



News Release

Office of the Superintendent, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, MI 48909, Phone: 517.241.0494, Fax: 517.335.4565

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 1, 2002

Contact: T.J. Bucholz
(517) 241-4395

Lansing Proposal A Forum Rescheduled For Monday, New Monroe County Forum Added For May 8

A Proposal A forum with the State Board of Education and Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Watkins originally scheduled for May 8 in Lansing has been moved to Monday, May 6 to accommodate an additional forum in southeastern Michigan.

The new forum in Monroe County will coincide with the State Board of Education's scheduled meeting there so Board members can receive feedback on their recently developed report on school financing in Michigan.

The Lansing forum will begin at 7 p.m. in the Hill Center - 2nd Floor Conference Room, Lansing Public Schools, 5815 Wise Road, Lansing.

The May 8 Monroe County Forum will be held in the Monroe County ISD's River Raisin Room, 1101 South Raisinville Road, Monroe. The Monroe County forum will begin at 7:30 p.m.

From Proposal A to A+ - A discussion of issues and options regarding the financial requirements of public education in Michigan was accepted by the State Board of Education at its March meeting.

The bi-partisan report, funded by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) and written by a cadre of school finance experts, including representatives from Indiana University, Wayne State University, Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, and the non-partisan Citizens Research Council, is designed to generate conversation about the ways school funding works in Michigan.

The impetus of the report occurred when the State Board unanimously commissioned its creation in November 2001.

"The benefit of Proposal A is recognized. However, much like a 1994 automobile, Proposal A may be in need of an engine overhaul and body redesign to remain contemporary," Watkins said. "Perhaps Proposal A was good in the 20th century. Now, perhaps, the citizens and children of Michigan deserve Proposal A+ as we move into the 21st century."

Watkins said policy makers like the State Board of Education have a responsibility to take a "conscious look at our decisions to see if they withstand the test of time and to ask ourselves if we can do better."

"It is with that intent that the State Board and I share this report," he said. "Our goal should be to work together to find a shared vision and common agenda that will address the shortcomings of the existing system."

The State Board will review final recommendations from the task force and forward policy recommendations to the Legislature in July for its consideration.

A copy of the full report is available at www.state.mi.us/mde. For further information about the Proposal A to A+ forums, contact the Michigan Department of Education at 517-241-1160.

####