

Michigan PTSA[®] Bulletin

every child. one voice.

Volume 83 Issue 5

Back to School 2007

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Great Expectations, Getting Your Year Started

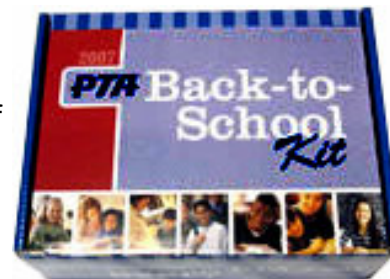
Excerpted from www.pta.org

Presidents, have you received your **Back to School Kit**? This is a box full of resources that can help you have a successful school year and increase your PTA/PTSA's impact on the community.

The Back to School Kit is sent in July directly from National PTA and if you have not received it, contact National PTA Headquarters at info@pta.org, (312) 670-6782, or Toll-Free at (800) 307-4PTA (4782). Several key items from the kit are available online at www.pta.org. Just follow the links! Home > Leadership Resources > Local Unit Leaders > Programs > Back-to-School Kit.

The 2007 PTA **Back-to-School Kit** gives you:

- The tools you need to plan and run your fall membership drive
- Resources to help you plan programs throughout the year that meet the needs and interests of your community
- Leadership resources to help you and your committee chairs run an effective unit



Here is what you'll find in your kit, which are also available to download at www.pta.org:

- PTA Parent's Calendar—Program and event suggestions for each month of the year, and customizable calendar pages to help you keep community members informed of upcoming activities
- PTA Grassroots Advocacy Toolkit—Materials to educate PTA members about how they can make their voices heard on issues that affect children and education
- 100 Ways to Help Your Child and School Succeed—An informational brochure that gives parents 100 ways they can support their children's education
- National Standards for Family-School Partnerships—What parents, schools, and communities can do together to support student success
- Membership Brochures—Resources to help you inform parents and school leaders why they should be part of PTA
- Membership Marketing Templates and Tools—Customizable materials to help you recruit and retain members
- 2007–2008 PTA Unit Achievement Award application—An opportunity for your PTA to receive recognition for its accomplishments
- 2007–2008 PTA Quick-Reference Guides (President's, Membership, Programs, and Money Matters)—Updated, easy-to-use primers for your PTA's leaders
- PTA National Strategic Plan 2007–2010—The strategic plan that will guide PTA's work over the next three years

The 2007 PTA Back-to-School Kit is sponsored by Office Depot, a Proud National Partner of PTA.

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Did you know?

According to Woman's Day Magazine, 55% of 12–17-year-olds are using social networking websites. Is your child one of them? Is your child using them in a safe way? In October, MySpace will introduce ParentCare software that will tell you the name, age and hometown listed in the profile of anyone who accesses the site from your computer. That way, you can see how your kids are portraying themselves online.

For more information or help with internet safety, visit these sites:

www.myspace.com/safety
www.ic3.gov
www.SafeTeens.com
www.WebWiseKids.org

President's Message

By Debbie Squires, Michigan PTSA President

Greetings, Leaders!

As the time drew closer to write this, my first letter as President, so many things came to mind. What words of wisdom would I share? I asked myself, when I was a leader at a local or council level, what did I want, better yet, what did I need to hear from our leader? And then two events happened that made me know exactly what the answer was. I set aside the list of topics I had made for now and reflected upon the two very inter-related experiences (although not seemingly at the time).

First, I was sitting in an audience, waiting for the keynote speaker to come out. He was to talk about his book *Everyday Leadership*. I had heard the speaker, Daniel Granholm Mulhern, before at a previous event, but not since his book was published. While I bought the book, had it autographed, and looked forward to reading it, I didn't expect the next hour to be so meaningful and timely.

The basic premise of the book is that 'Leadership' isn't always some grand gesture by larger than life people. In fact, most of the time it's done in small ways, everyday, by all of us. One section in the book talks about the importance of crafting a message that is clear and concise. It should be something that you could write on the inside of a matchbook cover; thus the term "Message on a Matchbook". It sounded intriguing, something to consider thinking about doing.

