



RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN  
SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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**MEMORANDUM**

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Martin Ackley, Director, Office of Public and Governmental Affairs

SUBJECT: State and Federal Legislative Update

**MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

On September 12, the House Education Committee heard testimony on House Bill 5261 that would permit retired teachers to reenter the classroom for substitute teaching. This bill also reinstates the Critical Shortage list and gives the State Superintendent the authority to allow retired teachers back into classroom for emergency situations if the reporting unit pays for the retiree's health care. There also was an amendment that failed that will likely be run on the floor again to make the reporting unit pay health care, pension and the unfunded liability for these teachers.

The committee also heard testimony on House Bill 5317 to require community colleges to ask during the application process if a student is a veteran or the family of a veteran. An amendment was added to make this change take place in the 2013-2014 school year for application printing purposes.

On September 19, the House Education Committee reported out both HB 5261 and HB 5317. The committee then heard testimony on Senate Bill 620 (S-8) to amend the Revised School Code to allow for the organization of conversion schools, which are school district operated schools that are converted to charter school, if the school is in the lowest achieving 5 percent of schools. Additionally, the bill allows for a "parental petition" to initiate the conversion of the school and requires the Michigan Department of Education to certify petitions and take actions if the petition is signed by at least 60 percent of the eligible parents or legal guardians of pupils at the school, or by at least 51% of the eligible parents or guardians plus at least 60 percent of the eligible teachers.

MDE shared with committee members that it has neither the resources nor expertise to certify signed petitions, and instead, assign that function to the Michigan Secretary of State's office, which has that experience and expertise.

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608 WEST ALLEGAN STREET • P.O. BOX 30008 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909  
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## **Michigan Merit Curriculum Workgroup**

In mid-September, education and business stakeholders joined members of the House of Representatives in a workgroup setting to discuss bills that have been introduced to amend elements of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC). The goal of the workgroup is to attempt to find common ground on changes to the MMC and put forth a bill to be moved to the full Education Committee. The next meeting date has yet to be determined.

## **MICHIGAN SENATE**

On September 19, the Senate Education Committee reported out Senate Bill 1051 that would require local school board members to abstain from voting on financial issues or contracts when a conflict of interest exists. The committee then heard testimony on Senate Bill 969 and House Bill 5267 to create a seat time exemption and special pupil membership count for qualifying dropout recovery programs (or The American Academy).

On September 25, the Senate Education Committee reported out SB 969 and HB 5267 and also Senate Bill 1239 which would provide strict discipline academies access to long-term borrowing.

## **FEDERAL**

On September 27, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) announced that the Education Achievement Authority of Michigan received a \$5,905,652 Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) Grant. Teacher Incentive Fund grants are awarded to improve pay structures, reward great teachers and principals, and provide greater professional opportunities to teachers in high poverty schools. Overall \$290 million was invested in 35 grantees.

Winning applicants were comprised of districts, partnering districts, states, and nonprofits that together serve nearly 1,000 schools in 150 urban, suburban, and rural school districts in 18 states and D.C. All applicants submitted proposals, developed in part by teachers, that provide opportunities for teacher leadership and advancement, put in place district-wide evaluations based on multiple measures that include student growth, and improve decision-making through better evaluations. These are direct grants from USED to local districts.

## **Continuing Resolution (House Joint Resolution 117)**

With the federal fiscal year ending on September 30th, Congress passed and the President signed (9/28/12) a six-month continuing resolution (CR) that will fund the federal government through March 2013. House Joint Resolution 117 maintains funding levels at fiscal year 2012 levels and provides a small across-the-board increase and secures funding for the next six months – without the risk of a government shutdown. This allows Members of Congress to focus on other fiscal issues like sequestration and the expiring tax cuts.

The House of Representatives is in session the first week of October and will then recess until after the November elections. The Senate is in recess until the November elections.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these or other legislative issues, please contact me at (517) 241-4395.