



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

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INTERIM STATE SUPERINTENDENT

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** February 14, 2019

**TO:** Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents  
Public School Academy Directors

**FROM:** Venessa A. Keesler, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent *V. Keesler*  
Division of Educator, Student, and School Supports

**SUBJECT:** 2018-19 Annual Education Report (AER): Frequently Asked Questions, Important Changes, and Revised Posting Deadlines

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is releasing its Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) regarding the process to prepare and post the Annual Education Report. New information and critical dates in the FAQ are included in the boxed text. The AER is designed to meet the federal requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for an annual report. Local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools must prepare and communicate AERs using data results from the 2017-18 school year and related information found in the 'Combined Report' and revised cover letter templates located at [MI School Data](#) in the Annual Education Report section.

The timelines for the 2018-19 AER are:

<b>ACTIONS REQUIRED</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
All 'Combined Reports' are available for preview but are embargoed (not to be saved for final AERs)	Beginning February 22, 2019
Districts and schools finalize AER cover letters	February 22-28, 2019
First date 'Combined Reports' and cover letters may be posted for public review	March 1, 2019
Date for all districts and schools to post final 'Combined Reports' and cover letters	April 12, 2019

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The 'Combined Report' provides detailed data on state administered student assessment results, accountability results, teacher qualification information, civil rights information, and the state results for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). There is a 'Combined Report' populated with the appropriate information for the state, each LEA, and each school. If used as designed, the 'Combined Reports' and cover letters also meet the state requirements for reporting to parents and communities in an annual education report.

This year's AER encompasses several new ESSA reporting requirements including:

- English language proficiency of English Learners
- Recently arrived English Learners exempted from an English Language Arts assessment
- Participation on MI-Access assessment
- Information from the Civil Rights Data Collection
- Progress towards the state's long-term accountability goals
- Inexperienced educators
- Educators with emergency/provisional credentials
- Educators not teaching in the subject/field of their certification/licensure
- School improvement funding amounts
- Several additional subgroups including homeless students, foster children, and military-connected students

If you have additional questions, please email Fred Williams at [williamsf3@michigan.gov](mailto:williamsf3@michigan.gov) or David Judd at [juddd@michigan.gov](mailto:juddd@michigan.gov).

Attachment

cc: Michigan Education Alliance

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
REGARDING THE ANNUAL EDUCATION REPORT (AER)  
\*\*Updated 2-5-19\*\*

**Q.1 What is the Annual Education Report (AER)?**

A.1 The Annual Education Report (AER) is a report designed to meet federal requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for reporting on performance for the most recently completed school year to parents and communities. The 2018-19 AERs are based on data from the 2017-18 school year.

**Q.2 Who is required to produce the Annual Education Report (AER), and what is its purpose?**

A.2 All local educational agencies (LEAs), including public districts, public school academies (PSAs), and intermediate school districts (ISDs) or regional education service agencies (RESAs) are required to report their 2017-18 performance. If used as designed, this is how Michigan schools and LEAs will meet the requirement of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and State law, Act 451, P.A. 1976 (and P.A. 25).

**Q.3 What is required of each LEA and each school to meet reporting requirements?**

A.3 Each LEA must:

- Save the final district 'Combined Report' and post it to the district website or provide a link to the report on the [MI School Data website](#).
- Edit the current district template cover letter addressing all the requirements and post this with the district AER. The letter should be dated to include when the AER was posted/sent <Month/Day/Year>. See Q.6 and A.6 below for the location of the cover letter templates.
- Make available paper copies of the 'Combined Report' and the cover letter to parents and members of the community that do not have internet access.
- Announce to the parents and community that both the district and the school AERs are available and how to access them.

Each School must:

- Save the final school 'Combined Report' and post it to the school website. If the school does not have its own website, these must be posted to the district website.
- Edit the current school template cover letter addressing all the requirements and post this with the school 'Combined Report'. The letter should be dated to include when the AER was posted/sent <Month/Day/Year>. See Q.6 and A.6 below for the location of the cover letter templates.

- Make paper copies of both documents available to parents and the school community members that do not have internet access.
- Notify parents that the AERs are available and how to access them.

