



DATE: February 17, 2011
CONTACT: Diane Bauman
248. 489. 3349

FOR RELEASE: Immediate

Superintendent reacts to Governor Snyder's budget plans for education released today

Farmington, Michigan--- The following is a statement released from Susan H. Zurvalec, Superintendent of Farmington Public Schools:

With the release of the Governor's budget today, there are a number of key issues to consider. **First, I applaud Governor Snyder's courage and willingness to open the budget dialogue with a willingness to challenge many assumptions that have been sacred.** There is no doubt that creative thought and intense dialogue is needed.

Even though we recognize the Governor and legislature have a huge challenge ahead in balancing the state's general fund budget, we strongly disagree with the low priority for education. Cutting funding for k-12 schools while, at the same time, raising payroll costs for retirement pensions is very short sighted. If we are to retain and attract talent and grow our business sector, then we need to invest in public education so that all of our young people are well prepared for college and the global companies we want to locate in Michigan.

While I do not agree with the priority he placed on funding for education, I do agree that a multi-year budget cycle for the state makes sense. It will allow for the necessary planning that has often been lacking. This proposed budget takes that first step in the dialogue that will shape Michigan's future.

Second, the Governor's focus on responsible budget planning for difficult times is consistent with the commitment of the Farmington Public Schools Board of Education and leadership team. Over the past several years, we have worked hard to be proactive on budget issues. Fiscal responsibility means that the district must not wait until the full brunt of the budget storm hits to engage. Data must be gathered and all financial options must be explored. One of these steps was made last year when we gathered community input regarding how the district should prioritize and consider options for budget constraint and reduction.

Third, Farmington Public Schools has a tradition of educational excellence that will be maintained. The proposed cuts and increased retirement costs amounts to a \$700 per pupil reduction or more than \$10 million for Farmington Public Schools. Because school districts have no ability to raise revenue locally or control spiraling retirement costs, we will consider all options and work vigorously to preserve our quality instructional programs for our students. We are committed to working together with our employees and community to find collaborative solutions whenever it is financially possible.

In partnership with our community, we will continue to ensure that the graduates of Farmington Public Schools continue to be prepared to compete in a global economy. Michigan is changing, the world is changing, but our students already have an advantage: Our district is global in its orientation with students and staff members that bring diverse gifts and backgrounds to stimulate learning and academic growth. We must not lose sight of our advantages in the midst of this storm.