



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING




JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN  
SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

October 23, 2009

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents  
Public School Academy Administrators and Authorizers  
Public School Principals

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan, Superintendent of Public Instruction 

SUBJECT: Michigan Department of Education Dropout Challenge

A few months ago, I asked every public elementary, middle and high school to identify 10-15 students who are nearing or in a transition year with multiple dropout risk factors and provide research-based supports and interventions. It is a simple concept that can have a huge impact. Schools and districts wishing to take this challenge were asked to register online for the challenge at the Michigan Department of Education Dropout Challenge web page at [www.michigan.gov/dropoutchallenge](http://www.michigan.gov/dropoutchallenge).

The response has been overwhelming. As of October 15, 2009, over 500 schools and districts have joined this challenge. I would like to personally thank the educators and administrators of each of these schools and districts for their combined leadership and commitment to change the direction and lives of thousands of Michigan students at-risk of dropping out of school.

***Challenge Registration and Recognition***

The media has asked for participating districts. I don't want to give the current list out today so on October 30, 2009, a list of schools and districts meeting the challenge will be publically released to the media and placed on the department's web site. For your school or district to be listed, registration must be completed online by 5 p.m., October 28, 2009. If you require additional information or assistance in registering, please contact Jan Ellis, Office of the Superintendent, Michigan Department of Education, (517) 373-9391 or email [ellisj@michigan.gov](mailto:ellisj@michigan.gov).

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### ***Recognition, Support and Professional Development***

The Michigan Department of Education in partnership with Learning Point Associates, Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center, REL Midwest, the National High School Center, Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals and other education organizations and foundations will provide a comprehensive series of professional development opportunities, information and resources to support this challenge throughout the 2009-2010 school year. Examples include: a statewide conference with national experts, interactive webinars, web-based social networking, best practice work shops and sharing opportunities, sample student surveys and more. Also, in order to provide data support to your current and future work, the Title IID Educational Technology grant will be embedding the Early Warning Signs into regional data systems.

All challenge schools and districts will also be invited to submit information to MDE on their challenge effort and student progress in late Spring 2010. Buildings demonstrating the most student progress will receive special recognition and awards from the Michigan Department of Education and its partners. The recognition and award guidelines are currently under development. Look for the release of a rubric and a student results template for your building to use to reduce the risk for dropout. These materials will help you document the current your impact on student work and behavior.

For additional information on support, professional development and recognition and awards, please contact Leisa Gallagher, a Co-Director of Reaching and Teaching Struggling Learners Initiative and a consultant to MDE on Dropout Prevention at (517) 908-3921 or at [mdedropoutchallenge@michigan.gov](mailto:mdedropoutchallenge@michigan.gov).

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