



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

BRIAN J. WHISTON
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 23, 2016

TO: Michigan State Board of Education

FROM: Brian J. Whiston, Chairman 

SUBJECT: Approval of the 2014-2015 Annual Legislative Report for School Improvement Plans

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has completed the annual review of School Improvement Plans (SIPs) as required by Section 380.1277 of the Michigan Revised School Code. The Office of Education Improvement and Innovation (OEII) collaborated with the Office of Evaluation, Strategic Research, and Accountability (OESRA) to draw random samples of schools statewide for the SIP review process. Each sample's demographic averages were compared to Michigan's public school population. Once the single most representative sample was identified and every sample tested had an equal proportion of schools from each district as did the population, OEII used the random sample of 150 schools in over 800 districts for its 2014-2015 SIP review process. The 2014-2015 random sample is representative of all public schools statewide.

This review of SIPs focused on the goals, objectives, strategies, and activities sections of the plan. As noted previously, this report is completed in compliance with Section 380.1277, which requires the State Board of Education to submit school improvement activities to the Senate and House Committees that have the responsibility for education legislation.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the 2014-2015 Annual Legislative Report for School Improvement Plans, as attached to the Superintendent's memorandum dated February 23, 2016, and submit the report to the Senate and House Committees on Education.

Attachment

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

JOHN C. AUSTIN – PRESIDENT • CASANDRA E. ULBRICH – VICE PRESIDENT
MICHELLE FECTEAU – SECRETARY • PAMELA PUGH – TREASURER
LUPE RAMOS-MONTIGNY – NASBE DELEGATE • KATHLEEN N. STRAUS
EILEEN LAPPIN WEISER • RICHARD ZEILE

608 WEST ALLEGAN STREET • P.O. BOX 30008 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909
www.michigan.gov/mde • 517-373-3324

February 2016

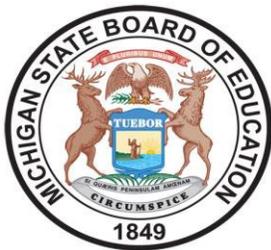
2014-2015 State Board of Education Report to the Legislature

School Improvement Plans

Office of Education Improvement and Innovation
School Improvement Support Unit

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. John C. Austin
Ms. Michelle Fecteau
Ms. Lupe Ramos-Montigny
Dr. Pamela Pugh
Mrs. Kathleen N. Straus
Dr. Casandra E. Ulbrich
Mrs. Eileen Lappin Weiser
Dr. Richard Zeile
Brian J. Whiston, Chairman, Ex. Officio
Gov. Rick Snyder, Ex. Officio



State Board of Education
Report to the Legislature
School Improvement Plans

Introduction

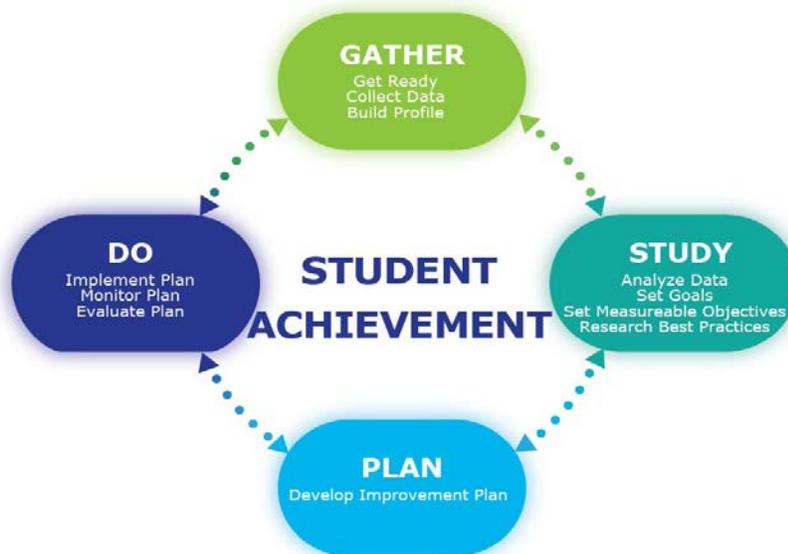
School Improvement Plans (SIPs) have been required in Michigan since 1990. Section 380.1277 of the Michigan Revised School Code requires all schools in the state to update and submit SIPs every year. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) collects SIP reports through the [AdvancED website](#) by the legislative mandated date of September 1st of every year.

Additionally, the State Board of Education is required, as stated in Section 380.1277 of the Michigan Revised School Code, to prepare and submit a report that reflects a sampling of schools' improvement activities across the state. Prior year reports have examined a sampling of all schools statewide or were exclusively focused on Priority Schools in order to understand at a high level how those different groups might approach the creation of their School Improvement Plans. This report looks at a sampling of Focus Schools statewide and summarizes 150 such schools' school improvement plans that were submitted by September 1, 2015, for implementation over the next three to five years.

