

Know Your Statistics

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

By: Michael M. Adamczyk, RSBA, CFO Assistant Superintendent, Business Services, Troy School District MSBO President

I came across an article on the Internet recently that originally appeared in USA Today on September 16, 2003. The title of the article was "U.S. tops the world in school spending but not test scores". The article pointed out that the U.S spends more public and private money on education than other major countries.

Funding and Privatization Concerns in the Public Schools

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

By: Cheryl S. Wald, CPA, CFO Supervisor, Financial Services, Howell Public Schools MSBO Board Member

As schools continue to struggle with balancing our budgets, the pressures of consolidation and collaboration push us to become creative to "reimagine" the educational system for K-12 students.

MSBO Update February 2010

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

By: David Martell, Executive Director, MSBO

[MSBO](#) 's Executive Director David Martell announces the winner of the February [MSBO](#) Annual Conference drawing; talks about MDE's Guidelines for Budget and Salary/Compensation Transparency Reporting and the Governor's state budget presentation to the Legislature scheduled for February 11.

Survey Reveals Key Transportation Policy Issues

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

By: By Tim Ammon, Management Partnership Services, Inc.

The 2009 Student Transportation Benchmarking survey has been released. The report details nine key performance metrics and summarizes results by region, ridership levels, and fleet size. Districts of all types responded to the survey, including rural, urban, large, small, district owned, and contracted operations.

Financial Strategies Questions and Answers

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

Following are the answers to a couple of questions [MSBO](#) Financial Strategies Conference participants asked during the questions and answers period portion of Office of Retirement Services (ORS) Director Phil Stoddard's presentation.

Hunger Doesn't Take A Summer Vacation

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is looking for community sponsors to run summer food programs to prevent more than 510,000 children in Michigan from going hungry when school lunchrooms close for the summer.

Is Your Data Current in the Educational Entity Master (EEM)

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

The Educational Entity Master (EEM) is a directory that contains entity codes and contact information for educational systems in the state of Michigan.

ASBO offers Special Membership—Preparing the next generation of school business officials

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

Happy 100 years! This year ASBO turns 100. For a century, school business officials have relied on ASBO International for the resources and knowledge to become more effective education leaders. In honor of this milestone, ASBO wants to start building for the next 100 years.

Mark Your Calendar

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

EPA Enacted Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule Requires Specialized Training

[1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [8](#) [9](#) ... [next](#) › [last](#) »

Know Your Statistics

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

By: Michael M. Adamczyk, RSBA, CFO Assistant Superintendent, Business Services, Troy School District MSBO President

I came across an article on the Internet recently that originally appeared in USA Today on September 16, 2003. The title of the article was "U.S. tops the world in school spending but not test scores". The article pointed out that the U.S. spends more public and private money on education than other major countries. The article went on to discuss the appropriate level of funding to achieve reform, in this case dealing with the federal No Child Left Behind legislation. But is the U.S. really the leading spender on primary and secondary education as the article states?

According to data released by the United Nations, between 2000 and 2002 the U.S. spent 5.7% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on education, which ranked 37th in the world and tied us with Estonia and Austria. Not first as the USA Today article would like everyone to believe. What country was number one in terms of percentage of GDP spent on education? - Cuba, at 19.7%. Some of the countries surpassing the U.S. were Yemen at 9.5%, Malaysia at 8.1% and Bolivia at 6.3. The average was 4.9%, so I am glad to say that at least we are spending above the average. So, it depends how one decides to look at data and what point you are trying to make. It sort of reminds me of writing a college term paper – you can find information and statistics to support just about any argument you care to make.

I decided to do some more research to see how Michigan fares against the other 49 states and the District of Columbia. According to the webpage [statemaster.com](#), which gets its statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics, between 1969 and 1989 Michigan's per pupil expenditure on K-12 education increased by 80%. Pretty impressive, I thought, until I discovered that for the same time period, Massachusetts increased its funding by 116.9% and Alaska by 112.8%. OK, but Michigan experienced some good economic times during part of that period (not the early 1980's), and we have been struggling through a recession for a good seven or eight years now, so how did education funding fare over a more recent period? Between 1994 and 2004, Michigan increased its K-12 per pupil expenditure by 13.4%. Only five states increased its spending by a lower percentage; Nevada at 12.9%, Oregon at 12.1%, Washington at 10.6%, Florida at 8.5%, and Alaska at 5.9%. Even with a meager 5.9% increase, Alaska spent \$11,551 per pupil in 2004 compared to \$9,947 for Michigan. What state was the leader? Vermont increased spending by 47.5% over this same time period and spent \$12,749 per pupil in 2004. Massachusetts increased spending by 34.7% and spent \$12,398 per pupil.