Then almost as if by fate, the very next evening I went to a local unit, where I had been asked months ago to help kickoff their membership drive. I said sure, thinking it would be an enjoyable evening of chatting with parents, staff and children. And it most assuredly was. (But it turned out to be so much more!) I walked in with the usual variety of brochures, and the National PTA Legacy video. I asked the membership chair the few questions I thought I might need to know – the cost of their membership, when their meetings were, etc. The speaker's message really hit home when people began arriving and she got busy and I found myself actually "selling" memberships. I hadn't really done that in years. Most of my time these days is spent talking to large groups.

I had a very limited time to share the value of being a PTA member. Some families were new to the school; some came from schools with a PTO; some had been members of the school, but not the PTA; and some were new to the whole education process with their very first kindergartener in hand. It was then that I fully appreciated the "Message on a Matchbook" concept.

I'm sure you are saying to yourself that you certainly know why being a PTA member is important. But are you able to articulate it at a moment's notice? While the price of a membership is relatively small, the value is "priceless". I would ask you at the beginning of this membership year, regardless of your PTA title, to take the time to sit down, give some serious thought and put your message on a matchbook and then create opportunities to share it.

Together We Are Stronger!

Debbie Squires



The Michigan Promise Scholarship

Submitted by Governor Jennifer Granholm



"The Michigan Promise scholarship opens the doors of education to every student in Michigan. It's an amazing opportunity for our students and a critical necessity for our economy."

- Governor Jennifer M. Granholm

The Michigan Promise scholarship gives every Michigan high school senior the opportunity to receive \$4,000 for college or technical training. Students can use the scholarship at any four-year college or university or a two-year community college in Michigan – \$4,000 will fund at least an associates degree or certification, giving every student a ticket to a good-paying job in this competitive 21st century economy.

The Michigan Promise scholarship is a critical step for Michigan's economy, as the states with the highest number of college graduates have the lowest unemployment rates and the fastest-growing economies.

Coupled with the rigorous high school curriculum standards that Governor Granholm fought for and signed into law, the Michigan Promise scholarship will position Michigan as the state that will lead the nation in educational achievement and economic growth.

Making college more affordable was a key recommendation of the Governor's Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth chaired by Lieutenant Governor John D. Cherry, Jr. The Michigan Promise was first proposed by Governor Granholm in her 2005 State of the State address.

Students who score well on the high school assessment will receive \$1,000 during their freshman and sophomore years and earn the remaining \$2,000 after successfully completing two years of post-secondary education. Students who do not receive qualifying scores on the high school assessment can earn the entire \$4,000 scholarship by successfully completing two years of post-secondary education. Students must maintain a 2.5 grade point average in their post-secondary institution to earn a Michigan Promise scholarship when they reach that two-year point.

Letter from Michigan Virtual University

By Jamey Fitzpatrick, President and CEO of MVU

Dear PTA/PTSA,

As part of our new relationship with the Michigan PTSA, the Michigan Virtual University® has been asked to write articles for this issue of the Michigan PTSA Bulletin. As a nonprofit organization created by the state in 1998, the MVU® works closely with Michigan's K-12 community to develop a variety of online courses, tools and resources that assist schools in a variety of ways. A large portion of this issue is dedicated to online learning and the use of Internet tools and services that can impact students, teachers and parents in positive ways. We look forward to sharing more information in future issues of the Michigan PTSA Bulletin. We welcome your ideas and suggestions as you learn more about Internet-based education solutions. We are always looking for new and innovative ways to better serve Michigan's K-12 educators, students and parents. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at (517) 324-5360.



Jamey Fitzpatrick
President and CEO
Michigan Virtual University

Top Ten Myths About Virtual Schools

By Michigan Virtual University

(Adapted from the North American Council for Online Learning)

1. Myth: Virtual schools are a separate system from traditional education.

Truth: Michigan Virtual School works in partnership with local districts and schools in providing online courses to Michigan students. Local schools award grades and credits for successful completion of MVS courses.

2. Myth: Online courses are for gifted and talented students only.

Truth: Online courses work well with all students, including at-risk students, urban and rural students, those with limited English proficiency and those with special needs.

3. Myth: Online courses lack interaction.

Truth: Students typically have more one-on-one interactions with their teachers and fellow students in online courses, especially when team projects are assigned, than in traditional classrooms. Teachers report getting to know their students better and students who are normally reluctant to contribute to class discussions tend to contribute more in online environments.

4. Myth: Online students are isolated and therefore will be socially disadvantaged.

Truth: In fact, students often engage actively both online and off as they complete assignments and socialize with other students and adults in their schools, at home and in the community.

