Michigan Chamber Urges State Board of Education to Move Forward Now On K-12 Accreditation

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The Board of Directors of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce has unanimously voted to reaffirm the Michigan Chamber's support for the current K-12 accreditation system. For many years, the Michigan Chamber of Commerce has been a strong advocate for high standards of student achievement and accountability in K-12 education.

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"We strongly believe the recent decision by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to delay implementation of the state's accreditation system was not in the best interests of students, parents, or Michigan's job providers," said Michigan Chamber President & CEO Jim Barrett.

"The current accreditation system in place since 1995 is based on seven different measures of school operations and student performance. This fair and reasonable system could and should have become operational in the spring of 2001 as originally planned," Barrett added.

According to Rich Studley, Senior Vice President of Government Relations for the Michigan Chamber, the Democratic majority on the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent are "wasting time and money on an unnecessary study of Proposal 'A' that is almost certain to call for higher taxes and more government spending on K-12 education, even though there are no valid studies showing a direct relationship between higher spending and improved student achievement."

Jim Sandy, Executive Director of Michigan Business Leaders for Education Excellence, said that every parent has the right to know if their child is attending a quality school and every taxpayer has the right to know if the billions of dollars spent on education every year are being used in an effective and efficient manner. "The State Board of Education, Department of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction have the responsibility to collect data and information about school performance and report their findings to the public," Sandy said. "Any further delay only hinders the ability to improve our schools and ultimately, hurts children."

"The Michigan Chamber has always been a proponent of high standards, quality assessments and school accountability. The recent action of the Superintendent and some members of the Board of Education has taken us backwards. We are proposing that education leaders step up to the plate and produce an accreditation system that will help all of Michigan's citizens to know that our investment in public education is a sound one," Sandy concluded.

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

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