



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT

January 9, 2015

**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**

The House will open the 98<sup>th</sup> Session of the Legislature on Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at noon. This day is typically ceremonial as members will have seats assigned and take care of administrative business.

As this is a new legislative session, there are no bills introduced at this time. We expect an announcement of House committees later this month. We anticipate changes to the chairmanships and members for the House Education policy committee and the K-12/MDE budget subcommittees.

**MICHIGAN SENATE**

The Senate also will open the 98<sup>th</sup> Session of the Legislature on Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at noon. This also is traditionally a ceremonial day. As this is a new legislative session, there are no bills introduced at this time.

Senator Pavlov will continue to serve as the Chairman for the Senate Education policy committee. Senator Hansen will serve as the Chairman of K-12/MDE budget subcommittee.

**FEDERAL**  
**EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS**

President Obama signed an omnibus appropriations bill for FY 2015 essentially level-funding Department of Education appropriations from FY 2014. Under the bill, both Title I and special education grants to states each receive modest \$25 million increases. There is also \$250 million for the Preschool Development Grants program and funding to increase the maximum Pell Grant award by \$100 to \$5,830. Among the significant cuts: \$21.6 million from the Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund and \$58.8 million from the Teacher Incentive Fund.

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### EARLY EDUCATION

Education Secretary Arne Duncan and Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell issued a statement on suspension and expulsion in early learning. The purpose is to support families, early childhood programs, and states by providing recommendations for preventing and severely limiting expulsion and suspension practices in early childhood settings.

### EARLY EDUCATION CONT.

The President's Council of Economic Advisors released "The Economics of Early Childhood Investments," describing the economic returns to investments in childhood development and early education. Some benefits, such as increases in parental earnings and employment, are realized immediately; other benefits, such as greater educational attainment and earnings, are realized later. Research suggests expanding early learning initiatives would provide benefits to society of roughly \$8.60 for every \$1 spent.

### COLLEGE RATINGS SYSTEM

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) released a framework for a college ratings system for further public comment. This framework summarizes the basic categories, institutional groupings, data, metrics, and tools that the USED currently is weighing in designing the ratings system. The purposes of the ratings system are to: (1) help students and families make informed choices when searching for and selecting a college; (2) help colleges measure, benchmark, and continue to improve across the principles of access, affordability, and outcomes; and (3) enable the incentives and accountability structure in the federal student aid program to be properly aligned to these key principles.

In the months ahead, USED will arrange and participate in many structured discussions about the ratings system to continue and focus the thoughtful exchange helping to identify, assess, and refine the best ways to improve access, affordability, and outcomes in higher education. The agency expects to publish the college ratings system before the 2015-16 school year and will continue to refine the ratings system over time based on user and institutional experience, input from the field, and the availability of additional data.

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