5. Myth: Online teachers have easy jobs.

Truth: Online teachers report that they work much harder and spend more hours online than in the classroom. Online instructional design, writing, management of instruction, and communicating with students can take considerable time and be quite different from what goes on inside a traditional classroom.

6. Myth: Online courses have to be developed from scratch.

Truth: Many online courses already exist that meet state standards and are accredited by recognized organizations. These online resources have been developed by states, for-profit companies and nonprofit organizations.

7. Myth: Online courses are easier for students than regular courses.

Truth: Most online courses are aligned to rigorous state standards. Course requirements include active participation, regular attendance and state assessments, and courses are supervised by state-certified teachers who adhere to competency-based academic requirements.

8. Myth: A student is more likely to cheat online.

Truth: Cheating is no more prevalent online than in the classroom. In addition, there are many technological ways to deter and track cheating when it does occur.

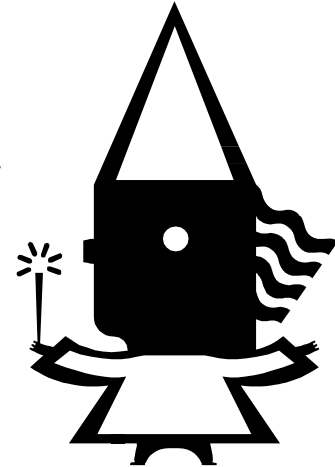
9. Myth: Virtual schools are about technology.

Truth: Virtual schools are about curriculum and instruction for students. Most schools already have the basic technology needed to offer online courses to students.



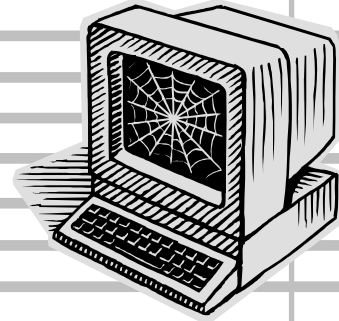
10. Myth: Online courses represent an “add-on” to already burdened school systems and teachers.

Truth: Online education represents an opportunity to take advantage of online resources and enables teachers to help students learn in ways that match students’ needs and learning styles. Online courses may or may not decrease costs, depending on how budgets are allocated and how online courses are integrated into instruction.



Online Membership Data Reporting (OMDR) Excerpted from the Local Unit Officers' Handbook

OMDR was designed to give local units a direct pipeline to enter information into a centralized database. This unprecedented access will help PTA at all levels be more efficient with funds and better respond to member needs. It will also point to areas where PTA can expand its service.



In order to gain access to the OMDR database, one local board member from each unit must participate in an online webinar at <http://registration.intercall.com/go/nationalpta>. Once this is complete, the president can contact the state office at 517-622-4782 for first time access information!

Upcoming Dates!

Tuesday	October 2nd	8:00 AM	Wednesday	October 17th	4:00 PM
Friday	October 5th	1:00 PM	Monday	October 22nd	10:00 AM
Thursday	October 11th	10:00 AM	Tuesday	October 30th	12:00 PM

You can also find additional information at www.michiganptsa.org/membership/omdr.html

PTA Parent Resources

Excerpted from www.pta.org

Do you have a child who is the victim of bullying at school? Need some ideas for getting your family more physically active? Do you want to make the most of your next parent-teacher conference?

As the best resource for parents, PTA offers useful information to many thousands of parents just like you. PTA provides the resources and support you need to stay involved in the life of your child every day.

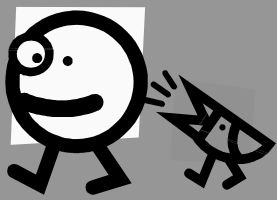
Take a look through the following categories within the Parent Resources section at www.pta.org and learn about new ways you make a difference in your child's life.

Student Achievement

Safety

Media and Technology

Health and Wellness



**Psssst!
Pass It On!**

Please pass this and all mailings on to your fellow PTA/PTSA officers and members.



A Fun, Simple + Profitable Fund-raiser for Non-Profit Organizations

One of life's great pleasures is a good cup of coffee. It is the most popular drink in the world today. **So what could be simpler?**

We offer custom labeled freshly roasted coffee direct to you for a **fun, simple and profitable fundraising** opportunity. Internet sales can add profit year round! For information contact ann@coffee4kids.com or call 248-760-8873.

