



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

January 7, 2013

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 97th Session of the Legislature on Wednesday, January 9 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 expect no changes to the chairmanships for the House Education policy committee or the K-12/MDE budget subcommittees.

MICHIGAN SENATE

The Senate also will open the 97th Session of the Legislature on Wednesday, January 9 at noon. This is also traditionally a ceremonial day. As this is a new legislative session, there are no bills introduced at this time.

FEDERAL

Fiscal Cliff

The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, passed by a bipartisan majority in the House and Senate and signed into law by the President last week. The measure permanently extends several of the "middle-class" tax cuts, raises marginal income tax rates on individuals making more than \$400,000/yr, and cuts spending in both the defense and non-defense sectors.

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It also postpones sequestration for two months -- until March 1 -- giving Congress more time to work on a plan to prevent the automatic spending cuts. We can expect a heated debate in February with the new Congress discussing whether to raise the debt ceiling and permanently cancel sequestration cuts. Federal agencies have been instructed to proceed with business as usual with the assumption that a solution to sequestration will be found in the near future.

Gun Violence

On December 19, five days after the tragic shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, President Obama announced that Vice President Biden will lead a task force charged with identifying concrete proposals for reducing the country's epidemic of gun violence. Secretary Duncan is among the Cabinet officials serving on the task force, along with Attorney General Eric Holder, Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius, and Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano. The President is demanding recommendations no later than this month.

Inasmuch, Governor Snyder has called on the Michigan Department of Education and the Michigan State Police to review best practices of safe school plans across Michigan, and help develop a means of greater access to strategies for students to find ways of resolving conflicts.

Governor Snyder is also asking local school districts to offer practical ways to help prevent the introduction of weapons on school property.

USED

USED is soliciting public comment on a new report, "Expanding Evidence Approaches for Learning in a Digital World," which calls for smart uses of emerging data generated by the use of learning technologies. It presents educators, policymakers, and funders with an expanded view of evidence approaches and sources of data that can help them with decision-making. Visit <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/technology/evidence-framework/> for more information.

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