



# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 17, 2002

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## Department Releases New Virtual Learning Guidelines

Michigan schools took a bold step into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century today with the release of new guidelines on virtual and long distance learning.

Kathleen N. Straus, (D-Detroit) State Board of Education President, said the guidelines are one of several statewide initiatives, such as House Speaker Rick Johnson's (R-LeRoy) school laptop program, the Board and Department of Education support to encourage Michigan schools to continue to embrace the Information Age.

"These guidelines are another tangible example of the State Board's on-going efforts to provide leadership in focusing on improving the academic achievement of all students, especially those in chronically underperforming schools," Straus said.

Based on policy recommendations recently approved by the State Board of Education from its Embracing the Information Age Task Force, the Department of Education has released new guidelines designed to encourage the increased development and use of long distance and virtual learning in Michigan's public schools.

"These new guidelines encourage Michigan's educators and students to more fully tap into the exciting and innovative opportunities that virtual and long distance learning offer," said Michael David Warren, Jr., (R-Beverly Hills), Secretary of the State Board of Education and the Chair of the State Board's Task Force on Embracing the Information Age.

"Virtual and long distance learning enables students and educators to connect with, and learn from, business professionals, artists, physicists, and engineers in Europe, the far East, South America, and throughout the U.S. and Michigan, before, during and after the traditional school day," Warren noted. "In short, these guidelines can open dramatic new opportunities for all Michigan students, especially those in chronically underperforming schools."

Local educators will play an important role in ensuring that these guidelines for virtual and long-distance learning are fully utilized in classrooms.

"Not only will these guidelines help propel Michigan's public schools into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, they provide clear safeguards to ensure that virtual and long distance learning, for which credit is given, will be done through a quality program with guidance from local educators," said Tom Watkins, Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The new guidelines can be found at [www.state.mi.us/mde](http://www.state.mi.us/mde).

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