



When you hear of million, billion and trillion dollar deficits, it is hard to get your arms around what it means to us locally. If you are invested in the stock market, you may have lost part of your investment. You may have put off taking a trip, buying a new car and maybe even reduced the number of times you have eaten out lately.

The economic challenge this year may mean that our local schools cannot maintain what they have been doing. They may need to stop spending money on classroom supplies or reduce or eliminate field trips, unless funded through fundraisers or the PTO. Unfortunately, next year might be worse.

Even with potentially substantial federal assistance coming, schools in Michigan are likely to see less actual funding next year. Let's put the problem in perspective. The previous budget year was also challenging for Michigan. The legislature struggled with a structural deficit. To address the issue, they essentially agreed to increase taxes – temporarily. At the conclusion of the Engler administration, the state put in place a five year progression to reduce state income tax. Last year, the state increased income tax to the Engler pre reduction rate. The thing is that this income tax rate will expire in 2010 and the tax debate will take place again, with a different legislature. The bigger problem is that increasing the tax rate did not fix the structural problem with the system. The latest predictions are

that the state will be almost 1.5 billion dollars short to fund its activities in 2009-10 even with the higher tax rate in place.

All of this means that while fuel, heat, retirement and wage costs will likely increase even after efforts to contain these costs, our schools will have less total revenue to make these ends meet. The state school aid could drop in the neighborhood of \$155 per student in the coming year.

## School Funding Challenges

*What does this challenging economic period mean to our local schools?*

Locally we see schools reducing staffing levels through both layoff and attrition. We see changes in staff insurance, cutting back on operational expenses and taking steps to reduce costs - but it may not be enough for next year. Our economy is in the midst of a

downturn and drastic steps have been considered or taken.

In many ways it is time for dynamic action. It is in times like these that we get action in Education much like we did when Proposal A was passed. Ultimately, I think that the success with any structural adjustment will lie with local educators. And, the closer we can work together to improve what we are doing for students, the better our chances for long term success.

Please call Scott Crosby at (231) 876-2260 or email at [scrosby@wmisd.org](mailto:scrosby@wmisd.org) with thoughts or questions related to our services.

*Focus on the Future is a monthly publication of the WMISD. For additional copies, please contact Jennifer Gaffke at 231-876-2210.*

*Please contact any of our Staff if you have any questions.*  
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*Schools throughout the nation are charged with educating our students and tracking their academic progress. The State of Michigan administers an annual statewide test for third through eighth grade students called the Michigan Educational Assessment Plan (MEAP). During eleventh grade all Michigan high school students take the Michigan Merit Exam (MME).*

These tests cover the state standards and content expectations that outline what a student should know and be able to do by subject at the end of each grade.

### Why Does the State Test Students?

These tests provide a way to measure in the same way, at the same time, how all Michigan students and schools are doing on the same skills and information. The information can be used to help schools evaluate programs to see if they are having the desired effect on student learning. Parents also receive a report on their students test scores, providing detailed information on how your child scored in each of the tested areas. It is important to *remember that this is one snapshot of achievement* among many that can reveal a student’s overall ability. It is important for both teachers and parents to take into account other test, progress reports, class assignments, and class participation.

### Subject Area Tested

Grade Level	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Social Studies
3 <sup>rd</sup>	X	X	X		
4 <sup>th</sup>	X	X	X		
5 <sup>th</sup>	X	X	X	X	
6 <sup>th</sup>	X	X	X		X
7 <sup>th</sup>	X	X	X		
8 <sup>th</sup>	X	X	X	X	
9 <sup>th</sup>	X	X	X		X
11 <sup>th</sup>	X	X	X	X	X

## Understanding State Assessments

### Understanding MEAP Scores:

- All MEAP tests have four performance levels:
- Level 1 indicates that a student has “Exceeded Michigan Standards”
  - Level 2 indicates that a student has “Met Michigan Standards”
  - Level 3 indicates that a student has demonstrated Basic knowledge and skills
  - Level 4 indicates that a student has shown minimal success in meeting Michigan Standards

Reviewing the Student Report - Check for areas of strength and weakness on the report for parents and compare the results to other assessments of your child’s learning (remember this is just a snapshot of his or her performance)

If you have concerns, discuss them with your child’s teacher.

