



News Release

Office of the State Board of Education, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, MI 48909, Phone: 517.373.3900, Fax: 517.335.4565

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

State Board To Discuss Key Education YES! Issues March 4

The State Board of Education will meet in early March at a Detroit location to further discuss key issues it has raised regarding Education YES!, the state's new proposed accreditation system.

The committee of the whole meeting will be held on Monday, March 4 in Wayne State University's McGregor Memorial Conference Center, Rooms F, G, and H, 495 West Ferry Mall, Detroit. The meeting will be used to reach consensus regarding final details of Education YES! - A Yardstick for Excellent Schools.

The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. The meeting will be open to the public, but no action may be taken by the Board. During the meeting, the State Board also is expected to listen to further public input on the issue.

Crucial points for board members are the system's proposed letter grading system, resources for underperforming schools, the distribution of the grades for all Michigan school buildings, technology and teacher quality issues, possible revisions to state education law, and alignment with federal legislation. The Board will take a final vote on the system at its regular meeting on March 14.

"The Michigan Department of Education has engaged stakeholders in a way they have never done before, and for that we are extremely grateful," said State Board of Education President Kathleen Straus (D-Detroit). "We are absolutely committed to making a final vote on this system in March."

Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Watkins has said many of the changes to the system discussed at the Board's meeting on February 14 were made in response to seven public forums held in January for the Education YES! accreditation system and to comply with President Bush's new No Child Left Behind Act.

"This system will more than likely outlive many of us," Watkins said. "It has not been done in isolation, and sets rigorous, fair standards to lift up Michigan's teachers and children. It is, quite simply, the single most important issue for the State Board of Education and the Department of Education."

Board members also expressed a desire to move forward quickly with a final vote on the accreditation system.

"I don't mean for this to sound harsh, but I'm not interested in fairness to schools. I am most interested in fairness to kids," said Michael David Warren, Jr., State Board of Education Secretary, (R-Beverly Hills). "Schools are about learning, and it is absolutely critical that we set high academic standards. Every day we wait means another day we lose as we attempt to assist chronically underperforming school buildings, and all of Michigan's children."

A copy of the Education YES! document can be found at the Department of Education's web site, www.state.mi.us/mde.

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