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Quality Education for Every Child

Giving Every Child the Tools for Success in the 21st Century Economy

Michigan's future is dependent upon our state's ability to provide all children with a high-quality education that gives them the tools they need to be successful in the 21st century economy.

Thanks to the groundbreaking work of the Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth led by Lt. Governor John Cherry, we now have a clear roadmap to follow to improve our educational system in partnership with local school officials, administrators, and educators.

Our schools now have clear rigorous standards for grades K-12, including high school graduation requirements that are among the nation's toughest. And the Michigan Promise scholarship is making higher education a reality for more families by making a \$4,000 scholarship available to every child to attend college, community college, or a technical training program.

We must continue to transform our educational system to meet head-on the challenge of the global marketplace.

21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS FUND

To prepare all Michigan students for success in college and the workplace, the governor will propose a new 21st Century Schools Fund that will use more than \$300 million to help Michigan school districts replace large, impersonal high schools that have low academic achievement and high dropout rates, with small high schools that use strong personal relationships, consistent discipline, and real-world relevance to help at-risk students achieve high academic goals.

- The 21st Century Schools Fund will be financed with \$32 million from the School Aid Fund that had been dedicated through FY08 to make payments to school districts related to the Durant settlement. The state will bond against these annual revenues to allow the 21st Century Schools Fund to issue grants over the next three years.
- Michigan school districts and intermediate school districts will be eligible to apply for start-up grants from the 21st Century Schools Fund. School districts are also eligible to apply for facilities grants from the 21st Century Schools Fund. Eligible school districts must have at least one high school building that has not made adequate yearly progress for two years. Districts that seek facilities grants must also have at least the equivalent of 800 full-time students in grades 9 through 12. Facilities grants can take the form of lump sum grants or millage equalization for districts that fund their small school capital needs through a local bond issue.
- 21st Century Schools Fund start-up grants can be used by districts to cover planning expenses in the year before the school opens and in its first three years of operation as the schools gradually expand their student bodies, typically by adding a grade each year. Facilities grants can be used to replace or renovate existing school buildings.
- Schools created under the 21st Century Schools Fund must be site-based managed with teaching and learning decisions made by teachers and principals, not a central district office; have curricula consistent with Michigan's new high school graduation requirements and with career pathways; provide students opportunity to do college-level work; and must be designed to improve educational opportunities for students attending schools that have failed multiple times to meet academic and graduation rate goals.

- In exchange for autonomy, a school created under the 21st Century Schools Fund will be held accountable to goals based on academic achievement, graduation rates, and college-sending rates.
- State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan will be approving the grant applications, based upon each proposal's ability and effort to implement innovative and effective instruction to students. The goal is to create new school environments for students in high schools that have not made Adequate Yearly Progress for at least two consecutive years, with the aim that more personal and relevant instruction will lead to higher academic achievement.
- Factors that will be considered in awarding grants include measuring the extent to which these new high schools will be used for systemic reform; providing an autonomous administrative structure; serving students from low-achieving high schools; and carrying support from labor and business organizations, the community, and private foundations.

OTHER EDUCATIONAL REFORMS PROPOSED BY THE GOVERNOR

- **Raising the Dropout Age**
The governor again asked the Legislature to raise the state's legal dropout age to 18. The law making 16 the dropout age was adopted in 1895 when most jobs did not require additional education. Since it is now clear that most jobs require education or training beyond high school, we must raise the age of compulsory school attendance to 18.
- **Increasing Investment in Early Childhood Education**
We must continue to improve education at every point on the education continuum. The governor's budget will increase investment in early education to ensure that children get a quality education during the critical first years of life.
- **Full-Day Kindergarten**
The governor is asking school districts to provide a full-day kindergarten experience – rather than the traditional half-day – for students entering school. This simple step will make a dramatic difference in the life opportunities of many of our youngest citizens.
- **Rewarding Colleges and Universities for Degree Completion, Expanding Educational Opportunity and Commercializing Research.**
The governor's higher education budget, scheduled to be submitted to the Legislature next month, will offer incentives to colleges and universities when their students complete degrees, for creating opportunities for low-income students, and for turning research into commercial products that strengthen our economy.
- **Improved Accountability**
The governor will ask the Legislature to give State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan new powers to close schools that consistently fail to graduate students and prepare them for the 21st century workforce.