### Classroom Assessment Practices

Best practice assessments are focused on giving teachers a quick, but comprehensive assessments of a student’s performance. This is achieved through a balance of three types of assessment:

	Formative	Interim	Summative
Example	Homework, quizzes, writing assignments	End of chapter test, Semester Exam	MEAP, MME
How is this helpful?	This is continuous information on an individual student’s progress	Provides periodic data on where classes need additional work	Provides annual scores and comparable data (the number of students meeting standards)
When is it assessed?	Daily	Quarterly	Annually

## 4th Graders from Pine River Visit the CTC



Eighty fourth-grade students from Luther and Tustin Elementary Schools collaborated with the Building Trades program at the Wexford-Missaukee Career

Technical Center.

In December, CTC students **Jesse Farmer** (Cadillac) and **Scott Simerson** (Cadillac) met with the 4th grade students at their schools and presented a math lesson on fractions and their importance. Scott and Jesse also discussed how to use raw materials and showed them a finished birdfeeder.

Several weeks later, the Pine River Elementary students visited the CTC for a hands-on experience. The Building Trades students helped them use hammers, saws and glue to build birdfeeders. A Pine River student was overheard saying "this is the coolest school ever!" Every student left with a birdfeeder, seed and a better understanding of Career and Technical Education.



## Careers For Women A Non-Traditional Career Seminar

Wednesday, February 4, 2009 (9:00-2:30)  
Wexford-Missaukee Career Technical Center

The conference provides high school girls in the WMISD an opportunity to meet with professional women and discuss these exciting careers:

*Meteorologist, Veterinarian, Conservation Officer, Dentist, Audiologist, Photographer, Probation/Parole Officer, US Army Sergeant, CAD Technician, Information Technician, Community Bank President, and Michigan State Trooper*

For more information, please contact a high school counselor or Jennifer Gaffke at 231-876-2210.

## Students Help With Project Christmas

BPA (Business Professionals of America) were recognized with a Community Service Award from the organization for their tireless energy and enthusiasm to help make Project Christmas a success.





- Students may not be evaluated for special education eligibility until the parent (or someone working in that capacity) gives their written consent.
- Students may not be placed into special education without the written consent of the parent.



### Did You Know?

- Parents may revoke their consent for a special education placement.
- Parents have the right to provide the diagnostic team with their observations, insight, and copies of any medical or other information that they acquired on their own.
- The special education system is built on teams of people working together. The relationship of the parents and the school is very important to help students progress and succeed.

## Student Performance and Parental Involvement

### Spotlighting Parent Michelle Foster

An article from the Michigan Department of Education's website, *Parent Involvement – Get the Facts on Why It's Important!* states: "The most consistent predictors of children's academic achievement and social adjustment are parent expectations of the child's academic attainment and satisfaction with their child's education at school." From this research-based finding, it is easy to predict that Michelle Foster's children will be very successful!

When we take the perspective - from the same article - of the "three major factors of parental involvement in the education of their children:

1. Parents' beliefs about what is important, necessary and permissible for them to do with and on behalf of their children;
2. The extent to which parents believe that they can have a positive influence on their children's education; and
3. Parents' perceptions that their children and school want them to be involved," we begin to see parents as uniquely wonderful as their children.

Michelle is no exception to this adage. She is a very busy wife, step-mother of two girls, mother of one son, and works as an infant teacher at Joyful Hearts Learning Center. Michelle still prioritizes time in her busy schedule for her gracious, generous and highly-effective involvement in her children's education.

