



News Release



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Department of Education, MEA Partner Statewide Billboard Campaign To Promote Public Schools

In recognition of the great things happening in Michigan's public schools, the Michigan Department of Education and the state's largest teachers union are unveiling promotional back-to-school billboards next week.

The Department of Education, in partnership with the Michigan Education Association, will begin its campaign on Monday across the state. The billboards convey a simple, yet powerful, message - *Our Neighborhood Public Schools Work! Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow*. The billboards also feature a group of multi-cultural high school graduates in cap and gown gazing at the Statue of Liberty.

"Our neighborhood public schools are the true Statue of Liberty in this country, and we felt it was time to promote in a very public way the good things going on in our public schools every day," Watkins said. "Educators and support personnel across the state of Michigan deserve our continued support, not simply dogged criticism. Schools are striving every day to educate all of our children, and it's time to recognize their outstanding efforts."

Watkins also said Michigan's public schools are the best economic investment we can make for the future.

"More new businesses start up in our Great State than anywhere else because of our highly educated and efficient work force," Watkins said. "It's time we give credit where credit is due. More than 95 percent of Michigan's work force has been educated in our public schools by dedicated, hardworking teachers. Our neighborhood public schools do the hard, backbreaking work of preparing our students to be the leaders of the 21st Century. They are the cornerstone of our future."

The campaign begins on Monday in 22 locations around the state, including Detroit, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Flint, Ann Arbor, Saginaw, and other locations on major arterial highways around Michigan. It also complements a policy recommendation from the State Board of Education's Ensuring Excellent Educators Task Force, chaired by State Board of Education Treasurer Eileen Lappin Weiser and State Board Member John C. Austin. The recommendation calls for the Department of Education to develop a public effort to support teachers as a profession and to enhance the image of teachers.

The promotional slogan also piggybacks on the "Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow...Public Schools Work!" marketing campaign promoted throughout the year by the Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA), MEA, the Department of Education, and embraced by dozens of Michigan public school districts.

The billboard campaign is anticipated to last approximately four to six weeks as public schools begin a new school year.