

Education CONNECTION

A Quarterly Publication of the Michigan Department of Education

June 2012

Technology Helps Third Grade Teacher Re-Discover Her Love of Teaching

By Christy Conway, 3rd grade teacher
Holland Heights Elementary
Holland Public Schools

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Christy Conway, 3rd grade teacher
Holland Heights Elementary

I still remember the day it all started. Right after Christmas vacation 2010, our Superintendent showed up in my room. When the Superintendent shows up, it's a big deal. He was there to tell me that I was chosen to

be part of the Tech Prototype Classroom Project, and that came with classes in Chicago and meetings with Apple.

Excited doesn't begin to explain how I felt. I wanted to do cartwheels but I wasn't sure that was an appropriate response. You see, I had hit a point in my teaching career where I realized that I was bored and the methods I had used for 20 years were just not fun. I needed new strategies but didn't know where to find them, and I had realized that I was not very happy at all.

Leaving Chicago, I felt totally overwhelmed. We had been given so much information and I was able to comprehend only a small amount. My prior experience with technology included email, online grading, Facebook, and Yahoo News. My world had multiplied in a matter of two

days and my brain couldn't seem to catch up. I was in luck, though, because it was February and I could put it on the back burner. My experience wasn't set to begin in the classroom until the following September.

Then it was September. I had a beautiful cart with 30 iPads as well as an interactive whiteboard. Determined to be successful, we got out the iPads on the first day. My goal was to model how to handle them appropriately and then let learners explore Photobooth. I learned a very important lesson - the students were more comfortable with the technology than I was and within minutes my voice was heard throughout the room, as learners discovered how to make a video. Fear set in. I swooped our Technology Integration Specialist and he led us through iMovie and Keynote.

(To continue with the rest of the story, please go to [page 6](#).)

Editor's Note: Part of the charge of the Education Connection, partnering with the Michigan Network of Educators, is to highlight an innovative teaching and learning approach by a great Michigan educator. During a recent school visit to Holland Public Schools, Superintendent Mike Flanagan was so encouraged by the story and transformation in 3rd grade teacher Christy Conway's classroom, he asked to highlight her story in his customary space on the front page. You can find Mike's column on page two.

FROM STATE SUPERINTENDENT
Mike Flanagan

Making Progress in Education

I try to visit at least one school district each month of the school year. The time I spend in these schools is invaluable. Not only do I get to observe innovative and creative programs that promote healthy learning environments, but I am inspired by the educators doing amazing things to help students achieve.



Mike with his grandson Will Flanagan

Recently, I had the privilege to visit Holland Public Schools, and in particular, the 3rd grade classroom of Christy Conway at Holland Heights Elementary. It was in this classroom where I was able to witness first-hand the reshaping of instruction. I was so encouraged by this visit that I invited Christy to share in her own words the technological transformation going on in her classroom, which is featured on the front page of this newsletter. By utilizing technology, Christy is providing a robust learning experience and providing her students learning options to best fit their needs.

I encourage all educators to follow Christy's example and make the leap into 21st Century instructional models. We need to move from a school system to a system of schools that offers flexibility and adaptability for student learning models and styles. This "Any Time, Any Place, Any Way, Any Pace" learning model is the natural progression and makes education available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

I would like to remove barriers that slow down innovation at the local level. This includes seat time regulations, length of school day and school year, and the traditional configurations of classrooms and instruction. Schools would be free to incorporate blended learning models, where students receive instruction from high quality online educators, along with face-to-face instruction from high quality classroom teachers. Teachers would be able to integrate digital media into all the core

academic subjects, making learning more interactive and practical. Districts using these already available digital tools will transform their schools, transform their student's achievement levels, and will transform our system of education, making it more cost-effective, innovative and engaging for Michigan's students.

An important component of this model is a performance-based bonus. School districts can earn these additional funds through innovation and showing progress in student achievement. This will continue our efforts to remove barriers that slow down innovation at the local level, move us away from an education system based strictly on attendance, and construct a powerful system of schools that is student-focused. This incentive-based model will help facilitate dual enrollment, on-line and blended learning, and early college participation.