Dates to Remember

October

- Child Health Month
- Crime Prevention Month
- 8-12—PTA Start the Art Week
- 18—Lights on Afterschool!
- 19-21—Emerging Minority Leaders Conference
- 21-27—National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week
- 27—Make a Difference Day
- 28—Treasurer's Remittance Form Due
- 28—Membership Roster Due
- 31-Dec. 3 National PTA Online Holiday Auction

November

- National PTA Focuses on Healthy Lifestyles
- American Indian Heritage Month
- National Adoption Month
- 1—National Family Literacy Day
- 1—2007-2008 Phoebe Apperson Hearst-National PTA

Excellence in Education Partnership Award available online

- 11—American Education Week begins
- 18—National Family Week begins
- 22-23—Michigan PTSA office closed for Thanksgiving
- 28—Treasurer's Remittance Form Due
- 28—Membership Roster Due



December

- 1—Unit & Council Eligibility Deadline for Reflections Participation (*Unit Dues Received, Minimum of 25 Members Posted with State, Bylaws Current*)
- 24-31—Michigan PTSA office closed
- 31—Unit and Individual Legislative Advocacy Awards applications due
- 28—Treasurer's Remittance Form Due
- 28—Membership Roster Due

Bomb Threat Response

By Jules Schmuker, Michigan PTSA Communications Assistant



Did you know that in the case of a bomb threat, most schools would evacuate students outside of the school building or into an open area such as a gymnasium? The Michigan State Police Bomb Squad says that safety response policies need to change.

Special evaluations must be made in a case to case basis to ensure the safety of those being threatened. In the case of a bomb threat or suspicious package, evacuating a building is not always appropriate as it could expose those being evacuated to greater dangers. Evacuating to a pre-determined location or open area invites the opportunity for a planted bomb or sniper.

If you would like more information, visit the Michigan State Police website www.michigan.gov/msp

Ask your Administrator what Crisis Plans are in place to ensure the safety of children while at school.

Is there a Crisis Team set up to address issues as they arise?

Career Forward

Michigan Virtual University

Are you interested in learning how your school can meet the new online learning requirements for high school graduation? This new Michigan Virtual School no-cost course helps students wrestle with some of the burning questions about their futures: What am I going to do with my life? What is the world of work like? What will I need to succeed? How do I match my interests with work? Using a variety of multimedia, course topics explore these questions and more. Throughout the course, students are asked frequently to reflect on what they're learning, to write their thoughts down as a continual refinement of their thinking and to discuss their thoughts with other students, either in-person or online. Key benefits of the course include learning about the world of work, gaining experience with online resources and satisfying the new high school graduation requirement for online learning. The course was developed through a partnership of the Michigan Department of Education and the MVU. Major funding was provided by Microsoft Corporation's U.S. *Partners in Learning* program. Support for online delivery is provided by Blackboard®, Inc.

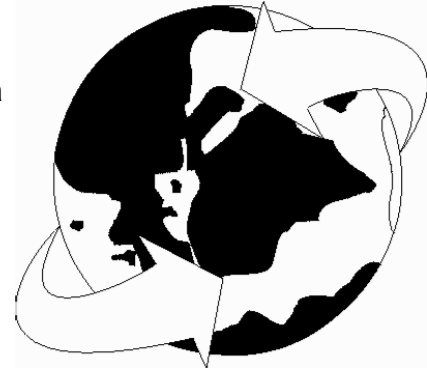
For more information, visit <http://careerforward.org>.

Online Education Exploding Around the Globe

By Michigan Virtual University

Last year, Michigan became the first state in the nation to require all students — beginning with the Class of 2011 — to take an online course or have a meaningful online learning experience as a condition of high school graduation. This significant shift in policy represents a clear and compelling signal that online learning is now part of Michigan's K-12 system.

Just 10 years ago, few people in the K-12 community used Internet-delivered education solutions as a strategy to support our elementary and secondary education systems. Most school leaders had never personally experienced a formal learning activity or course in a virtual environment. This lack of personal experience on the part of many educators made it difficult to introduce online learning as a legitimate education tool for the K-12 community.



In 1997, most if not all, colleges and universities in the U.S. were engaged in high-level strategic planning activities focused on harnessing the power of the Internet to expand and improve the delivery of educational services to students. Most have created entire degree programs that are delivered online. In short, there has been an explosion of online learning and this trend will continue to grow at a significant rate for the next decade.

