



STATE OF MICHIGAN
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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State Board of Education Statement on House Bill 4041, "Truancy Bill"

The Michigan State Board of Education supports the goal of increasing school attendance of all MI students. We recognize that just one missed school day is a lost opportunity for students to learn and that research shows that there is a connection between student attendance and student achievement. Moreover, as board members, we strongly urge all students to be consistently in attendance at school, learning and getting the education needed to end the cycle of poverty.

However, the MI State Board of Education does not support House Bill 4041, which is aimed at terminating cash assistance for families if a child between the ages of 6 and 15 is considered truant by their local school district, or for the minor alone if over age 16.

From the perspective of the Michigan State Board of Education, House Bill 4041 is unnecessarily harsh on children who are living in extreme poverty and have no control over their economic status. These children have very few resources and already face a greater likelihood to face a number of challenges, including mental health difficulties, chronic illnesses such as asthma, living with adult caregivers with inconsistent work schedules and lack of access to reliable transportation – some of the main barriers to regular school attendance.

With more than half a million Michigan children living in poverty and the needs of too many families unmet, our state should be doing everything possible to lift them up, not push them deeper into economic crisis.

This legislation, if implemented, will further push more of our children deeper into poverty, making it even more difficult to get to school. Knowing that the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) currently is implementing this practice as its departmental policy, we recommend that DHHS cease this practice immediately and urge Governor Snyder to veto this legislation, and for the legislature to adequately appropriate funding/advance legislation aimed at addressing the root causes of truancy.

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