Overview of Michigan's School Improvement Process

Michigan's school improvement process provides the foundation to address school improvement and promote student achievement as outlined in Section 380.1277 of the Michigan Revised School Code. Michigan advocates and supports a continuous and systemic approach to school improvement that focuses on the following main tasks:

1. Gather - Collect Data and Build a School Profile
2. Study - Analyze Data, Set Goals and Objectives
3. Plan - Develop an Improvement Plan
4. Do - Implement, Monitor, and Evaluate this Plan



During both Study and Plan components in the cycle, schools engage in goal development and planning. Goals and Plans are the sections of the SIP report that directly impact teaching and learning at the classroom level. Determining the degree of alignment with the criteria for strong Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Activities will provide information on the presence/absence of the elements of a planning process that is capable of guiding real change in schools – whether that change is rapid and transformational (as required for Priority Schools) or reflective and incremental (for mainstream Michigan schools). The results of the evaluations of these plans will help the MDE provide support in the school improvement planning process to all schools in the state.

Sampling and Review of Plans

The Office of Education Improvement and Innovation (OEII) collaborated with the Office of Evaluation, Strategic Research, and Accountability (OESRA) to draw random samples of 150 Focus schools statewide for the SIP review process. As noted previously, past reports have sampled all schools statewide regardless of identification status, or have looked exclusively at Priority Schools.

Focus schools are schools with the largest within-school gap in achievement between the top-scoring 30 percent and the bottom-scoring 30 percent of students in the school. During the 2014-2015 school year, 346 schools received the Focus school designation, which included the schools with previous Focus school designation during the 2012-2013 and the 2013-2014 school years. Of these 346 schools, 150 Focus schools were randomly selected for the review.

The OEII contracted with nineteen experienced reviewers with significant school improvement expertise, including persons with current or past employment as staff of school districts, intermediate school districts, the MDE, universities, and community colleges. The reviewers were provided with a one-day training on the use of a rubric that the MDE designed to align with the definitions of each component of the SIP process. Reviewers participated in guided practice exercises to ensure a common understanding of the criteria used to review plans. Reviewers then completed a sample plan independently to develop inter-rater agreement across the group. In addition to face-to-face training, reviewers were provided with a training manual to reference during the review process. Reviewers reported that it took from one to seven hours to complete each review, depending on the size of the school and the complexity and detail of the plan.

The rubric used by reviewers was developed based on the belief that without high quality goals and carefully chosen strategies, no amount of implementation or monitoring will produce improved results. Therefore, the reviewers used these four elements as a framework for examining plans: goals, measurable objectives, strategies, and activities. Measurable Objectives focused on subgroups and closing the achievement gap. Each element is described as follows:

1. **Goals** – There are two types of goals: organizational and academic. Academic goals focus on a content area based on a school’s achievement data. An example of such a goal would be: “All students will be proficient in math.” Organizational goals guide building-wide initiatives including structures, processes, culture/climate and/or procedures. An example of such a goal would be: “Staff will strengthen the use of formative/interim data to adjust instruction in our Professional Learning Community teams.”
2. **Measurable Objectives** – are used to plan what will happen, with whom, by when, and measured by what data. Good objectives are specific, measurable, attainable, results-bound, and time-bound. For example, good objectives for a math goal might be: “The percentage of students with disabilities achieving at least 85 percent on numbers and numeration items on the state assessment will increase from 48 percent to 80 percent by the end of the 2016-2017 school year.”
3. **Strategies** – describe what teachers do in the classroom with students in the presence of content for academic goals. Or, strategies can describe what staff will do to put into place a building-wide structure, process or procedure for organizational goals. Good strategies are research-based and describe observable teaching techniques, processes, and procedures. For example, a strategy chosen to achieve the math measurable objectives listed above might include the delivery of a lesson utilizing manipulatives that is aligned with state standards regarding numbers and numeration at all grade levels.
4. **Activities** – a list of action steps that describes what needs to be done so that instructional staff, support staff, administrators, or teams are ready to implement the strategy, have a plan for implementation of the strategy, and have a plan to monitor and evaluate the adult implementation of the strategy and the impact on student achievement. An activity associated with the mathematics manipulatives strategy could include a series of professional learning activities for teachers and administrators focused on mathematics pedagogy.

The data used for this review was submitted with the SIP along with the MDE Scorecard, which provided reviewers with information about academic achievement and achievement gaps. The summary of findings described below is organized around each of the four SIP elements: goals, measurable objectives, strategies, and activities.

