



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

February 7, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: John C. Austin, President

SUBJECT: Approval of Michigan State Board of Education – Education Improvement and Reform Priorities – Recommendations to Governor Snyder and the Legislature

The attached revised *Michigan State Board of Education – Education Improvement and Reform Priorities – Recommendations to Governor Snyder and the Legislature* is being presented to the Board for approval.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the Michigan State Board of Education – Education Improvement and Reform Priorities – Recommendations to Governor Snyder and the Legislature, as attached to the President's memorandum of February 7, 2011.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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**Michigan State Board of Education
Education Improvement and Reform Priorities
Recommendations to Governor Snyder and the Legislature**

The State Board of Education believes Michigan's education system must be organized to incent and reward performance on educational outcomes, not educational inputs. We also reaffirm the vision and principles of Universal Education as the appropriate framework to achieve education excellence for all students.

The performance focus we must have is this:

- Students graduate from PreK-12 with the academic, critical thinking, and creative skills needed to enter post-secondary education without remediation
- Graduates successfully obtain post-secondary credentials that ensure they are well-equipped for success in life, work, starting a business
- All Michiganders engage in lifelong learning, and are well prepared for a life as active citizens in our democracy

This goal is consistent with the Governor's "dashboard" targets for education of:

- 3rd Grade reading proficiency
- Performance on the Michigan Merit Examination at a level to ensure college/career readiness
- Increase Michiganders with a postsecondary degree or credential

To realize these goals, the State Board of Education (SBE) and Michigan Department of Education (MDE) are currently making the following their priorities. We recommend the following reform and restructuring priorities for the P-20 system to the Governor and Legislature.

Priority 1. Reimagine the Pre-K-12 Educational System in Michigan

Provision of an excellent education starts in the home with engaged parents who expect a lot from their children, create conditions to foster learning at home, and are active in their children's schools. Nevertheless, there is much the school can and does control. Every school must organize itself to best support learning and educational performance. An education system restructured and organized to achieve performance includes the following actions and reforms.

High learning expectations for all students:

- Implement the Common Core College and Career Ready Standards
- Adopt the Common Core College and Career Ready Assessments developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

Align incentives to improve outcomes and performance:

- Every school is expected to help students make yearly progress, and graduate students without need of remediation in the first year of postsecondary education.

- Every student should be able to accelerate at his/her own pace, and realize early post-secondary learning opportunities (dual enrollment, early college, technical and career learning). Eliminate the current financial disincentives for these opportunities.
- Ensure districts wishing to incorporate distance or blended learning have access to the widest possible range of quality programs, including the ability to develop programs themselves with appropriate partners and quality evaluation by MDE or their designee.
- Every school should have an equitable base funding amount, a base foundation grant, along with a part of the foundation grant that rewards student growth and performance. Schools have flexibility to apply resources (towards professional development, small class size, technology, expanded learning opportunities) as they determine to deliver performance and outcomes.

Provide accountability – track and report student progress:

- Implement the revised Michigan School Accreditation and Accountability System (MI-SAAS); (SBE action at February meeting to revise MI-SAAS without AYP, but with other measures that support subgroup achievement level growth).
- With full participation by state institutions, implement a pre-K, K-12, and higher-education Statewide Longitudinal Data System that can track individual learner performance through post-secondary degrees and include K-12 student growth measures.

Change outcomes for students in lowest performing schools:

- Clearly identify and support successful interventions among lowest-performing schools. Support school turnaround by applying needed resources including school improvement grants to implement models that have demonstrated success.
- Ensure effective school choices are available to all parents and students, including encouraging local districts to charter their own schools, thereby fostering innovation and keeping resources.
- Engage in legislative review and revision of Public Act 72 to ensure clear academic and financial accountability. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of emergency financial managers and school elected governing bodies for schools in financial emergency.

Priority 2. Ensure Excellent Educators

Every body of research and education reform of the moment, including Race to the Top, confirms that the most significant contributor to improved educational outcomes is the quality of the teacher to effectively deliver content and inspire student learning. Evidence indicates that this is particularly true among under-achieving, low-income, and minority students. Michigan's SBE/MDE has increased rigor and made newly transparent and accountable the performance of teacher preparation institutions, and now advances a continuum of educational reforms to ensure excellent educators in every building and classroom. Priorities for the Governor and Legislature to embrace and advance while working with Michigan's teachers, administrators, and education stakeholders include:

Reform Michigan’s teacher preparation institutions: Reform programs and share models that focus on effective classroom teaching linked to increased student achievement including the pedagogy, clinical experience, and cultural competencies needed to support success for all Michigan students.

Revise Michigan’s teacher professional development requirements to include professional development for all administrators and teachers, and link professional development to education and skills that increase student learning instead of relying on the acquisition of a Master’s degree or the current continuing education requirements.

Change the Tenure Act to accommodate the following:

- Award tenure based on proficiency level rather than number of years of teaching
- Require ongoing demonstration of teacher proficiency based on multiple measures, including at least 40% based on student achievement growth
- Make sure all teachers are equitably evaluated annually by qualified administrators (as required by current law)
- Streamline the process to discharge ineffective teachers

Implement a 3-tier teacher certification system that includes enhanced new teacher mentoring, recognition, and opportunities for increased recognition and compensation based on demonstration of proficiency and earning of ‘master teacher’ credentials (such as National Board Certification).

Develop State guidelines for teacher compensation that reward quality teaching: a statewide professional salary and health care benefits schedule that supports attractive career ladders, recruits the “best and brightest” into teaching, retains the best teachers in classroom settings, rewards teaching in high-priority schools, and provides opportunities for master teachers to play mentoring and instructional leadership roles.

Implement administrator certification and training to ensure administrators are well prepared, routinely assessed, demonstrate ongoing proficiency (including at evaluating teachers), and are provided ongoing professional development for effective educational leadership.

Priority 3. Reforms, Restructuring and Revenues

The SBE restates our support for a *comprehensive Pre-K through higher education* funding and support system as articulated in our May 2010 report, *Recommendations to Better Support Michigan’s Education System: Reforms, Restructuring and Revenues* and welcomes the Governor’s call for a “pre-natal-to lifelong learning” education system.

Threshold elements of the P-20 system: The SBE restates our recommendation that the key threshold elements of the P-20 education system needed in Michigan to provide individual opportunity and economic success are:

- Universal preschool for all three- and four-year-olds
- Mandated (preferably all-day) kindergarten for all children

- K-12 State Aid at a funding level sufficient to provide quality instruction
- Post-secondary education financial support for all citizens to reach a new minimum threshold consistent with two years of postsecondary education or technical training (as defined by Lt. Governors Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth [2004],)
- Higher Education operational support for Michigan's universities and community colleges at a level consistent with peer states

Paying for the needed education system: To put in place the education services we need, we must make the most effective and efficient delivery of education services; maximizing the impact of every dollar invested. To achieve this needed level of investment, a combination of cost-saving reforms and changes to the way revenues are raised and spent is required. The State Board of Education strongly endorses a balanced approach.

The SBE recommends that we pay for the needed education system by:

- Finding efficiencies through school consolidation and shared services
- Rationalize and align the 80+ Michigan early childhood initiatives and budgets within an MDE-housed Agency of Early Childhood Education
- Changes to school legacy costs such as pension and health care systems
- Re-allocating budget priorities within state government
- Rationalization of school mental health services; explore with departments (mental health, education, human services, juvenile justice) potential redundancy, elimination, and a coordinated approach, potentially lowering administrative overhead and finding cost savings while providing better educational, health, and mental health outcomes
- And finally, and only if necessary, recommending additional State revenues to fund Michigan's schools