As computers become more affordable, the penetration of home and school access to broadband Internet increases, and technology devices increasingly look and feel like televisions, radios, telephones and computers combined, opinions and attitudes about the use of the Internet as a viable education and training tool for K-12 students are growing more receptive.

Parents, too, play a key role in helping their children effectively harness the power of the Internet as a tool for research, communication and learning. Helping students build 21st century learning skills will serve them well as they pursue postsecondary education opportunities, as well as the world of work. To learn more about online education in the K-12 community visit the North American Council for Online Learning at http://www.nacol.org/docs/national_report.pdf to access a recent report titled "A National Primer on K-12 Online Learning."



Michigan steps up to the plate

The Michigan legislature and governor approved an online learning requirement (the first in the nation) for all Michigan students, as a part of the new Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) graduation standards.

These guidelines require that students:

- Take an online course
- Participate in an online experience
- Participate in online experiences incorporated into each of the required credit courses of the Michigan Merit Curriculum

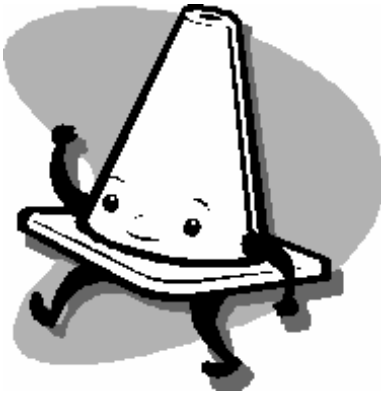
As this year's freshmen will be the first class required to meet the Michigan Merit graduation standards, school districts around the state have been developing plans to help students accomplish this task. To assist parents in assessing the progress their local district or school is making, here is a starter list of readiness questions.

- Does the school district have a formal written policy supporting and recognizing online learning, including recognition of credit for students from qualified providers?
- Is the technical infrastructure in place including student-level technology such as hardware (computers and internet connections) and software? Is there an adequate budget in place to support the technology?
- Is there a school philosophy that supports and encourages students enrolling in online courses?
- What is your school district's plan to meet the online learning graduation requirement? Will it be through allowing students to take online courses, completing an online experience or through incorporating online experiences into each of the required MMC courses?

If you'd like more information on the state's online learning experience guidelines, visit <http://www.michigan.gov/mde>

Safe Schools Week November 4 –10, 2007

Excerpted from www.safeschools.msu.edu



Safe Schools Week is November 4—10! Get your school involved! Schools, parents, students, and community members are urged to sign a safe schools pledge. Safe Schools pledges and registration forms are available at www.safeschools.msu.edu.

Michigan's Safe Schools provides a unique opportunity for students, schools and communities to focus on educational issues that directly affect the quality of Michigan's educational experience. Perhaps the most important strategy is to place school safety on the educational agenda. This agenda should address the quality of school climate (the overall psychological and physical atmosphere); involve students, parents and community in keeping schools safe; conduct regular school safety surveys; develop a school crisis plan in partnership with police, fire and emergency management; and practice the school crisis plan via drills or a table top exercise.

Safe Schools has compiled suggested activities for Safe Schools Week to get you started: Involving Community; Practice, Practice, Practice; Develop/Support Student Leadership; Emphasize a Safe Physical Environment; and Emphasize the Importance of Continuing Efforts. For detailed descriptions, visit www.safeschools.msu.edu

Effective Crisis Planning

One way to make sure your students and teachers are safe is by having plans in place for when a crisis happens. Here are some tips to ensuring effective crisis planning:

- Crisis plans should be developed in partnership with other community groups, including law enforcement, fire safety officials, emergency medical services, as well as health and mental health professions. These individuals know what to do in an emergency and can be helpful in the development of a school safety plan. This also ensures that emergency responders understand how the district and schools will respond in a crisis
- Crisis plans should be tailored to meet individual school needs. A plan should not be one document, but a series of documents targeted to the various audiences
- Provide teachers and staff with ready access to the plan so they can understand its components and act on them, alleviating panic and anxiety
- Practice is essential for the successful implementation of crisis plans, allowing for evaluation of what works and what needs improving
- Crisis plans are living documents. They need to be reviewed and revised regularly. Documenting all actions during and after an event helps in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a plan



School Violence

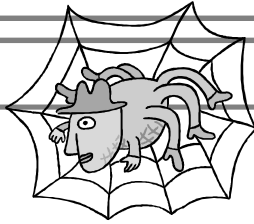
A key to helping deflect school violence is by communication. The School Violence Hotline will provide a means for students to anonymously report specific threats of imminent school violence or other suspicious or criminal conduct. The toll-free hotline, **1-800-815-TIPS**, will be operational 24-hours per day, 365-days a year, by the Michigan State Police Operations Center. You should understand that if there is any risk of immediate harm, you should call 911.