I then looked at teacher to student ratios, and Michigan ranked 45th at 18.1. Number one was Vermont once again at 11.3 and Massachusetts fared well again also, coming in number 12 at 13.6%. Near the bottom and ranking 46th was Nevada at 19.0 and number 47 Washington at 19.3 students per teacher. Could there be a correlation between spending increases on education and class size? Alaska by the way ranked number 22 at 14.7 students per teacher.

Next I looked at how our students did on 4th grade math and reading tests and 8th grade math and reading tests. Michigan students ranked 31st, 31st, 33rd, and 27th respectively in these four categories. Vermont students meanwhile ranked 5th, 2nd, 5th, and 3rd while Massachusetts's student ranked an impressive 1st, 1st, 1st, and 2nd. Vermont and Massachusetts had some of the highest per pupil expenditures amongst the states. The last statistic I looked at was Best Educated. According to the definition, it de-emphasizes spending for public education and instead measures states based on student achievement, positive outcomes, and personal attention from teachers. I would like to know how they measured personal attention from teachers. Vermont and Massachusetts scored high once again at 17.58 and 14.48, respectively while Michigan's was a negative 1.41. Washington was a negative 2.17, Florida a negative 4.41, and Nevada a negative 13.11. Is there a correlation between spending and student achievement? My very brief non comprehensive analysis would certainly seem to

point that way, and is counter to what a lot of others say.

As I stated previously, one can find and summarize statistics to support any argument they desire. I believe that this will be an important year for school funding, and we may see some major changes before the calendar year is done. Already proposals have been introduced in the legislature to limit administrative costs to no more than 28%, 5% pay reductions for all public employees, 20% employee premium co pays on health insurance, and probably a host of other ideas that will be coming out to help the state save money and deal with its non-ending budget deficits. Each one will have an affect on our budget. Our job as school business officials is to know our statistics. Know how the statistics are calculated. If our district rankings appear to be out of the norm, we need to figure out why. Is there a rational reason why? Are there efficiencies that maybe we are not taking advantage of? Our Superintendent, school board and community will want to know. The times ahead may be turbulent. We need to be the voice of calm, and know our statistics.

Funding and Privatization Concerns in the Public Schools

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

By: Cheryl S. Wald, CPA, CFO Supervisor, Financial Services, Howell Public Schools MSBO Board Member

As schools continue to struggle with balancing our budgets, the pressures of consolidation and collaboration push us to become creative to “reimagine” the educational system for K-12 students. In trying to keep cuts as far away from the classroom as possible, we have to continue to look at how our schools are staffed, how our programs are operating and justify each and every expense to make our schools lean. With the uncertainty of state funding and a current revenue structure that challenges us each year, until the system is changed to make funding for schools sustainable, schools will be forced to continue cutting programs and expenses. As we look forward, districts will likely see increasing costs; as the employee base upon which retirement expenses are calculated continues to shrink due to privatization, the challenges of benefit cost pressures, and the challenges of declining property tax bases and student enrollment.

As our state Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan said, “We’re looking at the new 3 R’s. The solution will be a mix of revenues, reforms, and reductions. We need all three.” I agree; we do need all three. However, it appears change won’t happen quick enough to prevent more schools from becoming deficit districts. As we have witnessed in many areas of State government, everything takes time and the schools are running out of time. We continue to do more with less, while we keep our overarching principal of providing quality education.

There are a number of high-powered groups pushing creative ideas and suggestions to work towards a sustainable solution. These include SOS, Save Our Students, Schools and State (a coalition promoting changes in how students are taught, and how schools are funded and operated) and the Practitioner’s Summit, (a coalition of public school officials throughout Michigan taking action to propose solutions).