#### **Q.4 What are the components of the AER that LEAs and schools must use? Where is the information found?**

##### A.4 LEA Required Components:

- The 'Combined Report' for the District, and
- A cover letter using the content outlined in the district template cover letter.
  - Designation of schools identified as TSI, ATS, CSI, or No Label (See Q.5/A.5 for definition of status designations)

##### School Required Components:

- The 'Combined Report' for the School, and
- A cover letter using the content outlined in the school template cover letter.
  - Designation of schools identified as TSI, ATS, CSI, or No Label (See Q.5/A.5 for definition of status designations)

##### Location of Data for AERs

Both the 'Combined Report' and the cover letter templates provide information unique to the LEA or school and can be found on the [MI School Data website](#):

- The 'Combined Report' is different for each LEA or school. See A.13 below for a description of the content.
- Login to the secure [MI School Data website](#) is required to access the templates. See Q.6 and A.6 below.

#### **Q.5 How do districts and schools report status designations of Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Additional Targeted Support (ATS), and those identified as No Label in cover letters?**

A.5 For the 2017-18 school year, schools were identified using definitions and labels as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

- A Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school is one that has one or two underperforming student subgroups.
- An Additional Targeted Support (ATS) school is one that has at least one subgroup performing at the same level as a lowest performing 5% school.
- A Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school is one whose performance is the lowest 5% of all schools in the state or has a graduation rate at or below 67%.
- Some schools are not identified with any of these labels. In these cases, no label is given.

For TSI schools – schools are identified every year. It is up to the local district to determine how and when its school(s) exit TSI status. MDE has identified a new group of TSI schools for 2018-19. If your school was included in the new identification group or was not exited by your district after being identified in 2017-18, you must continue to report your school with a TSI status. ATS schools were newly identified for 2018-19 based on federal requirements.

TSI and ATS status for 2018-19 can be found by checking your schools' [index report](#) on MI School Data or the 2017-18 Accountability Master Results File on the [MDE Accountability](#) page. The Accountability Master Results File will be available after accountability results are made public in March 2019.

## **Q.6 Where will I find the cover letter templates to be used?**

### **A.6 The cover letter templates are updated yearly. Please do not use a template from a previous year.**

The templates are available only to secure users on [MI School Data](#).

- If you do not have a secure login and require one, or if you do not remember your username/password, please contact the [Technical Contact for your ISD](#) for assistance. (For access issues, refer to A.10 below.)
- Once logged in:
  - Click on the 'Other & Data Files' tab at the right of the screen in the top navigation.
  - Click on the 'Annual Education Report' tab.
  - Click on the 'Cover Letters' tab.
  - Click on link to appropriate cover letter:
    - "Click here to download the District template in English"
    - "Click here to download the School template in English"
  
    - "Click here to download the District template in Spanish"
    - "Click here to download the School template in Spanish"
  
    - "Click here to download the District template in Arabic"
    - "Click here to download the School template in Arabic"
    - Retrieve the appropriate cover letter template.
    - Save letter to your hard drive, then edit your letter.

NOTE: The district letter is used for districts with more than one school. The school letter is used for all schools and used for single building school districts.

## **Q.7 Linking the 'Combined Report' to the district's or school's website was prohibited in the past. We've heard that a direct link is now acceptable.**

### **A.7 Districts and schools are now able to provide a link to their specific 'Combined Report' on the [MI School Data website](#).**

#### **DISTRICT AER COMBINED REPORT**

- Log in at [MI School Data](#).
- Click on 'Other & Data Files' tab at the right in the top navigation.
- Click on 'Annual Education Report' tab.
- Click on 'Combined Report' tab. This will result in the statewide report.
- Click on 'Edit Report' tab.

- Using the ISD dropdown menu, choose your ISD.
- Using the District dropdown menu, choose your District.
- For the District report, leave 'School' dropdown at 'All Schools in District.'
- Click 'View Results.' This is your District report.
  - TO LINK REPORT:  
Click 'Link to Report.' Copy and paste link into District cover letter.
  - TO POST PDF REPORT:  
Click "Download/Print.' Click on 'As a PDF' and open District Combined Report. Save PDF with specific name of the district. Link report into District cover letter.

