



September 18, 2008

Educational forum gathers thoughts on drop-out rates

The public will have a chance to express their views on drop-out rates at a public hearing afternoon (Sept. 18) at the Wayne County RESA headquarters in Wayne.

The hearing is one of 10 statewide hearings that have been organized by the Michigan Association and education groups Michigan's Children, Michigan's Charter Schools, Promise, and Michigan Future, Inc.

With half of the school districts and two-thirds of public school academies in Wayne County dropout rates above the state average of 15 percent, the group says there is an urgent a network of successful programs that ensures that no students slip through the cracks. One dropout is too many.

That concept is the impetus for the hearings about the dropout crisis that began earlier this. Attended by students, parents and educators, as well as law enforcement, business, faith leaders, the hearings provide a venue for discussion about the variety of causes and for the dropout problem.

"We have to continue broad community conversations about this problem to better identify works and what doesn't in making sure students get a quality high school education," President Iris K. Salters. "And then we must work together in our communities to make it

Low dropout rates can mislead communities into thinking they don't have a problem. For Livonia Public Schools has six public high school programs that could have graduated as 1,551 students in 2007, according to data released in August by the Center for Educational Performance and Information. Those schools have a combined average dropout rate of 4.90 percent. While that low percentage may not raise too much concern, the problem is still for the approximately 76 students who did drop out from those schools.

"These students face a lifetime of economic and social problems," said Jack Kresnak, Michigan's Children. "They'll have trouble finding stable employment, affordable housing and accessible health care. They are more likely to commit a crime than their classmates who. And most critically, they are more likely to raise children who go on to not earn a diploma, the cycle."

The public is invited to participate in today's forum at the Wayne RESA headquarters at Born, east of Wayne Road in Wayne. Testimony will be recorded, transcribed and delivered Jennifer Granholm and the Legislature at the Dropout Prevention Leadership Summit on Oct. Lansing.

Testimony also can be given online at www.mea.org/dropouts.
