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## Review Team to Examine Highland Park Schools' Finances

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November 3, 2011

### Preliminary Review Found “Probable Financial Stress”

Governor Rick Snyder today appointed a financial review team to examine the Highland Park School District’s finances under Public Act 4 of 2011, the Local Government and School District Financial Accountability Act. Based on a recommendation from State Superintendent Mike Flanagan, Gov. Rick Snyder has asked the financial review team to report its findings within 30 days.

Appointing a review team is the next step in the process following a preliminary review of the school district’s finances by the Michigan Department of Education. The preliminary review resulted in a finding of “probable financial stress” as a result of several issues, among them; recurring fund deficits, a current deficit of more than 15-percent of the district’s general fund revenues, and material internal control weaknesses as noted by external auditors. The Department of Treasury’s Bureau of Local Government Services will provide administrative support to the review team.

“One of the overarching goals of Public Act 4 is to identify potential financial problems sooner,” said Gov. Snyder. “The State was able to get earlier, better and more relevant financial information than what might otherwise have been the case. I’m certain this team will conduct a thorough review as quickly as possible.”

Review team members are:

**Carol Wolenberg**, Deputy State Superintendent (State Superintendent’s designee)

Ms. Wolenberg has been the deputy superintendent for administration with the Michigan Department of Education since 1996. She oversees the department’s administrative and support functions, including budget, accounting, audit, state school aid, and school finance. Wolenberg also serves as MDE’s chief financial officer and emergency management coordinator. She earned a bachelor’s degree in education, an MBE from Central Michigan University and has done post-graduate work in curriculum and administration at Michigan State University.

**Tom Saxton**, Deputy State Treasurer (State Treasurer’s designee)

Mr. Saxton has been a deputy state treasurer since 2006. He currently oversees the State and Authority Finance Bureau. Prior to joining the Department of Treasury, Saxton worked at the Department of Management and Budget for more than 20 years, serving in various senior level positions that included responsibilities statewide for capital outlay financing, risk management, real estate, and facilities administration. He holds a bachelor’s degree in marketing and an MBA from Michigan State University.

**Doug Ringler**, Director, Office of Internal Audit Services in the Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DTMB Director’s designee)

Mr. Ringler is the chief audit executive and director of DTMB’s Office of Internal Audit Services, where he’s served since 2008. He previously worked in the state’s Office of Financial Management and Office of Auditor General. Ringler received a bachelor’s degree in accounting from Ferris State University. He is a certified public accountant and certified internal auditor.

**Rob Bovitz**, Certified Public Accountant (nominee of the Speaker of the House of Representatives)

Mr. Bovitz is president of Bovitz CPA, P.C., in Trenton, a position he has held since 1983. Bovitz previously worked for KPMG (Peat Marwick) from 1982-83, where he served as auditor for the City of Detroit. He also served as president of Trillium Academy Charter School in Taylor. Bovitz received a bachelor’s degree in accounting from the University of Detroit.

**Robert Charles**, Chairman/CEO of North Star Advisors, Bloomfield Hills, MI (nominee of Senate Majority Leader)

Mr. Charles founded North Star Advisors in 2003 to deliver a broad array of professional advisory services stemming from his expertise in corporate finance. He previously served as executive vice president of global consumer financial services

for Ford Motor Company, was a partner in CSC Index, and worked as senior consultant for Bain & Company. Charles has a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth and holds an MBA from the Harvard Graduate School of Business.

**Phil Pierce**, Pierce Monroe and Associates (representing persons with relevant professional experience)

Mr. Pierce, is the managing member of Pierce-Monroe, and was previously president of Phil Pierce & Company, a financial and information systems consulting business. He also worked as manager of Xerox Corporation's corporate audit and operational analysis division, manager of Plante & Moran, and as senior auditor at Arthur Anderson & Co. Pierce received a bachelor's degree in accounting from Wayne State University.

**David Martell**, Executive Director, Michigan School Business Officials Association (representing persons with relevant professional experience)

Mr. Martell has served as executive director of the Michigan School Business Officials since 2004. MSBO is a professional organization for school managers who work in the non-curricular aspects of a school district, primarily in the areas of finance, accounting, payroll, purchasing, facilities, technology and transportation. A licensed certified public accountant, he also served as director of finance for Haslett Public Schools from 1994-2004. Martell received a bachelor's degree in accounting from Michigan State University.

**John C. Clark**, Giarmarco, Mullins & Horton, P.C. (representing persons with relevant professional experience)

Mr. Clark is a partner at Giarmarco, Mullins & Horton, a Troy-based law firm where he has worked since 1995. He is experienced in labor and employment law and is certified by the American Arbitration Association. Clark has represented state-appointed emergency managers since 2000 and has expertise in the Local Government and School Districts Fiscal Responsibility Act. He received a bachelor's degree from Michigan State University and a law degree from the University of Detroit Law School.

**Brom Stibitz**, Senior Policy Advisor in Department of Treasury (representing state officials with relevant professional experience)

Before his senior policy advisory role, Stibitz worked as legislative director for House Speaker Andy Dillon and as appropriations coordinator and policy analyst for the House of Representatives. He received his bachelor's degree in biology from Kalamazoo College and his MPA in state and local government from Northern Michigan University.

**Frederick Headen**, Director of the Michigan Department of Treasury's Local Government Services Bureau (representing state officials with relevant professional experience).

Headen has served with the Local Government Services Bureau position since 1997. Before that, he served as acting chair of the State Tax Commission and worked as legal counsel for the Citizens Research Council. Headen received a bachelor's degree in political philosophy and a master's degree in labor and industrial relations both from Michigan State University, and a law degree from Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing. This will be his 12th review team (five appointments by Gov. Engler, five by Gov. Granholm, and two by Gov. Snyder).

Under PA 4, a financial review team must reach one of three potential findings: no or mild financial stress exists in the unit of local government; severe financial stress exists in the unit of local government; or, a financial emergency exists in the unit of local government.

For more information about PA 4, visit the Local Government Fiscal Health page on the Department of Treasury's website at [www.michigan.gov/treasury](http://www.michigan.gov/treasury).