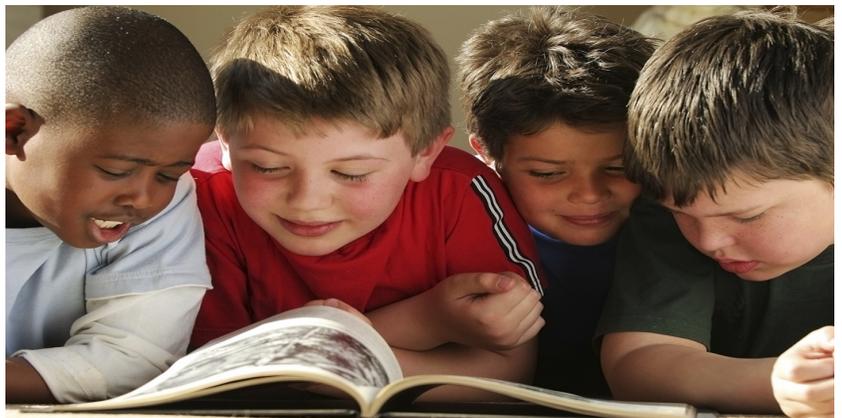
To read Secretary Vilsack’s announcement, go to: <http://www.adcouncil.org/newsDetail.aspx?id=264>.

Letter P.A.L.S. Summerfest 2009

In an attempt to help 1st-3rd grade students offset summer reading loss/setback and show up next year ready to read, Readers Are Winners, Inc. has created a new FREE 6-week summer reading event called [Letter P.A.L.S. Summerfest 2009](http://www.letterpals.org). The first-of-its-kind annual summertime interactive reading event created to engage and encourage daily reading, prevent summer reading loss/setback, and provide first-rate entertainment that is literally out of this world!

The Letter P.A.L.S. Summerfest concept offers many unique features:

- 6-week program length consisting of 24 personalized letters with 4 new letters per week (Monday - Thursday)
- Dynamic age-specific, theme-related storylines and characters who write the letters in the first person, and each letter tells a complete story
- Letters 3-pages in length, beautifully illustrated, and reviewed by reading specialists for age appropriateness
- Daily activities, games, contests, and prizes which support the letters and enhance the learning experience



To date, schools in 42 states have participated in the school year Letter P.A.L.S. program to great reviews. It was based on their feedback that Readers Are Winners, Inc. is now offering a summer event to help schools and teachers deliver students to the next grade at the reading level they worked so hard to develop. You can learn more about Letter P.A.L.S. Summerfest 2009 at www.letterpals.org. Teachers can start signing up their classrooms now.

Consolidated Application and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

You will probably need your most experienced staff working with the Consolidated Application. Most of the rules and guidance for accessing the state and federal grant funds will remain in place for the regular 2009-2010 grant cycle; including such things as supplement, not supplant; maintenance of effort; and related EDGAR requirements. The state is considering submitting request for waivers for some provisions of the ARRA grant funds, but even if approved these will not exempt schools from the requirements for "regular" 2009-2010 Title I and other federal grant funds. Deep knowledge of Local Educational Agency (LEA) staff is needed.

The staff assigned to the Consolidated Application should include people with strong expertise in both educational programs and budget and finance. In larger districts these may be different people working as a team. In smaller districts it may be a person with strengths in both areas.

The staff working on the Consolidated Application should adjust their spring and summer schedules to meet the deadlines published.



FEBRUARY 15, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- LEAs revise improvement plans for 2009-10 year- 2009-10 LEA Planning Cycle Application available in MEGS
APRIL 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Preliminary 2009-10 federal program allocations loaded into MEGS- LEAs begin development of federal grant applications
APRIL 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Title I School Section and Consolidated Applications available in MEGS- LEAs prepare and submit applications
JULY 1, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- All LEAs submit LEA Planning Cycle, Title I School Selection and Consolidated Applications on or before this date
NOVEMBER 30, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- All LEAs submit final expenditure reports for 2008-09 Consolidated Application grants- Final allocations are loaded into MEGS with carry over amounts from the 2008-09 year- Amendments are submitted beginning on this date

Our goal is to have all Consolidated Applications that are submitted in substantially approvable form before July 1, 2009, approved by the beginning of September. This means that the LEA Planning Cycle Application should be in progress now and include sufficient research-based strategies to consume both the regular and the expected ARRA Title I (and other) grants.

The LEA Planning Cycle, Title I School Selection and Consolidated Applications must be submitted in substantially approvable form by July 1, 2009. With the goal of MDE staff approving these applications by September 1, 2009, school staff working on these applications will need to be available during the summer to address any changes required from Field Services Unit staff.

Michigan State Board of Education

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www.michigan.gov/mde-newsletter

ON THE HORIZON...

- Near Future

[State Board of Education Meeting](#), April 14, 2009

[Spring School Improvement Conference](#), April 21-22, 2009

[MI Alliance for Gifted Education Conferences](#), April 24 & 27

[MI Assoc for Infant Mental Health Conference](#), April 26-28, 2009

[2009 Governor's Education Summit](#), April 28, 2009

[MSBO 2009 Annual Conference](#), April 28-30, 2009

- Distant Future

[State Board of Education Meeting](#), May 12, 2009

[Michigan After-school Collaborative Summer Summit](#), May 29

[2009 Emerging Leaders Program](#), June 16-18, 2009

[Educational Technology Leadership Conference](#), June 22-23

[2009 MCTM Annual Conference & Institute](#), August 6-7, 2009

[Michigan Teaching for Learning Institute](#), August 18-20, 2009

[MASA Fall Conference](#), September 23-25, 2009

[MI Association of School Boards Fall Conference](#), Oct 22-25

[Michigan Charter Schools Conference](#), November 2-3, 2009

[Early On Conference](#), November 5-6, 2009