These issues have a great impact on our schools. The playing field has changed and an emotionally charged atmosphere exists in many schools as we try to do what is right. Unfortunately, what is right is not always easy. While trying to be fair and evaluating what the “minimum” acceptable levels are, while still providing all the required/mandated education curriculum and resources, the uncertainties that surround all these changes are taking a toll on many of us. Staff feel unappreciated and performance can suffer, the work atmosphere can cause an arena of lack of trust and the relationships between the Boards of Education, administration, teachers, custodians, bus drivers, secretaries, etc. wears thin.

The big picture still puts schools in the position of deciding the haves and have nots when it comes to privatization. Privatization can take a number of different forms. It can be through a private company, through consolidation of services with an ISD or through the hiring back of a retired school employee through a third party. There can be tremendous cost savings to schools in privatization, and some employee groups have been subject to this trend more readily than others. But the reality is how far do schools go and at what cost? Currently, a number of schools have either privatized or looked into privatizing substitutes, transportation, custodial services and food service. As the looming cuts continue to pressure schools, there are no sacred cows. Privatization is being considered for many areas not considered before.

The identified cost savings may be great, but the peripheral costs may be greater. There is a balance, which cannot be measured by the bottom line. This is a difficult reality for many schools. Trying to find this balance and doing what is best for schools and students, puts forth significant challenges. Without question, these unprecedented challenges will require a “reimagination” of our K-12 educational system.

Survey Reveals Key Transportation Policy Issues

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

By: By Tim Ammon, Management Partnership Services, Inc.

The 2009 Student Transportation Benchmarking survey has been released. The report details nine key performance metrics and summarizes results by region, ridership levels, and fleet size. Districts of all types responded to the survey, including rural, urban, large, small, district owned, and contracted operations. A total of 114 districts responded, representing 30 percent of all buses across the state and 31 percent of the students transported. While large to very large fleets are underrepresented in the response, school districts should generally have little difficulty finding reasonable comparison groups to benchmark against.

The “average” district responding to the survey used 33 buses in a single bell system to transport slightly more than 2,000 students. One noteworthy finding is that average cost per rider has increased 15 percent and average per bus costs are up 24 percent over the 2007 survey. The comparative costs of regular and special needs transportation indicates that per rider costs for special needs students are nearly 10 times greater than regular education students.

Operations performance indicators provide some insight into the service costs and the relative differences in regions across the State. Of particular note is that more rural districts using single tier systems have relatively higher costs. While this result is not unexpected, it does challenge policy makers and administrators to develop service delivery options that can mitigate these issues.

Fleet maintenance indicators demonstrated that districts in the Upper Peninsula were using the largest percentage of buses over 13 years old, while districts in the thumb and surrounding areas were using the largest percentage of buses with more than 150,000 accumulated miles. These measures would seem to indicate that smaller, more rural districts will be increasingly challenged to find ways to fund the purchase of needed replacement vehicles. Funding replacement vehicles will be increasingly important as the number of buses and other vehicles supported by each technician continues to escalate. Survey results indicate that the average full time fleet maintenance technician is serving one more bus than in the 2007 survey. While this may not appear to be significant, it represents approximately 60 to 80 hours of additional maintenance time per year.

Two key transportation policy related issues emerged from the survey. The first was the lack of ride time guidelines that had been established in the survey group. Only 41 percent of respondents indicated that they had established a policy or operating procedure related to student ride times. Given the importance of time as both a cost control measure and a service indicator, this result was surprising. The second issue was the influence that the availability of routing software had on per rider costs. The results showed that districts using routing software transported more students on fewer buses at lower per rider costs.

As efforts are made to minimize the impact that budget cuts will have on classroom activities, transportation will remain a key area of concern. Evaluating alternative routing strategies, shared service initiatives, and other efficiency opportunities are likely to be of paramount concern. The 2009 Student Transportation Benchmarking Survey offers administrators, managers, and policy makers a significant source of data and insight into options to control or reduce costs.

Financial Strategies Questions and Answers

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

Following are the answers to a couple of questions [MSBO](#) Financial Strategies Conference participants asked during the questions and answers period portion of Office of Retirement Services (ORS) Director Phil Stoddard's presentation.