Use the hotline in the event you feel threatened, know of a possible act of violence, or have information regarding a weapon, but are unable to confide in a trusted adult, this hotline is an anonymous way to relay the information on to law enforcement and know that you did everything possible to protect yourself, other students, teachers, and administrators from possible violence.

It is not only necessary to keep schools safe in the event of a crisis, but also between students. Bystanders have the power to help stop bullying. Bullying may occur to a few students, but most students know about it. When bystanders don't help, the hurtful – even violent – behavior is reinforced. Student onlookers need to understand that they are responsible for their actions when they witness a bullying incident. In particular, bystanders should know they will face negative consequences if they decide to join a bully in taunting or teasing a victim, cheer the bully on, laugh at the bullying incident or otherwise take part in the bullying. **Doing nothing is really doing something – silence supports violence.** Share this concept with your students. We want to motivate bystanders to take action.

Officer E-Learning Courses



At a time when PTA budgets are tight and schedules are even tighter, e-learning is a solution for members looking to expand their skills cost-effectively and without the need to travel. This e-learning initiative is a step toward achieving PTA's goal of making all members informed advocates by 2020.

Log onto: http://www.pta.org/local_leader/elearning/index.asp to take the online courses listed below. Each course takes 30 minutes to an hour to complete and can be revisited repeatedly for more practice. Note: Usernames and passwords are on the back of membership cards.

PTA Basics – Discover the history and structure of PTA, as well as the programs and issues that the national network of PTA members undertake across the country to strengthen parent involvement in every school. (Course designed for emerging local leaders.)

Grant Writing – Does your PTA need more non-dues revenue to use in the school or community? Get familiar with the grant-writing process by taking a free introductory course on the basics of grant application.

Conflict Management – Learn the basic principles and techniques of conflict management by immersing yourself in a simulated real-life situation, guided by immediate feedback and expert advice.

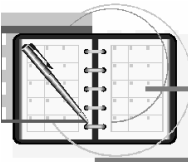
Planning and Goal Setting – Developed around a five-step process from Franklin Covey, this course contains printable tools and exercises for use in setting and reaching your goals.

Parliamentary Procedure – We have all attended a meeting where there were no objectives, people interrupted each other, conversation was dominated by arguing, and decisions weren't made fairly or in a timely manner (or at all!). Learn how rules of conduct positively effect the decisions a PTA makes while ensuring fair and orderly unit operations.

Running a Successful PTA Program – Outlines the steps for taking a program idea from concept to reality to meet the needs in your school. (Course designed for both emerging and current local PTA leaders.)

Effective Advocacy for Your Child – Organize around local issues and address them to benefit the needs of children and your community. (Course designed for emerging local leaders.)

Writing and Proposing PTA Resolutions – This course combines "stories from the field" with advice from members on researching and drafting resolutions and a checklist for writing and proposing resolutions.



Planning Your PTA Year – Disorganized volunteer projects lower enthusiasm and make people wonder why they tried to get involved in the first place. This course sets you up for a successful year, assisting your planning and goal setting.

Excerpted from the Local Unit Officers' Handbook.

Online Glossary

By MVU

Asynchronous Teaching and Learning:

Teaching and learning that is usually associated with online courses where a teacher and student do not interact in real-time.

Blended Learning: The combination of in-class learning activities and online learning activities.

Blog: Short for weblog, a personal online journal that is frequently updated and intended for public consumption and comment.

Online Career Planning Tools: Web-based tools that incorporate interest inventories, career exploration and portfolios (for example, the mydreamexplorer® career development system).

Discussion Board: Allows public communication between students and teachers.

Learning Management System (LMS): A password-protected, web-based software application that provides a teacher with a way to create and deliver content, monitor student progress and assess performance, and fosters student-teacher interaction.

Online Learning: Learning that utilizes online resources, technologies and communication tools in the building of knowledge and skills.

