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## New Lothrop schools open checkbooks to public

## NEWS

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MIDLAND — Conventional public schools in New Lothrop and a charter school, the International Academy of Flint are posting their checkbook registers for the public to see, said Ken Braun, director of the Mackinac Center's "Show Michigan the Money" project. Braun has been encouraging legislators, municipalities and public school districts to regularly provide this data on their Web sites.

"This is an effort to share with our constituents all of the district's financial transactions so that we can communicate the volume of activity that the board undertakes on a weekly basis," said Benzie Superintendent Dave Micinski, whose district also participates.

The International Academy of Flint has long posted all disbursements on its Web site, according to its spokeswoman, Dr. Lorilyn Coggins.

DeWitt Superintendent Tina Templin believes the process is a positive one for both external and internal use.

"We believe in partnerships and alliances that benefit students and educational programs," she said. "These partnerships cannot mature in effectiveness unless there is authentic transparency in our operations and decision making. The online check register will likely lead to stronger relationships and build trust throughout our community. Internally, it promotes accountability — always a benefit!"

The Michigan Technical Academy, which serves about 1,200 students in Detroit and Redford, and the International Academy of Flint are two charter public schools posting spending online.

"[A]s a public charter school, all of our financial information is publicly available, [and] Michigan Technical Academy is committed to using technology to make such data easier to obtain," said MTA Superintendent Jeremy Gilliam. "[We] welcome review and comment from the public."

With these additions, there are now 54 public school districts — including half of the largest 20 districts — and two intermediate school districts in Michigan providing this information on the Internet. More than one in five public school students attend a district that has an online check register. Links to all school district checkbook registers are available at [www.showmichiganthemoney.org/9329](http://www.showmichiganthemoney.org/9329).

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