First, when is the employer payment due on the bi-weekly report for ACH/Electronic Payment?

When ACH goes into production late summer 2010, the payment will still be due on the 20th of the following month. The schools have been advised that in November 2010, they are all anticipated to have transitioned to pay cycle payment. With pay cycle payment, the schools will pay contributions the day after they pay their employees.

ORS published an article in the Retirement Times Newsletter dated May 2009 titled, "ORS Begins ACH/Electronic Payment Project." This article provides further details including a time line. The link to this newsletter on the ORS Employer Reporting website is: <http://www.state.mi.us/dmb/ors/emp/psru/EmployerNewsletter/May2009/May20...>

A second question referred to estimating a pension payment when using miAccount as it appears to automatically include an increase in wages. What happens if the wages are flat or reduced?

When a customer estimates a pension in miAccount, it automatically projects the amount of service credit that will be earned based on the retirement effective date the user entered. Users can reduce this projection themselves in the tool (e.g., if they work part-time) and the system will accept the new number. If a user wants to increase the projection, the system stops them because a member cannot earn more than 1 year of service credit in a year.

The system also defaults to a 0% annual wage increase (i.e., no raises until retirement). Users can change this in whole values from 1% through 10% and whatever rate they choose is applied to every year between today and the retirement date entered.

Hunger Doesn't Take A Summer Vacation

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is looking for community sponsors to run summer food programs to prevent more than 510,000 children in Michigan from going hungry when school lunchrooms close for the summer.

The Summer Food Service Program could fill the summer hunger gap for hundreds of thousands of children if more sponsors are signed up to run the food program. Last year, out of the over 510,000 low-income Michigan children who were eligible, only around 84,000 (16.5 percent) were able to eat free meals or snacks at approved summer food program sites in their neighborhoods.

In stressing the importance of sponsoring these crucial summer food programs for children, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan said: "Many families across Michigan are struggling, and we can't have children going hungry in the summer when programs like this are available. I am calling on schools, churches, and local government and civic organizations to step up and have a positive impact on the lives and health of children in their community by being a Summer Food Service Program sponsor."

Research shows a direct relationship between good nutrition and learning. The Summer Food Service Program is a key building block in Michigan communities to develop healthy, happy kids who are ready to learn.

"The need is there and the food is available," Flanagan said. "We just need more locations around the state to serve the children."

Sponsors receive federal payments for both the meals served to children and the administrative costs of serving the meals. New sponsors will receive free training and technical assistance from MDE.

The Summer Food Service Program serves nutritious meals to children up to age 18 living in low-income areas (where 50 percent or more of the students qualify for free or reduced price school meals). The program can operate in schools, public housing centers, playgrounds, camps, parks, and faith-based facilities.

Sponsors can be public school districts or nonprofit private schools; public or private nonprofit residential summer camps; local, county or state government agencies; colleges or universities; or private nonprofit organizations.

To sponsor the program this summer, organizations need to contact MDE by March 31, 2010.

Applications and sponsor information may be obtained from MDE's Grants Coordination and School Support office, Summer Food Service Program, 608 W. Allegan Street, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, Michigan 48909, 517-373-3347; or on the MDE Website at: www.michigan.gov/sfsp.

Is Your Data Current in the Educational Entity Master (EEM)

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

The Educational Entity Master (EEM) is a directory that contains entity codes and contact information for educational systems in the state of Michigan. Managed by the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI), EEM data exist for public schools, nonpublic schools, intermediate schools districts and institutions of higher education.

The EEM application replaced the School Code Master in October 2008 and serves as the repository used for identifying and linking educational entities with many other data collection applications in the state of Michigan. This is the only place that the state of Michigan stores contact information about the districts, public school academies and schools.

Commonly used information includes school/facility name, entity code, grade levels, educational settings, address and contact information. The EEM is the foundation for all of CEPI's data collections and is used by state of Michigan departments to e-mail messages to school administrators and other contacts.

