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ROMULUS: School district joins others in posting financial information online

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By Jackie Harrison-Martin

ROMULUS — The Romulus Community Schools is prepared to “show Michigan the money.”

The district has joined a growing list of local governments and school districts committed to a growing transparency trend to post its spending data online.

The Allen Park and Trenton school districts also are participating in the project.

Romulus Supt. Carl Weiss said he found out about the push by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy in Midland to post district expenditures about seven months ago. He said he decided to be proactive and start the online listing in his district.

“We prepare that information for every board meeting anyway,” he said. “We don’t keep those kinds of things secret. We’re as honest and forthright as we can be.”

Those interested in the district’s finances can visit www.romulus.net.

Weiss said from time to time, a resident will ask what a particular payment is for or why a particular company is being paid. If questioned, that information generally is explained at a Board of Education meeting.

Weiss said this project might help some residents see the financial activities of the district in a better light.

Ken Braun, director of the Mackinac Center’s “Show Michigan the Money” project, has been encouraging all 551 public school districts and every municipality in the state to regularly provide financial data on its Web sites.

There are 48 public school districts and one intermediate school district in the state providing this information on the Internet.

According to the center, nearly one in five public school students now attend a district that has an online check register.

“Romulus Community Schools believes that it is a fiscally responsible district, and being transparent only solidifies this belief,” said Sherri Papazoglou, the district’s director of business and operations.

“We have a very supportive community and feel that this project is a great way to show them that their kids come first when spending their resources.”

Romulus went on board with the project last month. Weiss said he really hasn’t had much feedback from residents about it, and didn’t anticipate he would.

He said the financial data is just something added to the wealth of information already put online for residents.

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