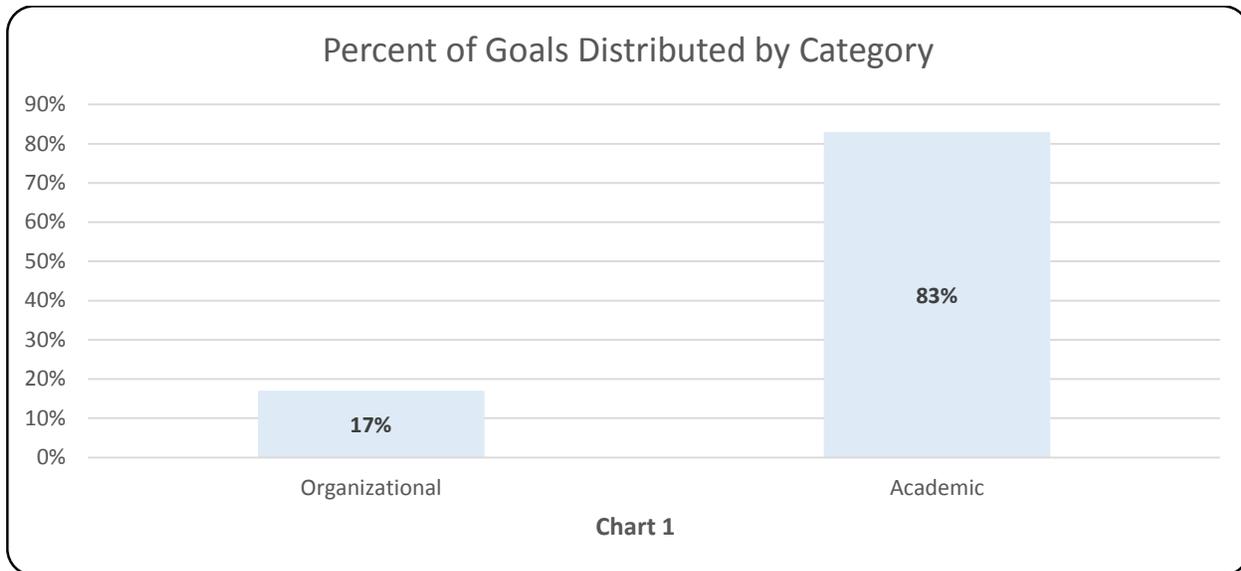
Summary of Findings

It is critical that students leaving Michigan high schools are prepared for careers and college without the need for content course remediation in college. Pursuant to that, the school improvement planning process begins with data analysis and developing goals, followed by setting measureable objectives, determining strategies and listing activities. The discussion of findings begins with a focus on goals.

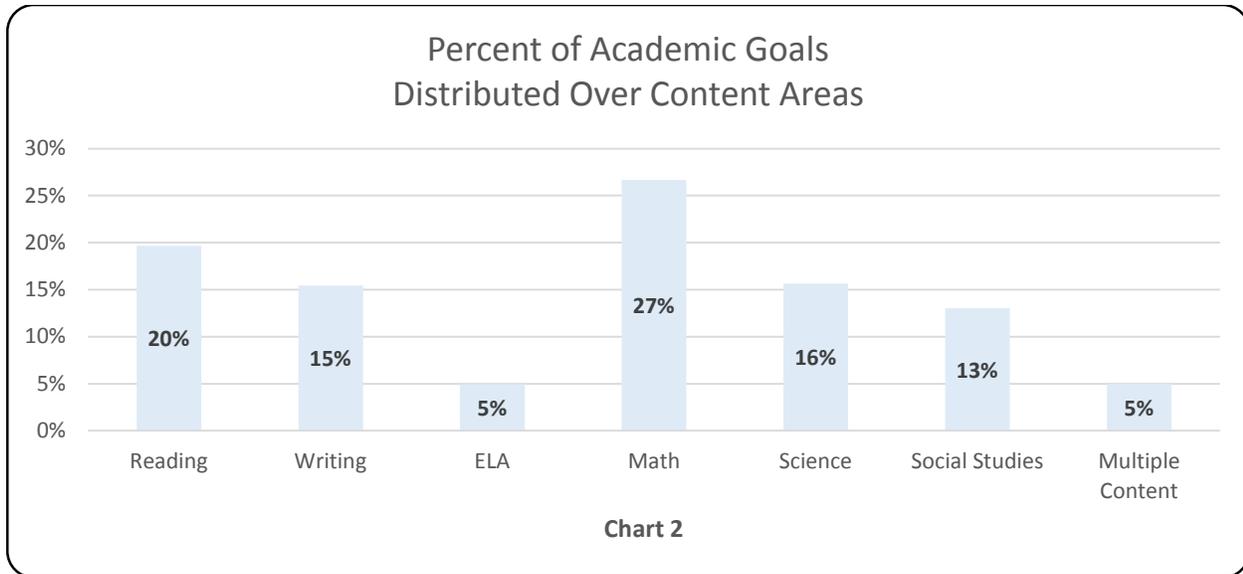
Goals

There are two types of goals: organizational and academic. Organizational goals describe building-wide structure, processes, climate/culture initiatives, or procedures that support student achievement. Academic goals are broad statements describing what students will be able to do in a content area.

As chart 1 below shows, 17 percent of goals written in the sampled SIP plans were designated as organizational and 83 percent were designated as academic. Compared to the 2013-14 school year, this marks an 8 percent increase in organizational goals and an 8 percent decrease in academic goals. This change reflects an increase in organizational goals possibly due to more district-level school improvement efforts and slightly fewer academic goals. Organizational goal topics represent a wide range of initiatives from culture and climate, technology integration, parent engagement and formative assessment development to name a few categories.



The largest percentage of academic goals were focused on English Language Arts (ELA) categories (reading, writing, and ELA categories combined) at 40 percent. In comparison to last year, there is a 3 percent decrease in ELA activities which, for the most part, stayed consistent. The next largest percentage of goals focused on mathematics at 27 percent, followed by science at 16 percent, down 1 percent. Chart 2 on the next page displays the percent of academic goals distributed over six content areas. Five percent of the goals were distributed over multiple content areas.



