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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
LANSING



THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR.  
SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

September 10, 2002

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** State Board of Education

**FROM:** Sharon A. Wise, Chair of the Ensuring Early Childhood Literacy Task Force

**SUBJECT:** Adoption of Policies on Ensuring Early Childhood Literacy

The Task Force on Ensuring Early Childhood Literacy presented its report at the August 8, 2002, State Board of Education meeting. Included in the report were policy recommendations for the Board's consideration.

The attached document titled "Policies on Ensuring Early Childhood Literacy" has been developed based on the recommendations included in the report.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education adopt the Policies on Ensuring Early Childhood Literacy, as attached to the memorandum dated September 10, 2002, from Sharon A. Wise, Chair of the Ensuring Early Childhood Literacy Task Force.

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MICHIGAN  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

POLICIES ON  
ENSURING EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY

PUBLIC AWARENESS

It is the policy of the State Board of Education that Michigan students achieve early literacy by promoting public awareness to inform citizens to become dedicated to early literacy.

*Early Literacy Education Recommendations:*

- a) Direct the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to encourage and support intermediate school district (ISD) and local education agency (LEA) efforts to promote public and parent awareness of the importance of parents as their children's first teachers, and the critical role parents and adults share in fostering a child's early literacy.
- b) Approve a recommendation to the Legislature from the State Board of Education to restore funding for the Read, Educate, And Develop Youth (R.E.A.D.Y.) program to provide kits containing important child development information, learning activities and other engaging materials to all Michigan families with young children.
- c) Direct the Superintendent of Public Instruction to meet with various agency directors to identify actions to increase early childhood parent information efforts during pre-natal, immunization and pediatrician visits.
- d) Direct the MDE to continue involvement and support for early childhood public awareness that promotes the importance of early literacy.
- e) Direct the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop a list of recommended educational priorities for corporate and community foundations.
- f) Direct the MDE to seek corporate and foundation funding for Department early literacy public awareness and professional development efforts.

*Research and Knowledge Development Recommendations:*

- a) Direct the MDE to update early childhood education standards and develop pre-kindergarten literacy benchmarks.
- b) Direct the Superintendent of Public Instruction to promote awareness of ISDs, LEAs, educators, administrators, decision makers and teaching colleges regarding research-based information on early childhood development and evidence-based practices for early childhood literacy acquisition.

- c) Direct the MDE to commission a longitudinal research study to determine the level of literacy development of Michigan children entering kindergarten.
- d) Direct the MDE to include a comprehensive multi-year evaluation component on student achievement, teacher behavior and program efficacy in all early childhood, literacy and other grant programs administered by the Department.

## COLLABORATIVE SYSTEMS

It is the policy of the State Board of Education that Michigan students achieve early literacy by promoting early literacy and fostering collaborative partnerships that optimize the growth and development of Michigan's children.

### *Service Agencies, Medical and Community Collaboration Recommendations:*

- a) Direct the MDE to encourage Multi-Purpose Collaborative Bodies to form or continue workgroups comprised of all major stakeholders including local human service and interagency representatives to encourage unified and coordinated services and programs to support the growth and development of children birth to age eight.
- b) Direct the MDE to recommend local school leaders work with community human service agencies, including public libraries, to provide parents with information on available programs and services to help their children succeed.
- c) Direct the Superintendent of Public Instruction to encourage ISDs to:
  - Promote community awareness of early learning programs;
  - Collaborate with hospitals and medical associations to provide free early learning materials through ISDs, the State and the U.S. Department of Education to families with young children; and
  - Build partnerships with local libraries, including the Library of Michigan, to encourage use of the library to promote reading readiness and early literacy and to develop children's and family programs that support acquisition of early reading skills.
- d) Direct the Superintendent of Public Instruction to continue strong support and involvement with the Ready to Succeed Partnership.

### *School/Child Care/Parent Partnerships Recommendations:*

- a) Direct the Superintendent of Public Instruction to strengthen partnerships among early childhood education programs, providers of early childhood care and education, and parents.