Michelle is not only the Wexford-Missaukee Intermediate School District's parent representative for the Northern Autism Network (NAN), but also the only parent representative in the region that attends all of the regional meetings - even when she has to arrange time off work, transportation and child care for her own children. Michelle also serves as the parent representative for the State-wide Autism Resources and Training (START) project. She is currently working with START representatives from across the state to develop a parent resource and training module. Locally, Michelle serves as the president of the WMISD Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders Parenting Group, which is developing emergent skills in awareness, training, advocacy, networking and support for parents of children with ASD.

Serving as a representative at regional, state and local levels, Michelle's hard work and dedication benefits all of our students. For more information on how you can get involved, please contact your child's teacher or follow the Michigan Department of Education website link: [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Final\\_Parent\\_Involvement\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_14732\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Final_Parent_Involvement_Fact_Sheet_14732_7.pdf)



Back row from Left to Right: **Derek Brock** (Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Pine River) , **Derek Shetenhelm** (Building Trades, Mesick), **Mike Anderson** (Computers and Electronics, Pine River), **R.J. Marine** (Power Sports and Equipment, Pine River), and **Jacob VanderVlucht** (Metal Fabrication, McBain)

Front row from Left to Right: **Jessica Abee** (Business Management Administration, Cadillac Adult Education), **Jeff Harnisch** (Machine Trades, Mesick), **Patrick LaRocque** (Electrical Occupations, Cadillac), **Amanda Marcotte** (Allied Health, Cadillac), and **Holly Smith** (Hospitality, Retailing, & Entrepreneurship, Manton)

Not Pictured: **Charles Cornelius** (Agriscience, Pine River) **Morgan O'Conner** (Cosmetology, Mesick)

## Outstanding CTC Students (1st Quarter)

Back row from Left to Right: **Kaleb Burkett** (Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Cadillac), **Justin Gernaat** (Metal Fabrication, McBain), **Andrew Cornelius** (Power Sports and Equipment, Pine River), **Shawn Barnes** (Allied Health, Mesick), **Daron Whittaker** (Building Trades, Mesick), and **Billy Newell** (Electrical Occupations, Pine River)

Front row from Left to Right: **Dustin Rossell** (Business Management Administration, Cadillac Adult Education), **Daniel Hosiet** (Computers & Electronics, Mesick), **Nicholle Mohler** (Agriscience, Manton), **Desiree Tower** (Cosmetology, Manton), **Betsi Garlets** (Hospitality, Retailing, & Entrepreneurship, Cadillac), and **Amos Martin** (Machine Trades, Mesick)



# FANTASTIC!

## CTC and the National Technical Honor Society

The Wexford-Missaukee Career Technical Center will be starting a Chapter of the National Technical Honor Society beginning 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of the 2008-09 SY.

To qualify, students must earn and maintain a B+ at the CTC and have no more than five absences per semester. Additionally, NTHS Students will be involved with community service projects to maintain good standing status with our NTHS chapter



## Help Your Child Learn at Home



*As your child's first teacher you have a key role. You can help your child prepare for school and life success. The quantity and quality of time you spend with your child matters. You can do some things to help your child be better prepared for school while having fun.*

**READ everyday** - Share your love of books with your child. Research shows there are benefits from reading to your child for 30 minutes a day. You can also build print awareness by pointing out the familiar signs, labels and other forms of print that surround children every day. Help children recognize the difference between pictures, letters and numbers.

**TALK, LISTEN and SING** - to help your child build language skills. Children expand their vocabulary by hearing you use bigger words. As you read, explain new words and ask your child what they think will happen next in the story. Listening to your child shows you care and value their thoughts while teaching them about conversation skills. Singing is a way to make language fun, introduces rhyme and rhythm, and helps lay the foundation for later reading success.

**WORDS** - Use as many words as possible to describe things in your child's world. The number of words your child knows relates to his/her later reading success. Don't use "baby talk." If your child makes mistakes in grammar, repeat the word correctly.

