



News Release

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Now is a great time to be of service to your local school and community

**An OpEd by Mike Flanagan
State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

July 29, 2009

Today, one of every four Michigan children fails to graduate with their class. This is an issue that could potentially affect 60,000 students across the state this year. As a member of the community and, as a caring adult, you can help share the vision of parents and educators alike to help kids stay in school and prepare them for success.

Here's how: I recently issued a challenge to school districts across the state to address the dropout crisis from several angles including research, extended resources and an early warning system. The response to this Dropout Challenge has been tremendous, but our overall progress also depends on the role families and communities play in children's lives.

With this in mind, why not consider volunteering as an adult advocate on behalf of our state's students. Beginning now, volunteers can help tutor children and close the summer learning gap. And during the school year, volunteers can help schools with attendance monitoring, school and peer counseling, mentoring, tutoring, staffing after-school programs or organizing service-learning projects for students.

In order for us to face this dropout dilemma head-on, there must be a focused effort of wrap-around support from every facet of our students' lives - parents, faith-based leaders, civic and community leaders, teachers and school administrators. You can help us make the meaningful difference that so many of our state's children need in order to grow into productive adults. If you can't volunteer with a school on a regular basis, you can seek other volunteer opportunities by visiting the Michigan Community Service Commission's web site at www.michigan.gov/volunteer.

Recently, President Obama issued a challenge to Americans of all ages to join *United We Serve*, and commit to service this summer. I am encouraged by his actions and trust that every American will heed the call. We, as educators are taking a stand to improve lives and change outcomes for our state's children. Won't you join us?

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