There is \$30 million (out of a \$13 Billion School Aid Budget) set aside for the 2012-13 school year as a financial bonus for districts that demonstrate their

"I would like to remove barriers that slow down innovation at the local level."

*~Superintendent of Public Instruction
Mike Flanagan*

students are showing academic progress from year-to-year. This inducement is something we believe every school district, school building, and classroom can achieve. This performance-based bonus model rewards schools for getting, and keeping, their students on track toward being career- and college-ready.

This funding also will give added value to schools that can help their lowest-achieving students get to grade-level achievement. If a district can demonstrate that students are showing academic progress in reading and math, they can earn the additional funding.

We want to provide additional resources to our schools, but do so in a way that ensures that all children can achieve at higher levels each year. This is a financial reward for the great work done by our schools, but more importantly, a boost to each student's chance for a bright and successful future. Schools should learn to harness the best of today's digital tools and make it possible to teach and learn in new ways. Undeniably, the benefits are immense.

Michigan Teacher of the Year Announced

Bobbi Jo Kenyon was named 2012–2013 Michigan Teacher of the Year in a surprise announcement recently by Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan.

Kenyon, a science and math instructor at Ottawa Hills High School in Grand Rapids, with over 16 years of classroom experience, was selected from among 18 regional semifinalists statewide. She is the first Grand Rapids Public Schools educator to receive the honor of being named Michigan Teacher of the Year (MTOY).

Kenyon will carry on the valued tradition of Michigan Teachers of the Year who have shared their teaching knowledge, expertise, and skills with educators across the state.

Through the corporate support of MEEMIC Insurance Company, Grand Rapids Public Schools will receive a monetary award of \$1,000 in honor of Ms. Kenyon's recognition as Michigan Teacher of the Year to be used for the advancement of education. Also, Kenyon will receive the use of a car during her tenure as MTOY, along with the opportunity to tell her story and communicate via blog on www.meemic.com.

The corporate support agreement

between the Michigan Department of Education and MEEMIC Insurance Company also includes a monetary award to be presented to the schools of each of the MTOY finalists.

The other educators selected as state-level finalists for the Michigan Teacher of the Year Award are:

- David Scott Emeott, mathematics teacher at East Kentwood High School, Kentwood School District
- Janet M. Holmes, early childhood teacher at River Oaks Elementary School, Dearborn Public



(from left) Roberto Rodriguez, Special Asst to the President for Education Policy on the White House Domestic Policy Council; MTOY Ms. Kenyon; State Superintendent Mike Flanagan; Grand Rapids Ottawa Hills High School principal Rodney Lewis.

Schools

- Julie Morgan, social studies teacher at Romeo Engineering and Technology Center, Romeo Community Schools

The Michigan Department of Education has used this award annually to honor Michigan's exemplary educators. The State Board of Education honors the Michigan Teacher of the Year with a seat at the Board table during its regular monthly meetings.

The Teacher of the Year is selected by a committee that reviews applications from teachers throughout Michigan. Applicants submit biographies and written essays that describe educational history, professional development activities, philosophy of teaching and thoughts on emerging education trends and issues.

For additional information on the Michigan Teacher of the Year program, access www.michigan.gov/mtoy.

Career and Technical Education Health Sciences Programs

Employment opportunities for the Health Science career cluster in Michigan are projected to increase by 20% from 2008 to 2018¹. In response, the Health Science cluster has the greatest enrollment of all Michigan Career and Technical Education programs in postsecondary education with 75,284 students enrolled in 2010–11.

At the secondary level 4,182 students completed the program in 2010–11, and at the postsecondary level 8,887 awards were conferred in 2010–11.

	Secondary	Postsecondary
Number of Programs	127	58
Unduplicated Enrollment	12,350	75,284
Completers/Awards Conferred	4,182	8,887

¹ Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth—Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives

Two Michigan Schools Awarded National Green Ribbon Schools Awards



The U.S. Department of Education recently announced that Clarkston High School and Detroit Edison Public School Academy have been designated Green Ribbon Schools.

