



Wednesday, December 10, 2008

Schools' spending posted online

Farmington is latest district to go public with its checkbook registers.

Shawn D. Lewis / The Detroit News

FARMINGTON -- Some Metro Detroit school districts are making it easier for the public to see how they're spending their money.

The Farmington Public Schools District is among the latest to publish its checkbook registers online. It's a response to a request from the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, a research and educational group that asked school districts statewide to be more transparent about where their money goes.

"The Farmington Public Schools is very proud of its record of sound financial management and prudent use of the taxpayers' resources," Superintendent Susan H. Zurvalec said Tuesday. "We are committed to transparency in all our financial transactions, and posting the check registry is just one example of how we do this."

The district's check registry is at www.farmington.k12.mi.us. It has been online since October. Registries of other districts are at www.showmichiganthemoney.org.

Posting check registers online is part of the Mackinac Center's ongoing "Show Michigan the Money" transparency project. Kenneth Braun, a policy analyst at the center, said taxpayers and parents have a right to know where the money is being spent.

"We began last spring by sending out a press release to the media asking every district to do it, and now we're approaching districts individually, beginning with Oakland County," Braun said.

"This week we sent out a request to every district in Macomb County asking them to do the same." Braun said the goal is to get every school district in Michigan to display their spending online.

The Waterford, Clawson, Bloomfield Hills and Oakland Intermediate school districts also have their registries online.

But not everybody is willing to be so transparent, and there are no consequences if they don't.

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