



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

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SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

February 3, 2011

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan, Chairman 

SUBJECT: State and Federal Legislative Updates

**State Update**

Bills for the new session have begun to be introduced. Currently, the bills have been re-introductions from previous sessions. This includes bills to eliminate the cap on the number of university-sponsored public school academies, require anti-bullying policies, require tenure based on effectiveness, create a commission to make recommendations about consolidating school services, and expanding educational requirements for foreign language and diet and health. Much of the talk from the committee chairs about the direction they are heading has been general regarding being "reform minded" and looking at tenure, the Local Government Fiscal Responsibility Act (PA 72 of 1990), and consolidation efforts.

The House and Senate had scheduled a joint Education Committee hearing to hear testimony from Robert Bobb, the Emergency Financial Manager for the Detroit Public Schools, but the blizzard forced the cancellation of that meeting. It is unclear if and when they will reschedule that hearing. Additionally, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on School Aid has been holding hearings. So far they had a hearing on the consolidation of services and districts. Also on the same day as the State Board meeting, there will be a hearing with testimony from school administrators and superintendents on matters related to school budgets.

Both the School Aid and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) budgets are set to begin in the House this session with the Governor presenting the budgets to the Legislature on February 17<sup>th</sup>. The Governor and the legislative leaders have set targets for passage and enactment of the budgets by May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup>, respectively. Either way, their expectation is to finish much earlier than the beginning of the fiscal year in October.

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As you know, the MDE, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and State Board of Education have invited new and returning legislators to a legislator orientation training event scheduled next week. Currently we have approximately 40 legislators planning on attending. The purpose of this training is to review many of the new laws passed last session relating to education reform, especially as there are so many new members in the House and Senate. This is an opportunity for the Legislators to learn about the Michigan Department of Education and start to break down many of the myths about this agency and education law.

### **Federal Update**

The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is again being considered by Congress. Reportedly Chairman Kline is planning ESEA hearings for the House Committee beginning the week of February 7th. These hearings are sometimes available online if you wish to watch, and details about the time and agenda are available online as well.

<http://edworkforce.house.gov/Calendar/EventSingle.aspx?EventID=223392>

In a post State of the Union press call Chairman Harkin stated that the Senate Committee would not hold any additional hearings and Senator Harkin wants the mark-up by Congressional Spring Recess with the bill on the Floor by late spring and passage by the August recess. This is an aggressive timetable and it is unclear whether the House will be set for a time table of this sort as well.

Further while Chairman Kline has expressed a willingness to work on pieces of the ESEA and get them passed as opposed to waiting for action on the whole of ESEA, the Senate has conversely expressed that they wish to work on the whole and not work piecemeal on the reauthorization.

On the budget front, there are proposals from a Congressional study committee as well as the House Republican leadership for massive cuts to education. Even if a compromise is the end result, as both proposals cut large amounts from the budget, then that would mean the end result would likely be a cut as well. Overall, at this point, the talk seems to be around the passage of another continuing resolution that would last a year.

For your information, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) recently released a dashboard using data to show educational performance. You may wish to check out this resource: <http://dashboard.ed.gov/>. It allows for comparisons of states as well as a breakdown of data within a state. This is one more way that transparency, accountability, and light-of-day is being used to drive educational reform.

I hope this information is helpful to you. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these or other legislative issues, please contact Lisa Hansknecht, Director of the Office of State and Federal Relations, at 517-241-4993.