



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



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PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan, Chairperson 

SUBJECT: State and Federal Legislative Update

State Update

Consolidation of Services

As you know, the Governor proposed using \$50 million in School Aid funds to create a competitive grant program to incent and cover the costs of implementing consolidated services and the consolidation of districts. Michigan Department of Education (MDE) staff were asked to come up with some language that could be used in legislation for this. MDE staff met with a group of external partners that included local and intermediate school district (ISD) superintendents as well as representatives from the following statewide associations: the Michigan Association of School Administrators, the Michigan School Business Officials, and the Michigan Association of Public School Academies. Based on the rich conversation that occurred, staff developed language that was sent to the Governor's office, the Legislature, and State Budget office. It is unclear when this legislation will be introduced or if, given the economic woes facing this state, the funding will be available.

Consolidation is clearly on the minds of legislators as well. Both the House and Senate Education Committees met and discussed consolidation of services (and districts in the case of the Senate). The Chairman of the House Education Committee, Representative Tim Melton (D-Pontiac), held a hearing on the issue and discussed his legislation (HB 6488 - <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2010-HB-6488>) creating a commission to address consolidation of services using the format previously used by commissions addressing military-base closures. The Senate Education Committee held a hearing on Senate Bill 1411 (<http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2010-SB-1411>), introduced by Senator VanWoerkom (R-Muskegon), that would amend the State Education Tax (SET) Act to reduce SET levies over four years, in the intermediate school district (ISD) with the lower millage, if two ISDs with four or fewer local school districts reorganized by combining, annexation, or disorganization under the Revised School Code.

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It is expected that there will be further discussion on this issue and these bills when the Legislature returns to full-time session after the November 2nd election.

Senate Bill 1284 (Senator Nancy Cassis) – Encourages districts to implement an early intervention program

As you heard from Senator Cassis and other presenters last month, early intervention is critical to helping low performing students, and thus their schools, turn around and improve their student achievement. Senator Cassis has a bill (SB 1284 - <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2010-SB-1284>) that passed the Senate unanimously and is awaiting a hearing before the House Education Committee. The bill would amend the Revised School Code to strongly encourage a school district or public school academy (PSA) to implement a program to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills if it operated a school that was among the lowest-achieving 5% of public schools, and other criteria were met. MDE staff worked closely with Senator Cassis in order to craft this bill into a form we could support that allows for local flexibility but emphasizes the importance of early intervention.

Given the past focus of the State Board on early intervention and the alignment of this bill with that focus, I encourage the board to support this legislation.

Senate Bill 1014 (Senator Michael Prusi) – Allows noncertified teachers for certain Native American tribal language/culture classes. As an update to the last Legislative Report, Senate Bill 1014 (<http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2009-SB-1014>) has been signed by the Governor into law (PA 168 of 2010). This act allows noncertified teachers to teach Native American tribal language and culture as there are currently no certification programs for such teachers. The teacher must show mastery of the language prior to teaching. This act will assist the Native American tribal communities to keep their language alive by allowing the language to be taught in school for credit.

Federal Update

Education Jobs Fund Bill

As an update to the last Legislative Report, the State Legislature passed the bill appropriating the federal Education Jobs Fund dollars. The Department is working to get this funding out to the districts as soon as possible.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Staff from MDE met with U.S. Department of Education staff, congressional staff, and White House counsel. While President Obama and the administration clearly would like to move on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) this year, it is equally clear from the congressional staff that this scenario is unlikely. Obviously anything is possible, but, given the time constraints and the election, it appears reauthorization will be addressed in the next session.

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, 517-335-4913.