U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools is a federal recognition program that opened in September 2011. Honored schools exercise a comprehensive approach to creating “green” environments through reducing environmental impact, promoting health, and ensuring a high-quality environmental and outdoor education to prepare students with the 21st Century skills and sustainability concepts needed in the growing global economy.

“Science and environmental education play a central role in providing children with a well-rounded education that prepares them for the jobs of the future,” said U.S. Secretary of

Education Arne Duncan. “Green Ribbon Schools demonstrate compelling examples of the ways schools can expand their coursework while also helping children build real world skill sets, cut school costs, and provide healthy learning environments.”

Award-winning schools will be invited to Washington, D.C. for a ceremony to celebrate their success, share information and receive a plaque to commemorate their achievement.

The 78 awarded schools were named winners from among nearly 100 nominees submitted by 30 state education agencies, the District of Columbia and the Bureau of Indian Education. More than 350 schools completed applications to their state education agencies. Among the list of winners are 66 public schools including eight charters, and 12 private schools composed of 43 elementary,

31 middle, and 26 high schools with around 50 percent representing high poverty schools.

The U.S. Department of Education’s “Green Ribbons” are one-year recognition awards. Next year’s competition will open in summer 2012. For more information about this program or becoming a Green Ribbon School, visit the website at: <http://www.greenribbonschools.org/>.



Summer Reading is for your Students!

Help your students improve skills through reading during the summer months. Most students, even those “at-risk,” make decent progress during the school year. Summer is the time they can fall behind. Michigan’s public libraries provide free, voluntary reading programs throughout the summer for children and teens. The programs encourage reading with contests and prizes; along with activities that engage children through their personal lives and interests; and by hosting special performances to motivate children in their communities. Libraries encourage parents to develop family literacy behaviors and provide developmentally appropriate programs

for a wide range of ages to create a culture of fluent reading. In many areas, libraries participate with local social service agencies to bring these enrichment programs to underserved and disadvantaged children. Your local public library can help your students maintain and even improve their reading skills over the summer. For more information, contact your local public library or go to www.michigan.gov/youthlibraryservices.

If you have any questions, please contact Karren Reish, Library Grants Coordinator, at reishk@michigan.gov or 517-241-0021.

New Teacher Certification Rules in Place

Rules to implement the most recent changes to the state's teacher certification system are now in effect. These revisions to teacher certification rules were based on legislative, educator and public input and also were part of the Governor's education message.

The Department of Education filed the rules ([ORR #2011-018](#)) which align with recently enacted education reforms. These rules allow for the development of a teacher licensure system in Michigan that focuses on quality teaching; job-embedded professional learning for teachers; recognition of teacher success;

opportunities for effective teachers to advance in their profession and alternate routes to teacher certification.

Background on Teacher Certification Rule Highlights:

- Rules provide more flexibility in what counts as professional development for renewal of the Professional Education certificate.

- In accordance with new legislation, the rules give options including course credits, state continuing education hours, and district-provided professional development for certificate renewal.

- Rules add an optional third tier advanced license to recognize teachers

with leadership skills and highly effective ratings.

- Rules add an "Expert in Residence" permit to allow individuals with a BA or higher degree and who demonstrate unusual distinction or exceptional talent in the field of specialization to teach in grades 9-12 for two or less hours a day.

These rules are meant to ensure that Michigan students have the best and most effective teachers in their classrooms, and that teachers receive targeted professional development to help them succeed.



Make Use of Assistive Technology at an Early Age

to support a child who is not yet sitting.

Mid: Batteries and some mechanical parts, such as a toy that reacts

to a child's movement.

High: Computerized devices including communication tools.

For a child with a disability, it is never too early to introduce assistive technology.

Assistive technology allows us to look "outside the box" for ways to assist a child in becoming independent and bypassing learned helplessness at an early age.

For the complete article on assistive technology, visit the Focus on Results Website: <http://focus.cenmi.org/2012/05/21/make-use-of-assistive-technology-at-an-early-age/>.