- b) Direct the Superintendent of Public Instruction to encourage ISDs and LEAs to develop and support programs and efforts to strengthen the relationship between elementary schools and parents of children birth to age five.
- c) Direct the MDE to develop tools to assist schools in creating and supporting partnerships between elementary schools and parents of children birth to age five.

### COMPREHENSIVE EARLY LITERACY SERVICES

While Michigan hosts a variety of early childhood and literacy programs, very few provide young children long-term, consistent, seamless services to ensure reading success. Instead, most programs vary significantly in size, scope and mission creating fragmentation and gaps in services.

It is the policy of the State Board of Education that Michigan students achieve early literacy by ensuring that Michigan's children will receive seamless, high-quality early literacy experiences.

#### *Early Childhood Experiences for All Children Birth Through Kindergarten Recommendations:*

- a) Approve a recommendation to the Legislature from the State Board of Education to restore and increase All Students Achieve Program-Parent Involvement and Education (ASAP-PIE) funding to serve all Michigan children on a formula versus competitive grant basis.
- b) Direct the Superintendent of Public Instruction to encourage ISDs and LEAs to continue and expand high-quality, evidence-based, early education programs.

#### *Early Childhood Literacy Experiences for Children Birth to Kindergarten At-Risk of Reading Failure Recommendations:*

- a) Approve a recommendation to the Legislature from the State Board of Education to increase funding for the Michigan School Readiness Program to provide access to the program for all three- and four-year-old children at-risk of school failure or reading failure.
- b) Approve a recommendation to the Legislature from the State Board of Education to fund full-day, full-year, high-quality early education programs for at-risk young children.

***Early Elementary (K-3) Literacy Experiences for Children At-Risk of Reading Failure Recommendations:***

- a) Approve a recommendation to the Legislature from the State Board of Education to provide funding for in-school and out-of-school, evidence-based, early reading intervention programs.
- b) Direct the MDE to form a task force of school library media specialists, in coordination with the Library of Michigan, to draft recommendations on how to enhance literacy experiences in schools for children at-risk of reading failure.

***Extended Learning Opportunities for At-Risk Children Recommendations:***

- a) Direct the Superintendent of Public Instruction to encourage ISDs and LEAs to partner with mental health programs such as, but not exclusive to, infant mental health and Preschool Expulsion Prevention Projects.
- b) Direct the Superintendent of Public Instruction to encourage ISDs and LEAs to partner with libraries and local cultural arts programs.

**TEACHER PREPARATION/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

It is the policy of the State Board of Education that early literacy opportunities for Michigan children will be provided by knowledgeable and capable individuals providing high-quality early literacy experiences.

***Early Education and Care Provider Training/Professional Development Recommendations:***

- a) Direct the Superintendent of Public Instruction to convene a meeting with appropriate agency directors to recommend methods to increase training and early childhood development in literacy for all providers of early childhood care and education.
- b) Approve a recommendation to the Legislature from the State Board of Education to provide funding to increase evidence-based professional development for all providers of early childhood care and education.

***Teacher Early Childhood Development and Literacy Recommendations:***

- a) Approve a recommendation to the Legislature from the State Board of Education to restore funding to support the Regional Literacy Training Centers' efforts to increase the number of teachers and administrators receiving professional development in early literacy development and acquisition.

- b) Direct the MDE to revise administrative rules to require all newly assigned kindergarten through second grade teachers to have early childhood (ZA) endorsements within two years of their assignment by September 1, 2005.
- c) Direct the MDE to make early literacy and early childhood development part of the continuing education certification process for all kindergarten through second grade teachers.
- d) Direct the MDE to encourage ISDs and LEAs to deliver evidence-based teacher professional development to ensure that all teachers have the skills and time they need to assess, identify, and overcome literacy barriers facing their students.

***Teacher Preparation/PreK-12 University Partnerships Recommendations:***

- a) Direct the MDE to revise the early childhood teacher certification test to ensure knowledge of literacy development and acquisition.
- b) Direct the Superintendent of Public Instruction to work with teacher preparation institutions to ensure student teachers seeking an early childhood (ZA) endorsement are placed with experienced teachers with that endorsement.