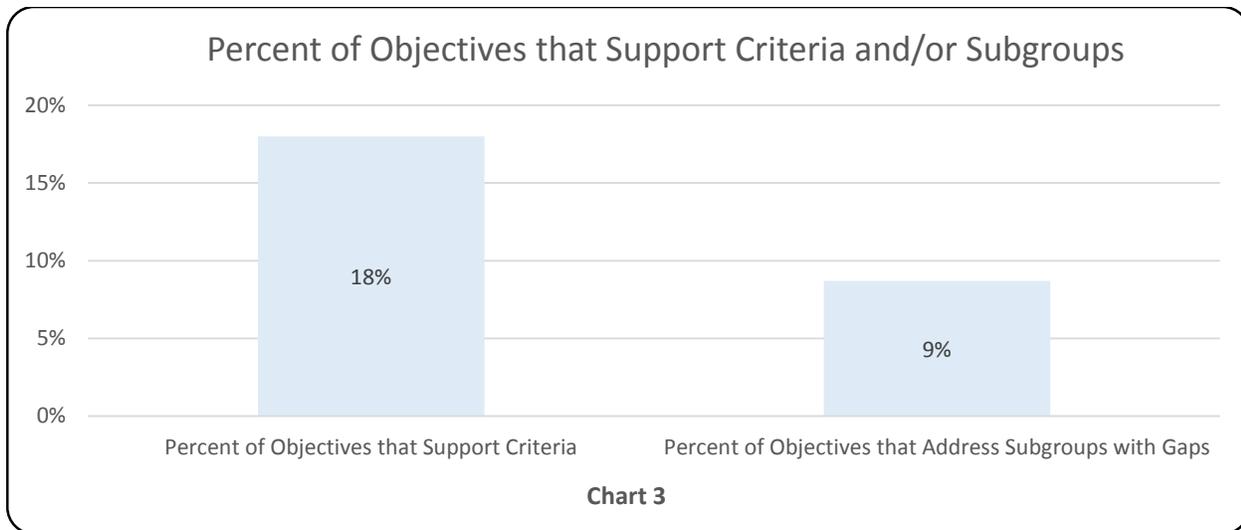
Measurable Objectives

Measurable objectives are derived from the goals and should support the following three criteria (based on the assumption the school recognizes and understands the role the bottom 30% plays in Focus School identification status):

- Subgroups (including the bottom 30 percent) perform lower than all students
- Measurable Objectives address the subgroups that perform lower than all students
- Measurable Objectives address closing the achievement gap and/or specific subgroups

For this report, subgroups are defined as ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged, English Language Learners, students with disabilities and all students in the bottom 30 percent achievement status.

Chart 3 on the next page shows that 18 percent of the Measurable Objectives met all three of the criteria defined above and 9 percent of the Measurable Objectives addressed subgroups within the achievement gap.



Strategies

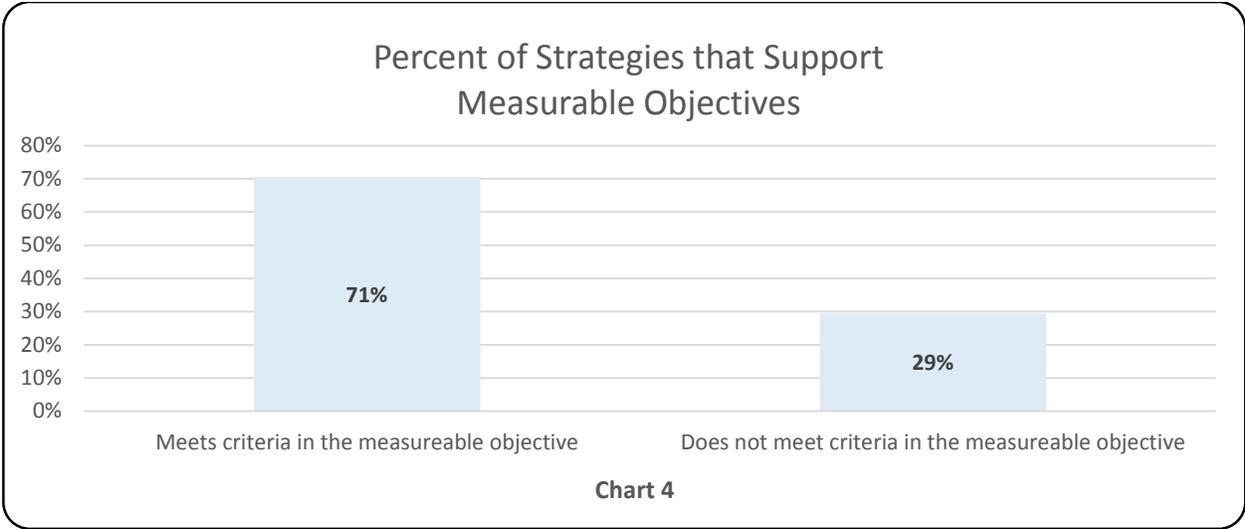
Strategies for academic goals describe “how” teachers will accomplish measurable objectives. Likewise, strategies for organizational goals describe the actions adults will take to meet organizational goals and objectives.

Chart 4 below shows the percent of strategies that were likely to meet the measurable objectives. Schools in the sample wrote a total of 2,001 strategies. Reviewers confirmed 71 percent of strategies had the potential to meet associated objectives, while 29 percent of strategies appeared to not have the potential to meet the criteria for the objectives.