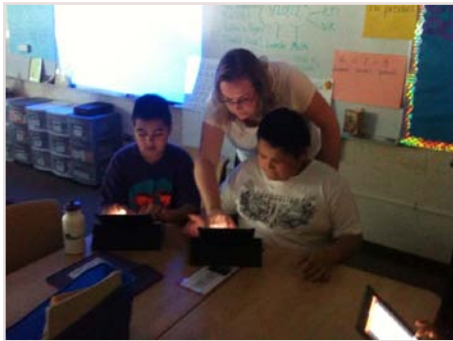
FOCUS on Results is produced and distributed by the Center for Educational Networking (CEN). CEN is funded under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and supports mandated communication efforts of the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education.

The goal of using assistive technology (AT) is to assist a child with a disability to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities. Assistive technology can range from:

Low: No batteries or mechanical parts, such as pictures for communication or physical supports, such as a pillow

Technology Helps Third Grade Teacher Re-Discover Her Love of Teaching (Cont...)

One day in October I sat down in tears. I realized that of all the great things happening with technology in my classroom, none could be attributed to me. My classroom used to be a place where I felt confident and successful for almost 20 years. Now I was fortunate to have technology at my fingertips, but I didn't know what to do. I thought that I didn't know how to teach anymore and it was devastating.



Two Holland Elementary 3rd graders being engaged by technology.

Angry, upset, confused, and not wanting anybody to know how I truly feel, I did what I do – I kept plugging away. The week before Christmas vacation was my turning point. I had decided to stop over-analyzing our technology experiences and do what I love – teach. As I looked around our room, I realized I had arrived.

We were in the midst of two projects on the iPad, one in math and one in writing, at the same time (Scribble Press and Keynote). Learners had their iPads at their learning spots and used them throughout the day for spelling words, vocabulary, math fact practice, etc. This time around, what welled in my eyes were tears of joy.

I could do it and I was doing it, and my teaching has been transformed. Where there used to be worksheets and engagement issues, we now have eager faces learning new concepts through the use of apps.

Learning is exciting in Room 5. It's magic and I love it. Technology has brought the joy back to my teaching and learning.



Christy Conway leading her class through a lesson with the aid of iPads.

Michigan School for the Deaf Academic Team Scores in Academic Bowl

The Michigan School for the Deaf (MSD) Academic Bowl team traveled to Washington, DC (thru their own fund raising efforts) to compete against Deaf/Hard of Hearing programs throughout the US in the 16th Annual Academic Bowl for Deaf and Hard of Hearing High School Students. The 2012 Academic Bowl team (aka "The Pink Ladies") came in 29th out of 80 teams. But equally as impressive was the Tartars brought home the Best Sportsmanship award from the competition.

Coach Angela Laguardia had this to say about the experience: "First of all, the Pink Ladies and I would like to thank all of you for the support and cheers that inspired us while we were in DC battling wits against other teams

from all over the United States. It was an AMAZING experience and the fact that we were voted by most of the 79 other teams for the Best Sportsmanship Award made us feel special."

Gallaudet University established the Academic Bowl in 1997. The competition consists of a question and answer game of general knowledge and quick recall. Questions are drawn from the following categories: History and Government; Language and Literature; Science and Technology; Geography; Mathematics; the Arts; Deaf studies; Current Events; and Pop Culture, Leisure, and Sports.

MDE would like to congratulate the MSD, all the students and teachers, and of course the Pink Ladies on this tremendous achievement.



The Pink Ladies with Sportsmanship Award. (from left) Jennifer Wickman; Kaitlin (KJ) Wears; Coach Angela Laguardia; Margaret (Meg) Peters; Jessica Kales

Did you Know...

