



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING



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**TO:** State Board of Education

**FROM:** Michael P. Flanagan, Chair

**SUBJECT:** Legislative Update

There were only a few legislative session days between the election and the November/Thanksgiving break.

During those days, the House Education Committee held a hearing on schools that do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) expectations for several years. At that hearing, Betty Underwood and Mike Radke testified about the statewide system of support that the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) provides and about the differences between Title I versus Non-Title I schools. This is in preparation for possible education reform via Representative Melton's newly introduced bill, HB 6705 (see page 2).

The Senate Education Committee reported legislation (HBs 5411 and 5832) to ensure parents are aware of their due process rights when there is a student expulsion, and to require that school board members excuse themselves from certain votes when they have a conflict of interest. The Committee also reported SB 1013, which clarifies the authority for implementing stronger options for schools that have not made AYP for more than three or four years, including hiring an administrator or closing a school.

The Senate, as a whole, made some minor changes to SB 834, which clarifies that personal finance is allowed as the fourth math credit and sent it back to the House for concurrence.

**House Bills 6412 and 6413**

Per last month's report, action is still needed on House Bills 6412 (Michigan Merit Exam) and 6413 (Michigan Promise Grant) before the end of the year. A House Appropriations Committee had been scheduled to pass the bills, but was cancelled after some scheduling issues with the legislative session.

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Representative Matthew Gillard (D-Alpena) introduced House Bills 6412 and 6413. These bills are companions to the budget bills enacted this summer. The Legislature ran out of time at the end of summer and thus, the bills need to move now. These changes were already agreed to in the School Aid Act and MDE Budget; these bills codify and eliminate conflicts in the Promise Award Act and the Revised School Code. These are expected to pass in the lame duck session. It is important that these bills pass and MDE staff is working to make that happen.

The main points of these bills allow for retakes of the college entrance portion of the Michigan Merit Exam (MME) if a student already has taken the complete MME, and add the third WorkKeys component to the test so that students may receive a work force readiness credential.

### **Agriculture Bills Enhance Farm to School Programs**

House Bills 6365 and 6366 would raise the required local school district commodity bidding levels and promote greater use of Michigan products in school food programs. Staff is working to clarify how the bills intersect with federal child nutrition law and U.S. Department of Agriculture regulations and guidelines. The bills have cleared the House and were recently reported by the Senate Agriculture Committee. They are expected on the Senate Floor during December.

### **Anti-Bullying Legislation**

The Anti-Bullying legislation (HBs 4162 and 4091) passed the House and is in Senate Education Committee. Rather than enumerating the examples of characteristics that can be included in a local district's anti-bullying policy, the definition of bullying and harassment in the bill specifically references the definition of those terms as adopted by the State Board of Education on September 12, 2006, in its Model Anti-Bullying Policy. Thus, while the characteristics are not enumerated in the bill, the bill references a document that does enumerate them.

The proponents of this legislation are pushing for it to be addressed in the lame duck session. As this is an issue that the State Board of Education has already adopted a position, it will be helpful to have your voices offered in support of the anti-bullying efforts within the Senate. Your experience and insight prove valuable in helping to move this forward.

### **Turnaround Schools Reform Legislation**

House Bill 6705 was introduced by Representative Tim Melton (D-Auburn Hills). He is trying to get this moved and enacted during the lame duck session.

In brief, House Bill 6705 would amend the Revised School Code to hold schools to certain measures if they are unaccredited for three consecutive years or failed to achieve AYP, as determined by the Department, for four or more consecutive years

If the school has not made AYP for four years, the school board may, with the approval of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, contract with a turnaround organization to operate as the administrator of the school.

If the Department determines that a school has failed to achieve the federal pupil performance standard for five or more years, and the local board has not entered into a contract with a turnaround organization, then the Superintendent of Public Instruction would be required to contract with a turnaround organization. The bill goes into further detail about what these turnaround organizations would be. Representative Melton is garnering input from a host of sources, so changes to the bill are likely.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these or other legislative issues, please contact Lisa Hansknecht, Legislative Director, at 517-335-4913.