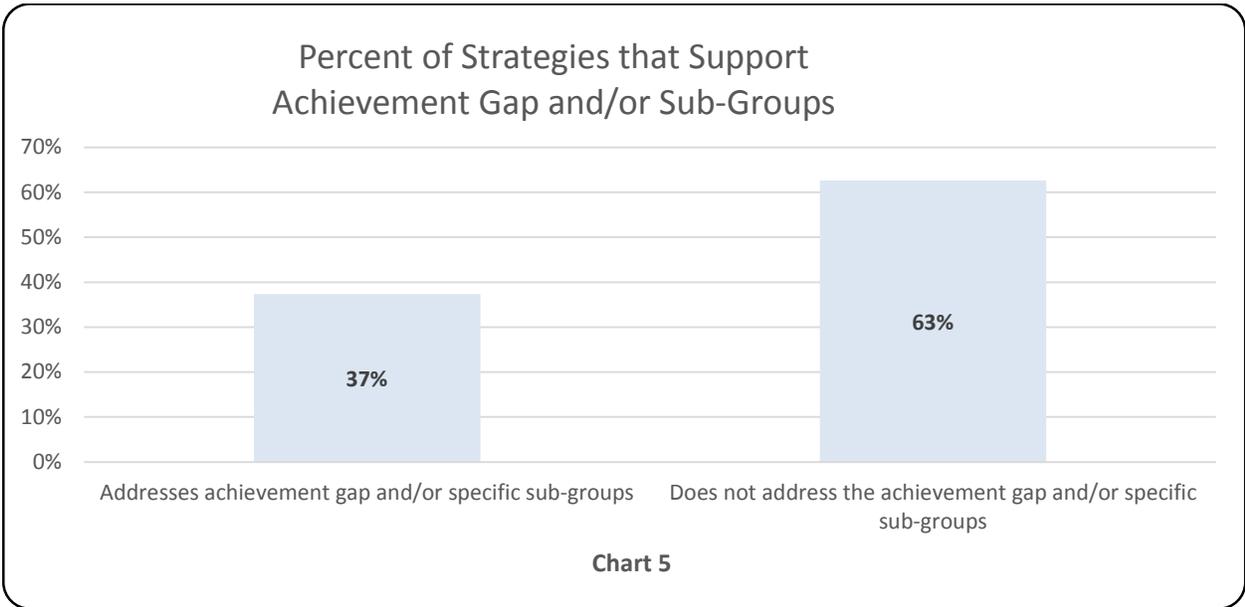
Given that these School Improvement Plans belonged to Focus Schools, the expectation was that the strategies would address the gap between the highest and lowest 30% of students. Most strategies and objectives that did not meet the criteria did not address the gap. For example:

- Teachers will focus on culturally relevant strategies and activities to maximize learning for all students.
- Teachers will utilize note-taking strategies during reading using post-it notes, writing in the margins, guided reading, dialectical journals, and color-coding.
- Math teachers will receive sustained and ongoing professional development to improve teaching practices and increase student achievement

Each strategy has the potential to increase student achievement overall, but none of them particularly addresses the needs of the students whose achievement is in the bottom 30%. It is difficult to see how these types of strategies could decrease the achievement gap.



Reviewers were also asked to identify strategies that supported each school's achievement gap and/or subgroups. Chart 5 below shows the percent of strategies used which addressed the achievement gap and/or subgroups. Of the strategies, 37 percent in the review addressed the achievement gap and/or specific subgroups; and 63 percent did not address the achievement gap and/or specific subgroups.

