



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



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SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

March 1, 2007

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan, Chairman 

SUBJECT: Legislative Update

The Legislature is just now starting to get rolling. There have been a few education related committee meetings, but they have mostly focused on presentations.

House Activity

The House Education Committee has had mostly presentations so far. At the request of the Committee, Superintendent Mike Flanagan and Lisa Hansknecht, Legislative Director, testified and provided an overview of the direction and legislative priorities of the Department.

Representative Tim Melton (D-Auburn Hills), Chair, has focused on early childhood and education technology. To that end, the Committee heard testimony from Dr. Joan Lessen-Firestone of Oakland ISD, Bruce Umpstead, Director of Education Technology and Data Coordination in the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), and staff from the One-to-One Institute and Apple Computers.

HB 4162 - House Education will be taking up this Anti-Bullying legislation sponsored by Rep. Byrnes (D-Chelsea). This bill requires local school districts to adopt an anti-bullying policy as laid out in the bill. An identical bill was offered in the Senate (SB 107) by Senator Anderson (D-Westland). It is my understanding that the bill may be amended in committee to specifically reference the State Board of Education's Model Anti-Bullying Policy.

As this is an issue about which 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 legislature. Your experience and insight prove valuable in helping to move this forward.

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During a previous session when the bill came before committee, the following groups supported it:

- Michigan Department of Education
- Michigan Federation of Teachers and School Related Personal (now the Michigan chapter of the American Federation of Teachers)
- Michigan Association of School Social Workers
- Michigan Association of School Psychologists
- Michigan School Counselors
- Michigan Equality
- Fight Crime: Invest in Kids
- Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
- Triangle Foundation
- American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
- National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

No organizations testified in opposition.

School Aid and MDE Budgets – The Subcommittee on School Aid and MDE budget bills begin in the House this year and negotiations have only just begun. Rick Floria has testified before this Subcommittee on the MDE budget about which you have already been briefed at the February 13, 2007 State Board meeting.

Senate Activity

The Senate Education Committee meetings have had presentations from and have asked questions of various universities' officials on high school graduates' transition to college and the retention rates of college students. The questions seem to focus on whether students are arriving prepared for college and whether colleges are doing enough to retain students through the full four-year programs. No legislation has been addressed to date.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact myself, or Lisa Hansknecht, Legislative Director, at 517-241-4993.