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November 28, 2005

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** State Board of Education

**FROM:** Mike Flanagan 

**SUBJECT:** Presentation on Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative (MiBLSi) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

In 2002, the State Board of Education approved criteria for a grant to support statewide personnel development in positive behavior support and effective intervention for early learning success. This grant was designed to meet Goals for Special Education as adopted by the Board in 1998, the State Board of Education Policy Framework for Special Education as adopted in 1999, and to address the Board's current Strategic Goal. The focus of this initiative is to reduce unnecessary referrals to special education by promoting early learning success and to help close the achievement gap for students with disabilities.

The grant was awarded to a consortium of Intermediate School Districts (Macomb ISD, Ottawa ISD, and Kalamazoo RESA). It is based upon effective practices in early literacy and positive behavior support as documented through federally-funded research. The initiative is aligned with Reading First and builds upon evidence based practices established in the research literature including the National Research Council and the National Reading Panel report. The Michigan Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative (MiBLSi) also receives ongoing support and consultation from national experts.

Currently 53 elementary schools are participating and documenting improved student performance in reading, reductions in office disciplinary referrals, and reductions in referrals to special education. A third cohort of schools are currently being selected through an application process.

The initiative is designed to:

- bring expertise to the school administration and staff;
- provide assistance over a period of time to assure expertise is embedded across administration and staff;
- implement web-based systems of student progress monitoring and documentation of outcomes.

Key features of the model include: schoolwide application; tiered intervention; student progress monitoring; and ongoing support for staff development in the application of research-based practices. The Attachment provides a more detailed overview of MiBLSi

This initiative is presented to the State Board of Education as a model of research-based practices that support improved student achievement in Michigan schools.

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## **Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative (MiBLSi)**

### **Background**

Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative (MiBLSi) is funded under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) through a grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Education. Criteria for the grant were approved by the State Board of Education (Board) in 2002 and were based on achieving Goals for Special Education, adopted by the Board in 1998. In addition, the criteria were developed to align with the Policy Framework for Special Education, adopted by the Board in 1999, and to support achievement of the Board's Strategic Goal.

The grant was awarded to a consortium of Intermediate School Districts that includes Kalamazoo RESA, Macomb ISD, and Ottawa ISD. The purpose and framework of the initiative were developed by the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services based on proven effective practices and research literature. The ongoing design and implementation of the grant are a collaborative undertaking among the consortium and the staff of the Department.

### **Goal and Focus**

The overall goal of MiBLSi is to develop support systems and sustained implementation of a data driven outcomes model in elementary schools to help students become better readers with social skills necessary for success. This includes all students, including those with disabilities.

The focus of the grant is to create a statewide system of ongoing support and local district and building capacity to sustain improved outcomes for students. In addition, the model is designed to support "going to scale" statewide.

### **Research Base and Alignment with NCLB and IDEA**

MiBLSi is aligned with national initiatives such as Reading First and requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB); it builds upon evidence based practices firmly established in the research literature including the National Research Council and the National Reading Panel report. Ongoing support and consultation are provided from national experts who are currently recognized for their research and implementation of such practices in the areas of Positive Behavior Support and Scientifically Based Reading Research. In addition, the tiered intervention model aligns with the Response-to-Intervention (RTI) requirement in the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004).

### **Structure**

The structure of MiBLSi includes a state leadership team that oversees the implementation of the grant, three co-directors from the ISD Consortium who administer the initiative, state trainers who provide professional development to school based teams, and local coaches who provide ongoing support to the school teams. Schools complete a readiness application to participate in the project and make a commitment to work with the initiative for three years.

### Model and Critical Features

A three-tiered model of intervention is used as the framework for MiBLSi. The first level addresses the needs of all students in the building and is referred to as universal support. The secondary level or strategic support addresses students with moderate risk, and the intervention is usually targeted toward a small group of students or a specific component skill that has been identified as needing additional development. The third level addresses the needs of student with the most intensive needs. This process impacts school wide systems which include school improvement as well as grade level and individual responses to intervention. The model considers the needs of each student in the building and targets appropriate interventions to assure successful academic and behavioral outcomes for all students.

Critical features of MiBLSi include:

- Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), a web-based student progress monitoring system for literacy
- School Wide Information Systems (SWIS), a web-based data system for tracking Office Discipline Referrals
- Ongoing professional development and technical assistance in both early literacy and positive behavior support
- Funding and implementation at the school building level

### Current Status and Outcomes

Twenty-two elementary schools began participation in the first cohort (2003-04); a second cohort consisting of an additional 31 schools joined the initiative in 2004-05.

Each school team collects information on:

- behavior and reading support systems within the school;
- implementation measures on behavior and reading;
- student outcome measures in behavior and reading.

The teams use this information to evaluate program effectiveness and to develop intervention plans.

Outcomes evidenced both in the research literature and in the Michigan schools participating in MiBLSi include:

- improved results in student performance on the MEAP;
- improved results for Building AYP status;
- reductions in office discipline referrals;
- improved behavior and social skills for students;
- reductions in referrals to special education for academic failure and behavior problems.

This initiative is delivering on a promise to improve success for students and schools. It is aligned with the requirements and the intended outcomes of both NCLB and the IDEA.