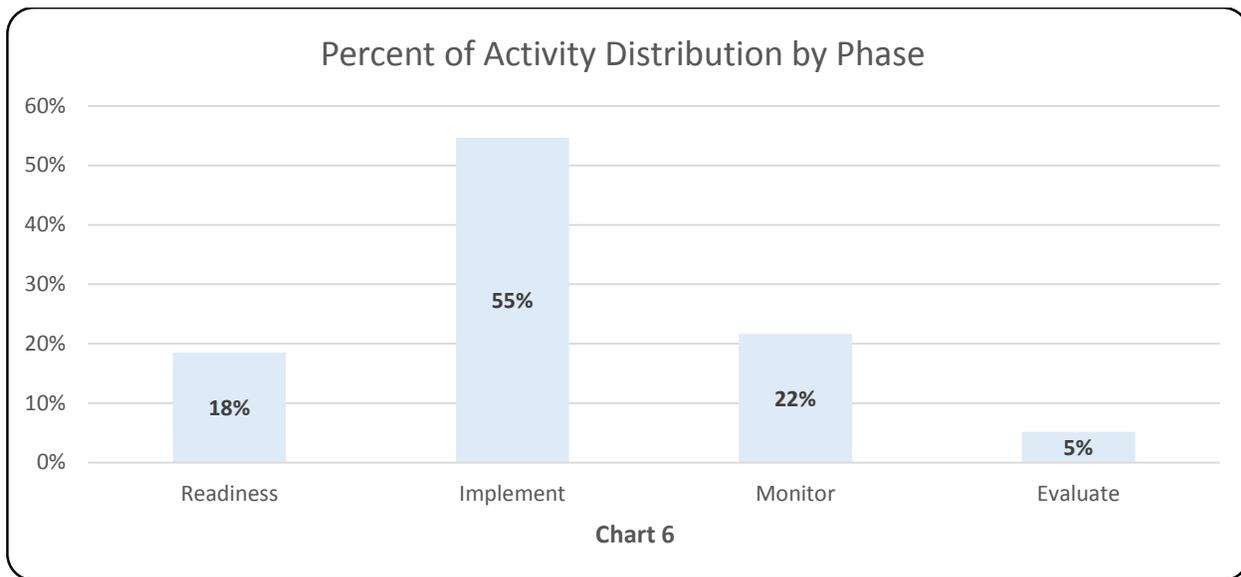


Activities

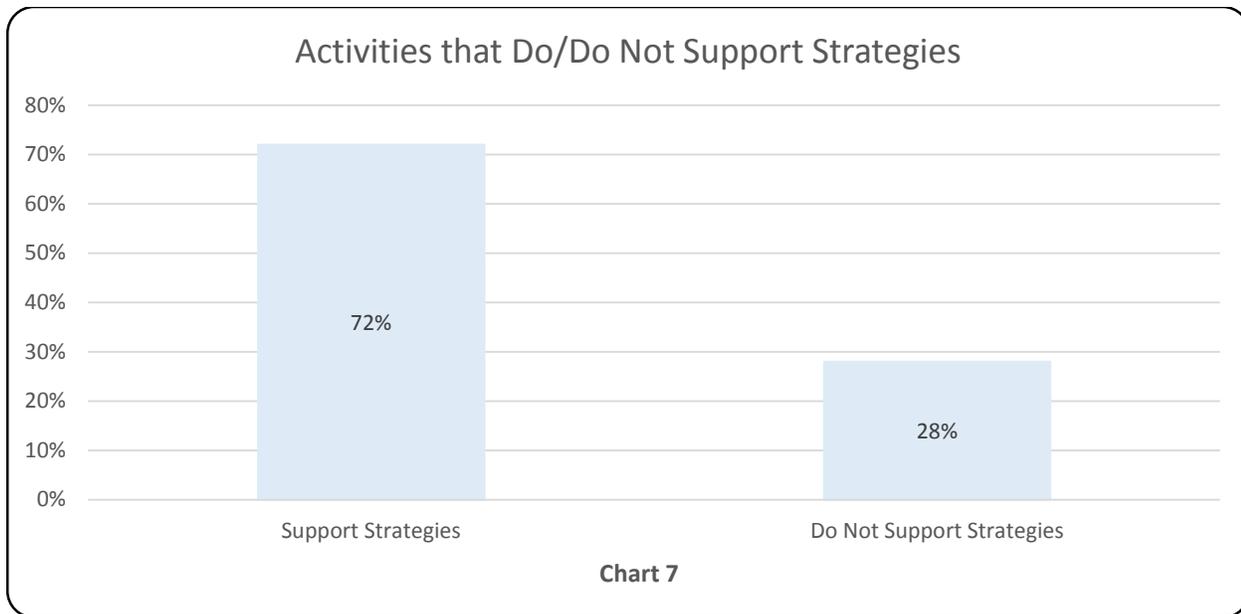
Activities are the daily ongoing practices and behaviors that the administrative, instructional, and support staff adopt to support the defined strategies and measurable objectives. Activities are intended to ensure that the strategies are implemented with fidelity and have the potential to positively impact student achievement. Activities can be categorized into the following implementation phases:

- **Readiness** (Getting Ready) - ensures the readiness for implementation and that participants have the knowledge and skills to implement the strategy. Possible activities may include professional development, purchase of materials, planning and communication processes.
- **Implement** - ensures the successful implementation of the selected strategy. Possible activities may include communication, identification and set-up of support structures, professional support, or academic interventions.
- **Monitoring** - ensures that the strategy is implemented with fidelity. Possible activities may include classroom walkthroughs and professional learning community meetings.
- **Evaluate** – ensures that the strategy has the intended impact on teacher practice and student achievement. A possible activity may include analysis of achievement data.

Reviewers were asked to categorize each activity by these phases. As chart 6 below describes, the majority of activities were classified in the implement phase at 55 percent, followed by monitor at 22 percent, readiness at 18 percent, and evaluate at 5 percent.



In total, 4,826 activities were listed under strategies and were considered for review. Of those activities, 72 percent were deemed by the reviewers as supporting associated strategies, while 28 percent did not support strategies (see Chart 7 below). Compared to last year, there is a 13 percent decrease in activities that support strategies and a 13 percent increase in activities that do not support strategies.