Online Research: Using online resources, such as search engines (e.g., Google™), databases and archives, to access documents and multimedia files.

Podcast: Audio or video files that are distributed over the Internet using RSS (see below) for playback on a portable media player.

RSS Feed (Really Simple Syndication): A way to easily distribute frequently updated content, such as a list of headlines, blogs, update notices and podcasts to a wide number of people.

Online Test Preparation Tools: Web-based practice test taking and feedback (MVS offers free access to the Michigan Merit Exam test-taking preparation tools, which includes the ACT).

Wiki: A website that allows people to freely create and edit web page content; e.g., Wikipedia, a web-based, free content encyclopedia.

Online Education is Rich With Opportunity

By Michigan Virtual University

Kristi Bush teaches online classes for Michigan Virtual School (MVS) and sometimes misses the face-to-face opportunity to engage students as she did in her former career as a high school English teacher. However she sees great benefits to online learning, including the reality that the future economy will involve working and communicating online. Now a K-12 media specialist in Shepherd, Kristi has also been an instructor with MVS for five years. MVS provides online courses to middle and high school students in home and school locations across Michigan.



“Kids often know how to download music or how to make their MySpace page look fantastic,” Kristi said. “But that’s not the same as communicating an idea, or applying the appropriate soft skills like using the right tone, using the right language, spelling and punctuation, for example.”

Parents and online teachers also need to help students appreciate the importance of guarding their personal safety, Kristi noted. “While online learning is focused on the content of the course, we’re at the same time teaching citizenship, much as we do in a traditional classroom,” she said. Kristi went on to say that online learning often includes a great many exciting features and “toys,” and young people are tempted to run and play with the toys, like the first day of kindergarten. “The Internet is full of toy boxes,” said Kristi. “We have to teach them that they have to accomplish some work before they can play.” She definitely sees online learning as the future. “Most people are going to consider some sort of postsecondary training, whether college or work training of some kind, and a great many will need to be lifelong learners to be successful,” she said.

“The online environment takes away some of the barriers people have faced before, like the difficulty of commuting, juggling work and school, finding time to go to classes, or finding childcare. With online learning, those barriers are erased, and people learn in a way that fits their individual lifestyle.”

“the sky really is the limit”

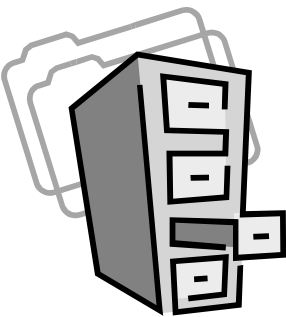
Parents need to realize that online learning creates more possibilities for their children. “It really is a level playing field,”

Kristi said. “Schools and parents look at individual educational development plans for a student, but often find a district can’t provide what the student needs. We tell kids the sky is the limit, but when we look up, we see the roof of our schools and what the district can provide. But in the online environment the sky really is the limit.”

“The primary differences that I’ve seen in the classroom between online students and traditional students is that online students often times are looking to meet a need that has not been met in the traditional classroom,” said Kristi. The online environment opens the possibilities.

Sales Tax Filing Requirements

Excerpted from the Local Unit Officers’ Handbook



Michigan sales tax filing frequencies are as follows:

- If your annual tax due is less than \$750 you would file annually
- If your annual tax due for the year is between \$750 and \$3600 you would file quarterly
- If your annual tax due for the year is over \$3600 you would file monthly

There is a provision for an exemption of nonprofit organizations that have total aggregate sales in a calendar year of less than \$5000. In this case, Michigan PTSA recommends that PTA/PTSAs simply remit sales tax regardless of total sales because:

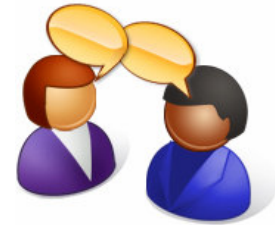
- The Department of Treasury requires that organizations qualifying for the exemption refund collected sales tax to every customer from whom it was collected
- Sales tax is the primary revenue stream for the School Aid Fund

If you have any questions, refer to the Michigan Department of Treasury at www.michigan.gov/treasury

Overview of Officer Duties

Excerpted from the Local Unit Officers' Handbook

Under well-established principles of nonprofit corporation law, a board member must meet certain standards of conduct and attention in carrying out his or her responsibilities to the organization. Several states have statutes adopting some variation of these duties, which would be used in court to determine whether a board member acted improperly. These standards, or fiduciary responsibilities, are usually described as the duty of care, the duty of obedience and the duty of loyalty.



