2014 "At-A-Glance" Overview

MICHIGAN Department of Education

Beating the Odds Schools

What are Beating the Odds Schools?

"Beating the Odds" Schools are schools that given the things they cannot control, outperform schools in similar situations. The Michigan Department of Education developed two separate studies of schools Beating the Odds using considerably different methodologies. Both used student test scores on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), Michigan Merit Examination (MME), MI-Access, and MEAP-Access. The two studies are as follows:

- **Study 1:** Schools that perform better than expected based on risk factors.
- **Study 2:** Schools performing above their comparison group of the most demographically similar schools in the state.

Why are Beating the Odds Schools important?

It is important to recognize schools that are beating the odds for their academic accomplishments and also to learn from them about how to serve our students in ways that maximize their possibilities for future success.

How are Beating the Odds Schools determined?

The first methodology identified schools performing above their predicted levels based on risk factors including economic disadvantage, minority students, students with disabilities, and English language learners. For each school, student test scores in each of the content areas of mathematics, reading, science, social studies, and writing were analyzed alongside risk factors to predict a school's rank on the Top-to-Bottom School Ranking and comparing it to how well the school actually ranked. Schools performing significantly better than expected were identified as Beating the Odds Schools.

The second methodology identified schools performing above a comparison group of the most demographically similar schools in the state. For each school, a set of demographic variables (not under the control of the school) are gathered, including:

- Grade configuration
- Total enrollment
- State foundation allowance
- Percent economically disadvantaged
- Percent minority enrollment
- Percent students with disabilities
- Percent English language learners
- Whether the school has over 80% of its students reported as Students with Disabilities

Each school was compared to every other school in the state on these demographic variables to identify their 30 most demographically similar schools. Schools were grouped in by these variables and the performance of each school was analyzed within its group. Schools at the top of their group and performing significantly better than the comparison group were identified as Beating the Odds.

What happens once a Beating the Odds School is named?

Beating the Odds Schools are a type of "Reward School," named annually in fulfillment of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Schools are recognized for their achievements through a communication and by dissemination to local media.

Reward schools will have their promising practices highlighted at conferences such as the Michigan Department of Education's (MDE's) School Improvement Conference and other events including educator networks and professional organizations.

See the lists and detailed resources at:

www.mi.gov/beatingtheodds