

A New Year's Challenge

By Jimmie Rodgers,
CSO Director



The academic year is nearly half complete; the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year holidays for 2005 are history. Whether we like it or not, history is the foundation for the future and the present is the laboratory where we use what we know (history) to develop new and better strategies and systems to guide and direct our society, whether micro or macro, (the future). This leads me to my topic of discussion. *"If you always do what you've always done, you're going to get what you've already got."* A year or so ago, I bought some stock. It was my first venture in to picking a stock. I chose a good blue chip that was underval-

ued. This stock has continued to decline in value, but I told myself this is a good stock, and I picked it, so it should start going up. I had an emotional tie to my choice. The price continued to decline until now it is worth about half of what I paid. Shame on me!

Are educational strategies, systems and methods in your school producing the results you want? Are the children in your schools' classrooms making acceptable academic progress? Are the students who are a year or more behind closing the gap? If the answer to any one of these questions is NO, what are you doing about it? Are you just continuing to do what you have always done, hoping things will change? If yes, shame on you! History is telling you that something isn't working. What is it? You have multiple resources for analysis of past performance, including antidotal information of past teachers, your own observations, MEAP data, Performance Series or other standardized assessment data, school improve-

ment teams and other colleagues with which to discuss perplexing short comings. You should be aware of online resources such as "Study Island," "Skills Connection," "Compass Learning," "GoMath.com," and other computer based study and practice materials.

You can be an advocate in your school for searching out best practices, based on sound research, and documented field experience. Read: "What Works in Schools," by Robert Marzano; The 90/90/90 schools: Chapter 19 of "Accountability in Action," by Douglass Reeves; "The Results Fieldbook," by Mike Schmoker; and "No Excuses," by Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom. You will find knowledge and wisdom in these writings and others like them that was not presented in your formal education classes. Being an expert in your content area is important, but it is not enough. You must be knowledgeable in current educational pedagogic methods that work.

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Special Points Of Interest

- State Board Approves New High School Curriculum
- Board Appreciation Month
- Marshall Students Explore Science
- School Improvement Corner

January is Board of Education Recognition Month

The State of Michigan has designated January as Board of Education Appreciation Month. It is our pleasure to publicly thank all the Board members of the FSU-authorized academies for their work, dedication, and commitment.

Allen Academy: James Blanks, Fr. Ronald DeHondt, Lawrence Jackson, Lillis James, Ivan Johnson

Benton Harbor: N. Jean Nesbitt, Glenda Bell, Reverend Walter Brown, Linda Fearnow, Betty Mason, Willie James Mitchell

Bridge Academy: Lisa McGuire Ahmed, Toyab Al-Bari, Ali Hasan, Muhammed Nasser, Ali Suleiman

Conner Creek Academy-East: Carmelita Bambrick, Amanda Allen, David Chegash, Sarah Stepnitz, James Cadariu, Deborah Frontiera

Creative Technollgies: Craig Vandenbos, Marcey Allington, Phyllis Knoch, Esther Dahlquist, Tom Witters, Rebecca Powell, Vivian Sosnowski

Francis Reh: Robert Kenny, Ed. Hall Jr., Stanley Krajkowski, Diane (Penny) Lichon, Sr. Maria Beckman, Margarette Stephens, Marsha Wilson

George Crockett: John King, Queen Dooley-Randall, Charles Reeves, Linda Daniels, William Kevin Smith

Hope of Detroit: Thomas Rys, Joe Gappy, Erin Irwin, Danielle Jackson, Roslyn Love, Franklin Fordum

Huron Academy: Richard LaBaere, Katherine Colombo, Jeffrey Duchene, Charles Sanchez, Robert Wheeler, James Perna

Joy Preparatory Academy: Francis Brockington, Diane Gresham, John Rivers, George Van Antwerp, Glen Thurman, Andrea DeShields-Jenkins

Marshall Academy: Erich Heidenreich, Michael Darling, Colleen Gadwood, Patti Cornwell, Susan Twiss, Christopher Busch

New Bedford Academy: Janice Swy, Wanda Winslow, Zelda Lucas, Paul Stoianowski, Jennifer Cherry

New City Academy: Marcus Burkholder, Michael Botke, Thomas Fitzsimons, Cynthia Primes-Heard, Calvin Tompkins, Yvette Hill-Green, Ivy Smith

Northridge Academy: Rose Murphy, Leenard Williams, Charles Winfrey, Hazel Miller, Pauline Pryor, Satis Brooks, Sybil Sharp

Pierre Toussaint Academy: Daryl Carson, Crystine Brantley, Dennis Nordmoe, James Chiles, Earleen McDaniel, Cassandra Hester

Voyageur Academy: Joseph Rush, Darryl Barnes, Judith Donnell, Mattie Ellis, Joe Hightower, Barbara Smith, Curtis Wade

THANK YOU For Your Service!