Fiduciary Responsibility

As a member of an association's board, you are required to assure yourself and the association's membership that the organization is operating in compliance with all the rules, regulations, laws, ordinances, and statutes, which govern it. Those who serve on the board of a PTA/PTSA (or any other nonprofit organization) have responsibilities different from, but complimentary to, those of the board itself. The obligations of board service are considerable. They extend well beyond the basic expectations of attending meetings and participating in fundraising activities. When you become a board member, you are legally obligated to prudently and reasonably conduct yourself in such a manner as to preserve and protect the organization. If you, as a board member, fail to exercise prudent and reasonable caution and care, you leave yourself open to criticism from your peers, and even to potential personal liability for financial losses or mismanagement that occurs during your term as a member of the board.

Duty of Care

The duty of care describes the level of competence that is expected of a board member, and is commonly expressed as the duty of "care that an ordinarily prudent person would exercise in a like position and under similar circumstances." This means that a board member owes the duty to exercise reasonable care when he or she makes a decision as a steward of the organization.

Duty of Obedience

The duty of obedience requires board members to be faithful to the organization's mission. They are not permitted to act in a way that is inconsistent with the central goals of the organization. A basis for this rule lies in the public's trust that the organization will manage donated funds to fulfill the organization's mission.

Duty of Loyalty

The duty of loyalty is a standard of faithfulness; a board member must give undivided allegiance when making decisions affecting the organization. This means that a board member can never use information obtained as a member for personal gain, but must act in the best interests of the organization.

Fran Anderson Awarded (con't from back cover) By Martin Ackley, Michigan Department of Education



Left to Right: Kathleen Straus, Fran Anderson

Anderson's contributions to educational excellence and to positive community involvements are demonstrated by her actions, which include:

- Continuing service on the Michigan North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement
- Continuing service as President of the North Oakland Medical Centers Foundation
- Continuing service on the board of the Pontiac Oakland Symphony

Members of the Michigan for Public Education group enthusiastically nominated Anderson, not only because she has outstanding qualifications, but because she knew Dorothy Beardmore personally, and shared Beardmore's philosophy for educational excellence and inclusion.

Beardmore promoted educational reform throughout her tenure on the State Board of Education, beginning with formulating new teacher certification rules in 1985 that require focused, relevant professional development for teachers. She envisioned quality education for all students. She dedicated over 34 years of her life to achieving this vision, striving to identify and remove barriers to student achievement, setting high expectations for all; believing that every child is capable of learning and encouraging others to recognize that. Prior to her election to the State Board of Education, Mrs. Beardmore served eight years on the Rochester Board of Education (1967-75) and 10 years on the Board of Education of Oakland Schools (1974-84).

Fran Anderson Recognized

By Martin Ackley, Michigan Department of Education

The State Board of Education presented the Dorothy Beardmore Service To Education Award to long-time and revered statewide education advocate Francile (Fran) Anderson on August 14, 2007.

Anderson, of Waterford, is the former State President of the Michigan Parent Teacher Student Association; former Michigan educator; and for the past 12 years, has been the driving force behind the Michigan Public Education Task Force, now known as Michigan for Public Education.

"Fran is a knowledgeable, dedicated and informed citizen activist whose considerable energies have been focused on public education as a result of her experiences as an educator, a concerned mother, and a devoted grandmother," said State Board of Education President Kathleen N. Straus.

The Michigan Parent Teacher Student Association, which supported Anderson's nomination, stated that she was, and still is, the ultimate advocate for children. The Association holds her in such high regard that it has created the "Fran Anderson Michigan PTSA Scholarship" which was awarded for the first time this year.



Left to Right: Barb Blanchard, Ruth Schlucter, Debbie Squires, Fran Anderson

"Fran is well respected among parents and educators and is often called upon for her expertise on child-related issues," Straus said. "Her interest remains on children and the importance of their education. Even at 80 years of age, she keeps up with current trends and topics in education."

In accepting the Beardmore Award, Anderson told the State Board of Education: "This is a moment in my life which is a highlight I'll never forget. There is nothing more exciting to me than to be able to say to you, this award, is probably one of the greatest soaring moments of my life."

(story continued on page 11)

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