



News Release

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Watkins Names Seasoned Instructional Leader As Chief Academic Officer

Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Watkins has named Michigan MEAP Director Jeremy Hughes as the Department of Education's new Chief Academic Officer.

Hughes, the current director of the Office of Educational Assessment and Michigan Merit Award, which includes the management of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), will begin his role as Chief Academic Officer on October 1, 2002. He will spend the next month in a transition role between the Department of Education and the Department of Treasury, where the MEAP and Merit Award Programs are housed.

"We are very pleased to have such an outstanding and dedicated academic leader as Dr. Hughes accept the role as the state's Chief Academic Officer," Watkins said. "This role encompasses everything that he loves about education - curriculum and instruction - and he will be invaluable as we all continue to work toward making Michigan's public schools a national model of success."

As MEAP director, Hughes' experience and background will add value to several Department of Education initiatives. Hughes will play a critical role with the Department of Education as he works to implement both the federal requirements of President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law in January, and the state's new accreditation system for Michigan schools, titled Education Yes!. Michigan schools will receive their first report card in December 2002. He will also assist the State Board of Education in boosting academic performance in all schools, especially those that are chronically underperforming.

"Jeremy is a great choice to work with the Department of Education and Tom Watkins," said Michael Flanagan, executive director of the Michigan Association of School Administrators. "I worked with Jeremy when I was an ISD Superintendent, and I believe he'll be great for the kids."

Hughes fills the role left vacant when Bill Bushaw, former Chief Academic Officer, left the Department of Education in June to take a position as Director of Learning Systems at the Merit Network with the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor. Elaine M. Madigan, Director of the Department of Education's Office of State Aid and School Finance, has ably filled the role on an interim basis.

"We are very pleased to hear of Dr. Hughes' appointment. He is a very talented and dedicated educator that has served the needs of Dearborn well, and we are sure his experience will translate well at the state level," said Sonia Harb, director of employment and training for the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS). "He has been extremely responsive to the needs of very diverse and challenged populations."

Prior to his accepting his position with the state of Michigan in 2002, Hughes served as superintendent of the Dearborn Public Schools from 1989 to 2002, as superintendent of the Haslett Public Schools from 1979 to 1989, and as assistant superintendent of the Saginaw Township Community Schools from 1974 to 1979.

"I am delighted by the Department's selection," said Leonard Rezmierski, superintendent of Northville Public Schools. "I have known Jeremy Hughes for 12 years. He is an educator of outstanding credentials, commitment, and conviction. He will be an effective leader and an asset for local school districts across Michigan."

Hughes said he elected to join the Department of Education because of Watkins' overarching and consistent message of helping teachers teach and children learn - an idea central to the Department of Education and the State Board of Education's decision-making yardstick.

"What has impressed me about Tom Watkins and the Department of Education is their consistency of message," Hughes said. "Every decision is made with the best interest of Michigan's teachers and children in mind. I pledge to use my skills, knowledge, and experience to fulfill that admirable goal."