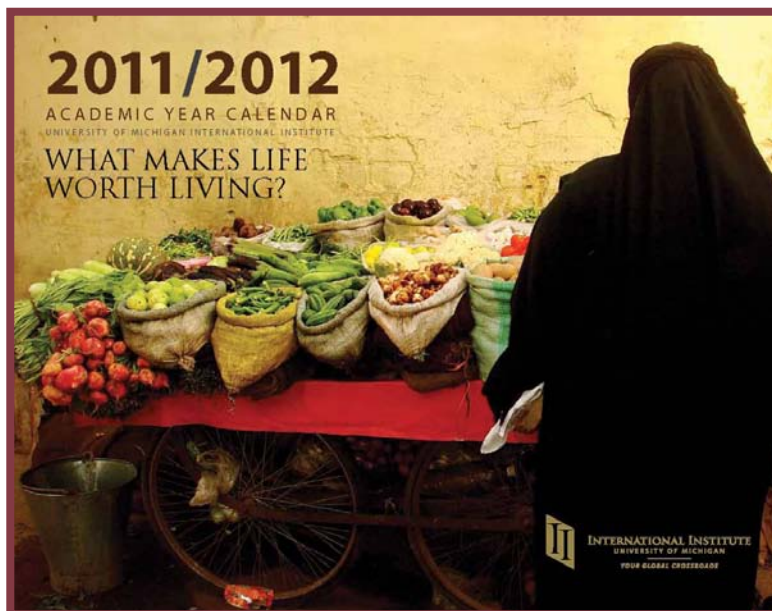
Starting in 2007 the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Mike Flanagan began granting seat-time instruction waivers to help local district remove barriers of instruction for certain students. Some milestones since 2007:

- initially approved 22 across the state.
- opened it up statewide to any school.
- As of this school year, 215 local districts, PSAs, and ISDs are taking advantage of Seat Time Waivers
- And 2,646 students using Seat Time Waivers for 100 percent of their learning.



State Supt Mike Flanagan with the Bully Busters – a highly-effective anti-bullying team of students at Plymouth-Canton's Farrand Elementary School. (with P-C Supt Jeremy Hughes and Farrand Principal Troy Reehl). Flanagan: "This program should be replicated in every school!"

International Institute Outreach Calendar



Cover of the 2011-12 Calendar

The U-M [International Institute's outreach calendar](#) is an academic-year calendar designed to help educators enhance global learning in the classroom. Each month's photograph focuses on a different country complete with a descriptive caption and

Did You Know? facts drafted by experts in that particular world region.

The calendar will cover the 2012–2013 academic year and the theme "Capturing How We Communicate." The calendar is a free resource for educators. Please limit requests to one copy per person. Administrators or department heads may request copies for up to five staff members.

Mailing: The next calendar will be mailed in August 2012. An e-mail will be sent to let you know the calendar has mailed. The Institute will make every effort to ensure the calendar reaches all those that request one. All addresses are confirmed through U.S. Postal Service validation software. Individuals with problematic addresses are contacted separately. Please check with your school office or interoffice mail personnel if for some reason you experience an unexpected delay.

Note: Copies are limited and will be distributed in the order requested.

2012 “Breaking Traditions” Awards

The Office of Career and Technical Education honored 26 students on May 23 at the State Library of Michigan. They were recognized for their outstanding achievement in a Career and Technical Education program that was non-traditional for their gender. To be considered, a student had to be nominated by school personnel, complete an application, including an essay, and submit

letters of recommendation. Students were congratulated by the keynote speaker, Paula Cunningham, President and CEO of Capitol National Bank, who encouraged them to continue to follow their dreams. The 10th annual event was attended by parents, teachers, administrators, families, and legislators.

MDE would like to congratulate

all of the award recipients. For a list of the awardees, visit the MDE website at: http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-37818_34785-279001--,00.html



2012 “Breaking Traditions” Award winners proudly displaying their awards during a ceremony at the Library of Michigan in Lansing.

MGTV Michigan Mock Election Project

Michigan Government TV (MGTV), in partnership with Leland Public Schools and the Michigan Center for Civic Education (MCCE), is coordinating the MGTV Michigan Mock Election project for the 2012 election. The project engages students from nearly 550 Michigan public, charter and private schools in voting online. They also were able to vote on contemporary issues such as immigration, the economy, energy and health care.

Two years have passed, elections

are just around the corner, and planning is underway for the 2012 Mock Election. For the 2012 election, students will vote online for the President, U.S. Senate, U.S. Congress, Michigan House of Representatives, Michigan Supreme Court and state ballot proposals (it is optional to vote in some, all or none of the Michigan races).