State Board Of Education Approves New High School Requirements

At its meeting on December 13, 2005, the State Board of Education unanimously approved increasing State high school graduation requirements for all Michigan students.

Michigan high school students will now be required to take four years of math and English language arts; as well as three years of science. Students will also be required to take three credits of social studies, two credits of world languages, and one credit each of health/physical education and visual and performing arts. Prior to the change, students were only required to take one semester of civics.

"This change is absolutely necessary," said State Board of Education President Kathleen A. Strauss. "With the evolving economy and global pres-

ures on what education and skills students will need for the jobs of today and tomorrow, we needed to act now."

Governor Jennifer Granholm, who has advocated for a rigorous mandated State curriculum, joined the Board in the afternoon and personally thanked the members for their leadership in this endeavor. The Board's recommendations mirrored those put forth by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flannigan in November.

The requirements include what is being called the Michigan Merit Curriculum that combines a core list of rigorous academic classes, along with a list of 21st Century Skill sets that will be integrated and taught in all courses.

The State Board also required that all high school students take the Michigan Merit Exam, or the alternate MI-Access Assessment for students with severe disabilities; and that all students complete at least one on-line credit or non-credit course or learning experience in order to graduate.

The Michigan Merit Curriculum will begin with the 2006 freshman class next year, and if any necessary legislation is passed and enacted by March 1, 2006. If legislation is not enacted by that time, the requirements would begin with the following freshman class. For more information on the new requirements, visit .





Spotlight On Academies



Marshall Science Students Study Insulation

In November, students at Marshall Academy undertook a study of the principles of insulation as part of a science energy unit. Students in Kathy Tarkiewicz's 5th grade class took the challenge of designing insulation that would protect a raw egg from breaking when dropped from various heights. "We had done various experiments with insulation," said Ms. Tarkiewicz, "and each student



had to use their own imagination to design and build their insulation for the egg drop." Students used a variety of materials including bubble wrap, cotton balls, Styrofoam, and even Nerf Balls.

Each student's design was dropped from gradually increasing heights. Six students had eggs that survived a fall of over 20 feet when Headmaster Larry Longwell dropped them from a storage balcony in the gymnasium. Students were surprised at the designs that failed and some of those that succeeded in pro-

tecting the egg.

"This is definitely the high point of our unit on insulation," said Tarkiewicz. In addition to information learned about insulation, students learned about energy transfer and basic principals of engineering design and packaging.



A new Feature Makes Its Debut This Month . . .

It is our pleasure to introduce a new monthly feature in the CSO newsletter, called **School Improvement Corner**, by Suzanne Finney, the CSO Academic Assessment Specialist. Suzanne spends a great deal of time researching the literature on issues of academic performance, assessment, and school improvement. Each month she will highlight a particular article or area of interest and provide information on where to go to find out more about the topic. We hope you will find this resource valuable. For more info on a given article contact Suzanne at:

finneys@ferris.edu.



School Improvement Corner

By Suzanne Finney

At its December 2005 meeting the State Board of Education approved the current version of Michigan School Improvement Framework. Pages 15-18 of the document list the supporting research, which is most impressive. In future newsletters I will be sharing highlights from this research. The Education Yes! School Performance Indicators, the self-evaluation segment of the Michigan School Report Card, will reflect the framework's 26 benchmarks that are organized in the following five strands:

1. Teaching for Learning
2. Leadership
3. Personnel & Professional Learning
4. School & Community Relations
5. Data & Information Management

The question remains, "Will we choose to see this as just more paperwork to be done and spin the answers and documentation to give the best slant, or will we embrace the process with the goal of securing academic success for each and every student?"

The document may be accessed at:

<http://www.michigan.gov/mde>

Until next time . . .



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You have the knowledge and wisdom of history as a foundation. You are in the present and understand the urgency of changing what is not working, improving what works, and seeking, yet unknown, strategies and systems that may work. You and your colleagues are engineering the knowledge and values of future citizens of our communities, our states, our country, and, yes, even our world.

It is an awesome responsibility, and collectively we dare not fail.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jimmie Rodgers".

Save The Date!

The CSO will be moving its Summer Briefing to the Spring this year! The date will be April 27, 2006, at the Double-Tree Hotel in Dearborn. More info to follow!



FSU Mission

Ferris State University will be a national leader in providing opportunities for innovative teaching in career oriented, technological and professional education.