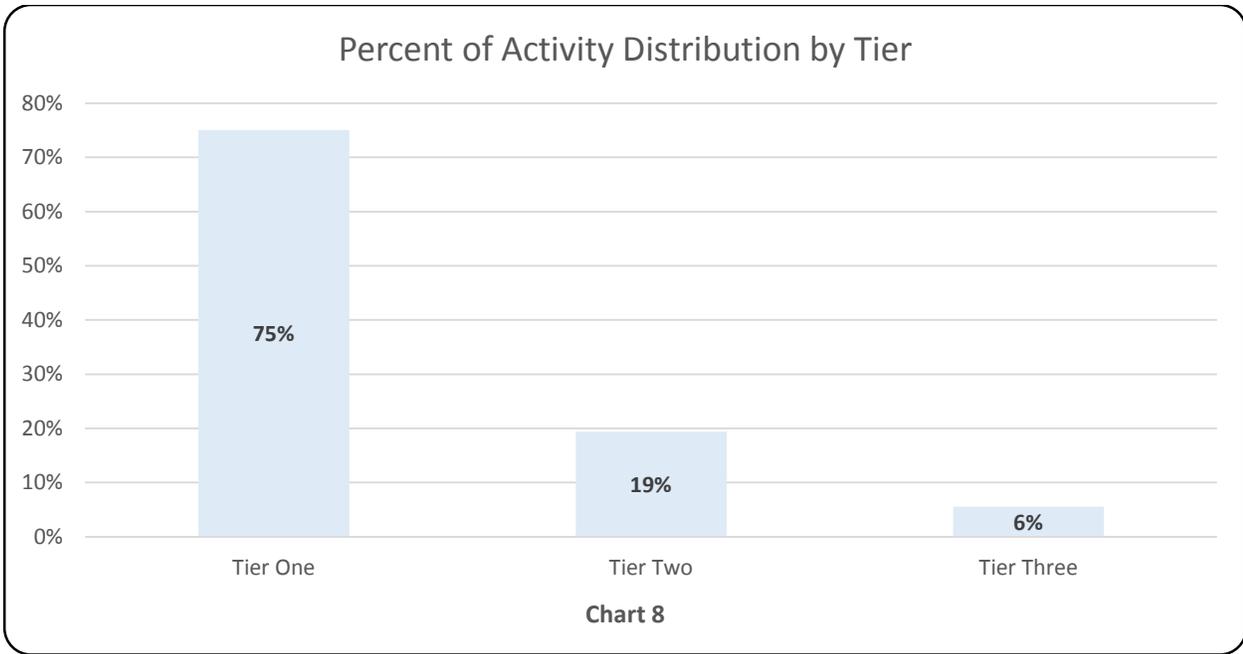


Schools included in this review, along with their ISDs, receive their feedback from the scoring rubrics. MDE asks them to consider this feedback and work with their ISDs to revise their School Improvement Plans as needed.

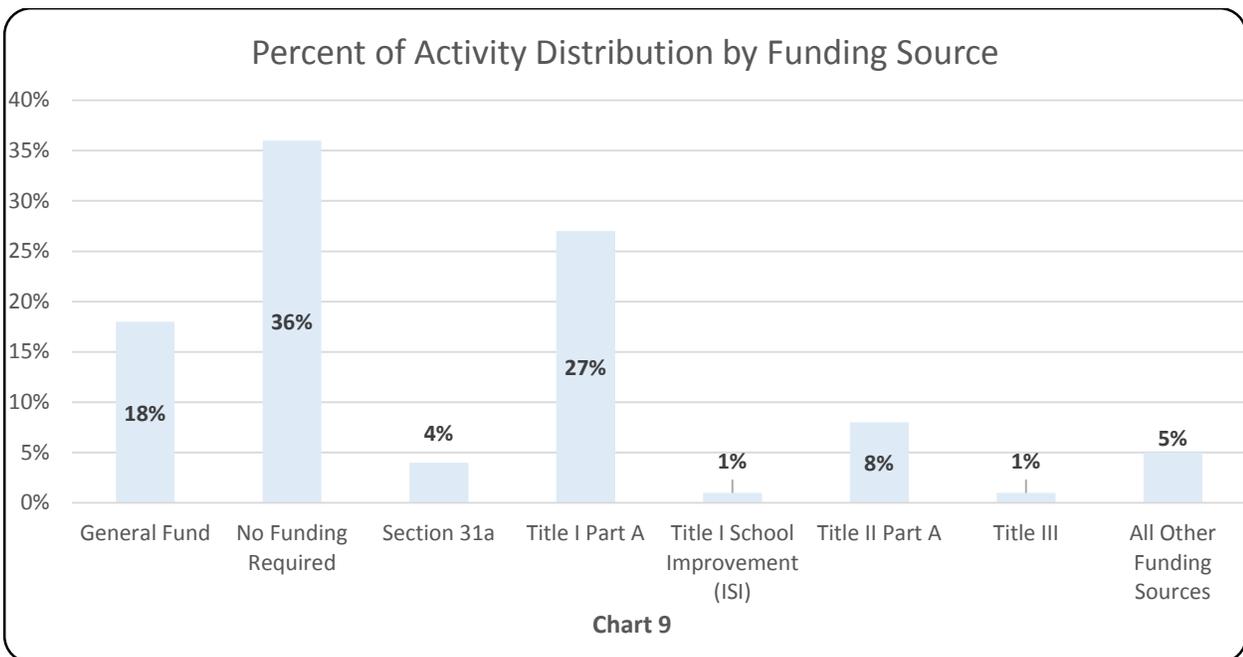
For the first time for the 2014-2015 school year, district staff were asked to define their classroom activities in their SIP by using a 3-tier system offered by the National Center on Response to Intervention (RtI). This system is a series of classroom supports and instruction into the 3 Tiers listed below:

- **Tier 1** – All students in Tier 1 receive high-quality, scientifically based instruction, differentiated to meet their needs, and are screened on a periodic basis to identify struggling learners who need additional support.
- **Tier 2** – Students in Tier 2 do not make adequate progress in the core curriculum and are provided with increasingly intensive instruction matched to their needs on the basis of levels of performance and rates of progress.
- **Tier 3** – Students in Tier 3 receive individualized, intensive interventions that target the students' skill deficits for the remediation of existing problems and the prevention of more severe problems.

Reviewers were asked to label activities within the Tier system. Chart 8 below shows that 75 percent of activities were defined as Tier 1, 19 percent as Tier 2 and 6 percent as Tier 3. The majority of students in the sample received Tier 1 level classroom instruction and supports. These students are screened on a periodic basis to identify struggling learners who need additional support. Students who are identified as needing additional supports are moved to Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 support interventions.



