

Michigan Chamber of Commerce Responds to Student Achievement Test 'Irregularities'

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The Michigan Chamber of Commerce today responded to State Treasurer Doug Roberts announcement that the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) 5, 7 and 8 winter test results for 22 public school districts were shown to be "irregular." Pursuant to the Michigan Merit Award Ethics Procedure, the Department is turning the results back to the affected school districts for investigation.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20000320/DEM039>)

"Most teachers and school administrators are honest and hardworking. However, the information made public today suggests that some teachers and/or school administrators in 71 schools and 22 public school districts may have acted improperly in their handling of student achievement tests," said Michigan Chamber President & CEO Jim Barrett. "The Michigan Chamber strongly agrees with State Treasurer Roberts that this information is very significant and potentially very serious."

"We also strongly agree with State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Watkins who said that questionable practices regarding the administration of the MEAP test are unacceptable and will not be tolerated," Barrett added.

"Earlier today several members of the State House were harshly critical of charter schools for their performance on the 7th Grade math MEAP test," said Jim Sandy, Executive Director of Michigan Business Leaders for Education Excellence. "If these lawmakers are truly interested in student achievement, they should be equally concerned about this serious development in 22 traditional school districts."

"Now that the Department has turned these troubling results back to the affected school districts for investigation, it will be up to school boards and school administrators to take appropriate action to remedy this situation," Sandy added. "Employers will be watching carefully to see if the education establishment is up to the task of policing its own."

"It is also important for parents and job providers to note that 69 out of 71 of the schools that may have engaged in improper test administration practices are traditional public schools. Only one of the 71 schools in question is a public school academy. The other school is a non-public (Christian) school," Sandy concluded.

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce is a statewide business organization representing approximately 7,000 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce. The Michigan Chamber of Commerce was established in 1959 to be an advocate for Michigan's job providers in the legislative, political and legal process.

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