Teachers interested in registering for the 2012 MGTV Michigan Mock Election can contact MGTV to receive

a link to the registration form: <http://www.mgtv.org/education/mock-election-project/>. Voting in the Mock Election can easily be incorporated into election curriculum plans. In addition to voting, high school students have the chance to participate in cable programs related to election issues that will air statewide on cable. Questions on the Mock Election project should contact, Michelle Webb, MGTV Acting Executive Director, at michellew@mgtv.org.

Flexibility in the Michigan Merit Curriculum

The hallmark of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) is not the credit requirements; it is the fact that the credit is

based on proficiency with content not on seat time.

The MMC content expectations can be met in various learning settings such as career and technical education; work-based learning programs; integrated sequences such as humanities (e.g., combining English, social studies, and art); integrated math and science classes; project-based learning; college credit opportunities like dual enrollment; advancement placement and International Baccalaureate programs; and online learning. Regardless in what setting, students must demonstrate they have met the subject area content expectations for that credit area.

Additional flexibility is provided through the Personal Curriculum (PC) option. The PC is a process to modify specific credit requirements and/or

content expectations based on the individual learning needs of a student. It is designed to serve students who want to accelerate or go beyond the MMC requirements and students who need to individualize learning requirements to meet the MMC requirements. This gives districts the flexibility they need to think outside of the box when it comes to providing students with learning opportunities that meet their needs while still ensuring that they leave high school career-and-college ready.

The MMC is a big step in supporting the Governor's vision that students should be able to learn "Any Time, Any Place, Any Way, Any Pace." More information on the MMC can be found at www.michigan.gov/highschool.



Connected Educator Series

Michigan teachers face the challenge of being proficient in the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning within their classroom (see cover story). Administrators call for it, parents expect it, and students crave it. Unfortunately, teachers also have limited time, resources, and access to the latest applications of instructional technology.

As budgets are reduced across the state, opportunities for educators to attend conferences and meaningful professional development are becoming limited, if not extinct.

So how do teachers get access to current examples of edtech "done

right" given today's education climate? The REMC Connected Educators Series brings effective instructional technology strategies directly to the inboxes of every teacher in Michigan. Each video episode features a master teacher from Michigan demonstrating how he or she uses technology in their teaching; steps on how to get started; and ideas that can be tweaked to work in different classroom settings.

The library episodes can be found at REMC website www.remc.org/connectededucator and includes topics such as blogs, wikis, iPads, Skype, Moodle, Google, video assessment, and much more. For convenient access,

they are also accessible through iTunesU through MACUL's MI Learning and also REMC MI StreamNet at www.mistreamnet.org.



WHAT'S NEXT

[State Board of Education Meeting](#) June 12, 2012

[MITS/REMC Blended Learning 2012](#) June 18-20, 2012

[Michigan Joint Education Conference](#) June 20, 2012

[20th Annual Educational Facilities Conference](#) June 25, 2012

[EdCon 2012 - The Secondary Education Conf](#) June 25-27, 2012

[MCTM 2012 Conference](#) August 1-2, 2012

[Learning Leaders: Reinventing, Rejuvenation, Results](#) ... Aug 8, 2012

[State Board of Education Meeting](#) August 14, 2012

ON THE HORIZON

[MASA Fall Conference](#) September 26-28, 2012

[Annual Facilities / Operations Director Conf](#) Oct 7-9, 2012

[School Improvement Workshop for ISDs, RESAs, and Educational Organizations](#) October 10, 2012