Reviewers were asked to label activities by funding source. Information on funding sources for activities was included in each SIP, categorized by 23 types of classroom activities. These 23 activities were refined to eight activities, which were selected by percentage of funding response (see Chart 9 below). Reviewers indicate that 36 percent of all activities required no funding source. Twenty-seven percent were funded by federal Title I Part A funds and 18 percent were funded by general funds. These three funding sources account for 81 percent of all funding sources for activities in this sample, almost half of those activities (36 percent) required no funding.

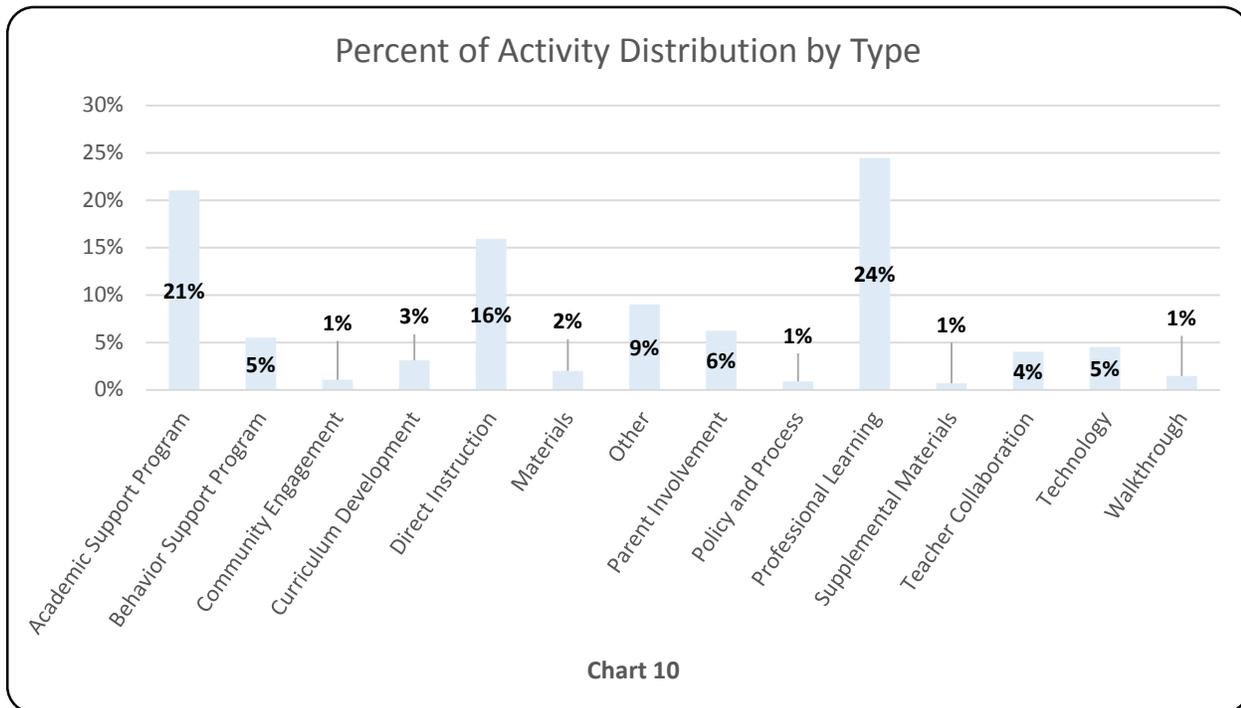


Reviewers were asked to label activities by type. A total of 19 activity categories were refined to 14 categories by percentage of Type response (see Chart 10 on the next page). The most commonly selected activity was professional learning at 24 percent. The distribution reflects slightly more activities focused on educator professional learning during the 2014-2015 school year. This may be attributed to the State of Michigan’s Legislature’s recent focus on educator evaluations. Teachers and educators are in the process of professional learning initiatives in an attempt to impact student achievement.

The next most commonly selected activities were those that support strategies related to Academic Support at 21 percent. The high frequency of these activity areas might be due to schools recognizing achievement gaps and providing academic support for students within the bottom 30 percent or identified sub-groups, which can help close the gap. Direct instruction is the third most commonly selected activity at 16 percent.

Professional learning, academic support and direct instruction categories account for 61 percent, along with 5 percent of activities dedicated to behavior support programs.

Community engagement (1 percent) and Parent Engagement (5 percent) account for a total of 6 percent of the activities that involved the community and parents. Teacher collaboration accounted for 5 percent of activities and another 5 percent accounted for technology activities.



Conclusion

This annual review of SIPs show the plans range from basic to very complex. Both ends of this spectrum raise concerns for the MDE because basic plans may not meet student

needs and complex plans may be difficult to implement and monitor. Overall, the majority of plans demonstrated that schools are attending to each component of the school improvement planning process.

The 2011-12 and 2012-13 reviews showed that most plan components were heavy in the readiness and implementation phases and light in the monitor phase. The 2013-14 review showed an increase in the activity monitoring phase to 78 percent. This year's plans show a decrease of activities in the monitoring phase, down to 22 percent.

Please direct questions related to this report to Bill Witt, Supervisor, OEII School Improvement Support Unit at WittB1@michigan.gov or 517-335-2957.