Each district and charter school has at least one authorized user of the EEM. This individual is assigned by the superintendent or school leader of each district. It is the responsibility of the EEM authorized user for each district to update the EEM data for the district's schools, facilities and unique education providers. Both the authorized user and the school superintendent or leader must sign a security agreement. Nonpublic schools are asked to assign authorized users as well. CEPI recommends EEM review and update at least three times a year and more often if changes occur. Accurate data recording in the EEM makes other data submission smoother for your district.

Is your data current in the EEM? To find out, go to www.michigan.gov/eem. In the EEM-Search box, type your district name or district entity code. You will get a list of entities associated in some way with your district. Click on the district name to go to the district record.

If you do not know the name of your authorized user, you may click on the box and send an e-mail message to this individual, asking if all records have been recently updated. The authorized user is not identified in the box, but if his/her user authentication is current in the EEM, the e-mail message should be delivered with no problem.

To identify your district EEM authorized user or to ask questions relative to the EEM or other CEPI data applications, please send an e-mail message to CEPI@michigan.gov or call 517-335-0505 and choose option 3.

ASBO offers Special Membership—Preparing the next generation of school business officials

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

Happy 100 years! This year ASBO turns 100. For a century, school business officials have relied on ASBO International for the resources and knowledge to become more effective education leaders. In honor of this milestone, ASBO wants to start building for the next 100 years. Celebrate ASBO's legacy by bringing in the next generation of school business leaders.

Special Membership for NEW Members ASBO is offering a **Special Introductory Centennial Membership** for only \$100. The strength of the ASBO community comes from you. The number-one cited benefit of membership is the network. Each time a new member joins, that network grows by adding new experiences and ideas to the collective knowledge.

Download the application: <http://asbointl.org/index.asp?bid=32568>

Mark Your Calendar

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Feb](#) • [2010](#)

EPA Enacted Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule Requires Specialized Training

[MSBO](#) is now offering training that will certify workers in compliance with the recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) enacted Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting (RR&P) Rule. The rule has lead component identification obligations, tenant and parent notification requirements, and stringent work practice/cleanup and record keeping requirements. School districts should consider providing this training to at least one maintenance staff in order to ensure regulatory compliance in the event that in-house personnel need to disturb painted components within applicable spaces. The training will last for a period of five years before a refresher course is required.

There are currently **two workshops to choose from: March 22, 2010, April 19, 2010**. The classes will be held from 8 am to 5 pm at the [MSBO](#) office, 1001 Centennial Way, Lansing, MI. Registration fee: \$200. [Register Now](#).

AHERA Project Designer Training

[MSBO](#), Lansing; 8:00 AM-5:00 PM • Feb. 18, 2010

This is an annual refresher course for certification and licensing of asbestos abatement project designers. The program will update project designers on any changes made in the past year that would affect project design, i.e., new laws, new equipment, new methods, etc. Objectives include: personal protective items to be included in specifications; design of containment areas and safety systems; estimating of cost for a project and development of a budget; and how to properly prepare specifications for an abatement project.

Property Tax Basics

[MSBO](#) Office, Lansing; 8:45 AM-4:00 PM • February 22, 2010

Learn property tax basics, including a discussion of allowable millage rates, enabling laws, & how taxes are levied and collected. The presenter(s) will explain the various terms used in the levy process of school taxes, how the annual county settlement process works, and how it affects districts. The target audience is new business managers, business office support staff managing tax receipts, and board members.

AHERA Inspectors & Management Planners Training • February 25, 2010

[MSBO](#) Office, Lansing; 8:00 AM-5:00 PM

This one-day course is designed as an annual refresher course for persons who are accredited inspectors and management planners through an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved training program. The EPA requires reaccreditation of inspectors and management planners who perform work under the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). To maintain your status as an accredited inspector you must attend the annual half-day (4 hours) reaccreditation training, plus an additional half-day of training for the management planner reaccreditation.

AHERA Contractor/Supervisor Training

[MSBO](#) Office, Lansing; 8:00 AM-5:00 PM • March 4, 2010

This course is an annual refresher for persons who have taken an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved contractor/supervisor course. The course provides the required instructional update for those accredited contractors/supervisors who wish to maintain their accreditations. The course will include lectures, demonstrations, handouts, and discussion periods. Attendees will be required to provide a copy of their original training certificate to receive a reaccreditation certificate.