[2012 MANS Conference](#) October 18-19, 2012

[MDE/MSBO Workshop](#) October 23, 2012

[\(PLTW\) / \(STEM\) Conference](#) October 26, 2012

[MASB Fall Conference](#) November 8-11, 2012

[School Improvement Conference](#) November 9, 2012

[26th Annual Support Staff Conference](#) Nov 15-16, 2012

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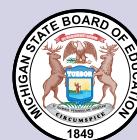
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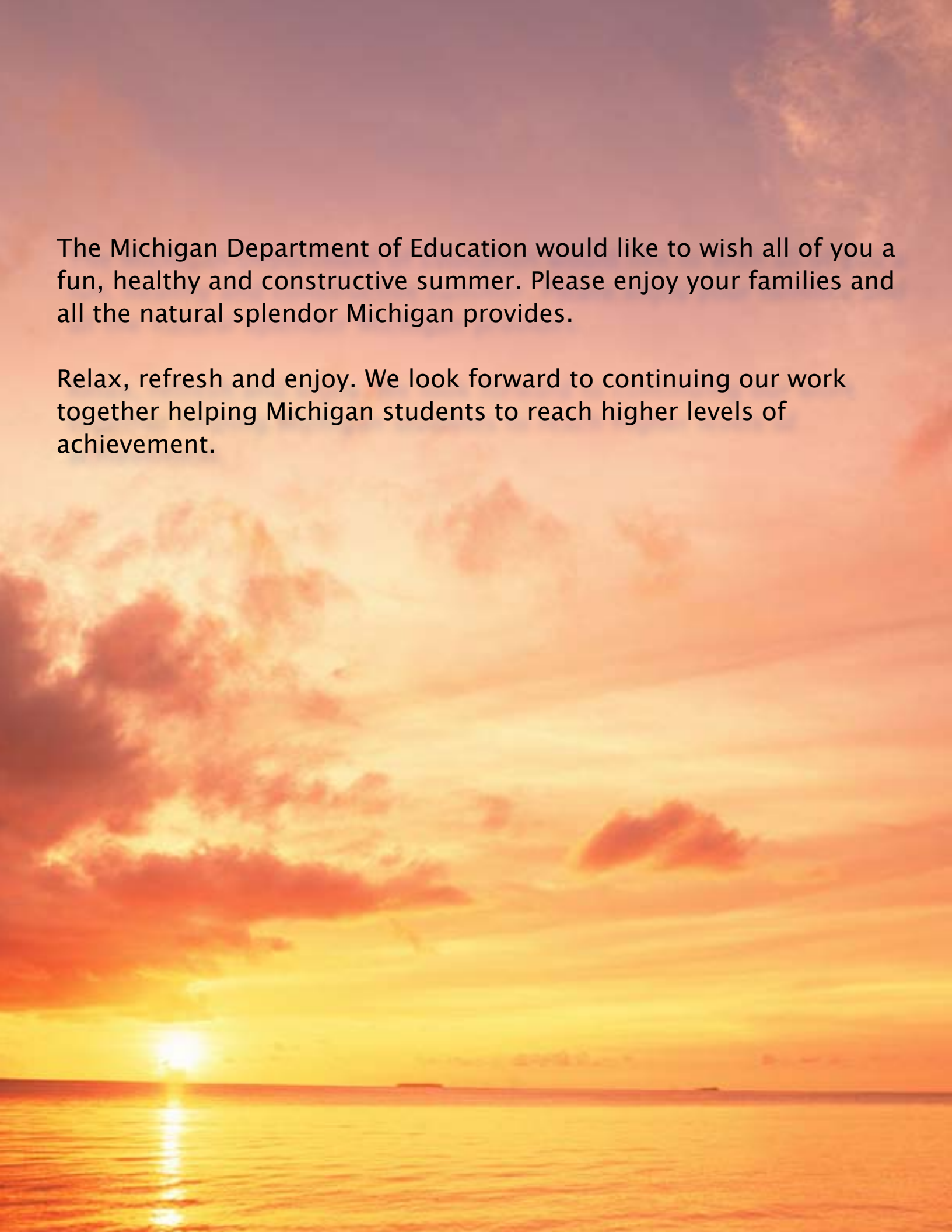
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The background of the entire page is a photograph of a sunset. The sun is a bright, glowing orb positioned low on the horizon, slightly to the left of the center. Its light creates a shimmering, vertical reflection on the calm surface of the water below. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds that are illuminated by the sun, showing a range of colors from pale yellow to deep orange and red. The water in the foreground is dark, with the sun's reflection being the primary light source. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

The Michigan Department of Education would like to wish all of you a fun, healthy and constructive summer. Please enjoy your families and all the natural splendor Michigan provides.

Relax, refresh and enjoy. We look forward to continuing our work together helping Michigan students to reach higher levels of achievement.