**RESPECT** - Be respectful with your child and others. Your child learns from watching you. Make sure your actions are ones you want your child to repeat.

**PLAY with your children** - Let them see you as a playful person. Children solve problems and learn new skills through play. Avoid the pressures to drill your child as a way of teaching numbers or letters but rather use everyday experiences as learning opportunities. Have your older preschooler help write grocery lists or letters to family and friends. Encourage your child to draw every

day. Have your child tell you about their drawing; as they get older they can label their pictures. Take your child into the community to play with others and learn about the world.

**HELP** - your child see herself/himself as a capable person - Help build self-esteem by pointing out all the things your child does "right." Help your child see how wonderful she/he is.

**MATH** - is learned by working with materials that are fun to use. Cooking is an opportunity to sort, measure and sequence using a written or picture recipe. Have your child figure out the answers to every day problems, such as how many napkins for the dinner table. As you are driving in the car count things you see out your window.

**SCIENCE** - is learned by helping your child explore the world around us. Take walks in the outdoors, stopping frequently to look at birds, insects and plants. Discuss what you see, encourage your child to ask questions.

**ASK for help** - If you are concerned about your child's development in any area, call 1-800-*Early On*. An experienced, caring person can connect you with your local area and determine if more supports are needed.

**ADVOCATE** - If you want to help assure that every child in our community will be healthy, happy and ready to succeed consider joining the local Great Start Parent Coalition by calling Mike Acosta or Liz Walker at 231.876.2265.

## WMISD Parent Advisory Committee

Ever since the state made education for Special Education students mandatory in 1973, each intermediate school district in the State of Michigan has been required to have a Parent Advisory Committee (PAC).



This is a committee of parents of Special Education eligible children who acts in an advisory capacity with WMISD administrators. Each local school district Board of Education nominates a parent to serve in this capacity, and the WMISD Board of Education appoints members of this committee. In addition, the WMISD Center Programs also have a representative. This group hears updates from the WMISD Administration, advises

the administrators, considers WMISD Special Education Plan amendments, makes suggestions for improvements, etc.

During the 2008-09 school year, the WMISD Special Education Plan will be re-written and reviewed to meet current Michigan Department of Education expectations. Last year, there was discussion about how parents new to the special education process could feel more supported and welcomed.



**Emily Booth** (Pine River, Business Management Administration) works in the ISD General Education Office

## CTC Co-op Students of the Month



**Ray Seaberg** (Manton, Metal Fabrication) works at Purity Cylinder Gas

## CTC Students Win Regional Competition

Career Technical Center students from the Hospitality, Retailing and Entrepreneurship program received medals at the DECA regional competition on January 7, 2009.



**Jessica Cieslak** (Cadillac) and **Kelsie Zubor** (Lake City) received medals in the role play portion of the Hospitality Services team competition. **Betsi Garlets**

(Cadillac) received an overall event finalist medal and a medal for receiving one of the top scores on the written test in the Restaurant and Food Service Management competition.



Be patient – show your child you care through your commitment and encouragement.

Become a regular at your local library where your child will have access to a variety of age appropriate reading material.



Continue reading together even after your child learns to read. Older children enjoy listening to others read.

Have conversations about what your child reads or what you read together. Ask questions and listen attentively to the answers.

Help your child see that reading is important. Set a good example for your child by reading books, magazines and newspapers.

## Tips for Helping Your Child Become Successful

Limit the amount of television your child watches so that more time can be spent reading.

Read from a variety of children’s books, including fairy tales, song books, poems, and informational books.

Read with your child every day.

*WMSD Mission Statement  
The mission of the Wexford-  
Missaukee Intermediate School  
District is to provide high quality  
educational and support services  
requested by its constituent local  
districts whereby each district can  
more effectively meet the educational  
needs of its students and citizens.*

**WMSD Board of Education**  
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