#### SCHOOL AER COMBINED REPORT

- Log in at [MI School Data](#).
- Click on 'Other & Data Files' tab at the right in the top navigation.
- Click on 'Annual Education Report' tab.
- Click on 'Combined Report' tab. This will result in the statewide report.
- Click on 'Edit Report' tab.
- Using the ISD dropdown menu, choose your ISD.
- Using the District dropdown menu, choose your District.
- Using the School dropdown menu, choose the appropriate School name.
- Click 'View Results.' This is your School Combined Report.
  - TO LINK REPORT:  
Click 'Link to Report.' Copy and paste link into appropriate School cover letter.
  - TO POST PDF REPORT:  
Click "Download/Print.' Click on 'As a PDF' and open School Combined Report. Save PDF with specific name of the school. Link report into letter.

Reminder: Linking ensures the most current data are reflected. A PDF copy may become outdated since it is current only as of the date the report was retrieved and saved.

The data are important to provide parents and the public with detailed information that is easy to find and compliant with AER requirements. It also helps school districts package all the required data elements needed for federal reporting in one location, saving valuable time and resources.

#### **Q.8 Can we retrieve our 'Combined Report', save it as a PDF copy, and then post it to our website as in the past?**

A.8 Yes, that is still possible. We are attempting to make it easier for schools to post their AERs by allowing you to **link** directly to your own unique 'Combined Report' on the [MI School Data website](#), BUT if you prefer a static PDF copy, you may use that method (see A.7 above).

**Q.9 When must the 'Combined Reports' and cover letters be posted and available?**

A.9 LEAs and schools must post and make copies available no sooner than March 1, 2019, but no later than April 12, 2019. Providing this information may help parents work with teachers, principals, and administrators to better meet the unique needs of their children. This information should remain available on the website(s) until the next year's report is prepared.

**Q.10 If my staff does not have a log-in name and password to the [MI School Data website](#), how do I establish one for them?**

A.10 [Contact your ISD/RESA](#). For a list of these contacts, visit this link and find the Technical Contact for your specific ISD. The Technical Contact listed will be able to create new accounts and reset passwords.

**Q.11 How will the state monitor implementation of the reporting requirements?**

A.11 Both the state and the federal government will be monitoring district and school websites for 'Combined Reports' and cover letters.

**Q.12 How do school staff members PREVIEW the AER to help prepare the template cover letters?**

A.12 **Expect to have the embargoed data available to prepare your 'Combined Reports' and cover letters beginning February 22, 2019.**

MDE will provide early access to the 'Combined Reports' so that LEAs can **PREVIEW** their embargoed data at the [MI School Data website](#) beginning February 22, 2019, as the assigned district and school staff members responsible for these reports finalize the cover letters. The cover letter templates reflect specific data used to complete the 2018-19 AERs (based on data from the 2017-18 school year). **Please do not post or link any data reports prior to March 1, 2019.** Parents must be notified when the district and school release these annual reports. The final date for all districts and schools to post 'Combined Reports' and cover letters is April 12, 2019.

**Q.13 What will we find in the 'Combined Report' on the [MI School Data website](#)?**

A.13 The content of the report is presented in several sections:

**Teacher Quality:** Identifies the number and percentage of inexperienced teachers, principals, and other school leaders. Reports teachers who are teaching with emergency or provisional credentials. Includes teachers who are not teaching in the subject or field for which they are certified.

**Student Assessment:** Includes the following three assessments: M-STEP (Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress), MI-Access (Alternate Assessment), and College Board SAT. Presents assessment information for English language arts and mathematics for grades 3 to 8 and 11, and MI-Access science for grades 4, 7, and 11, compared to state averages for all students as well as subgroups of students. The report helps users to understand achievement performance within grades and schools, and to make comparisons to district, state, and national achievement benchmarks.

**NAEP Report:** Provides state results of the national assessment in mathematics and reading every other year in grades 4 and 8. The NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress), commonly referred to as 'the Nation's Report Card,' is another important assessment tool used to determine student progress. NAEP results cannot be directly compared with M-STEP results for the same grade. There are no national standards. NAEP uses a different assessment framework from Michigan. NAEP and M-STEP define their performance level descriptions differently and performance levels do not correspond between the two assessments. NAEP is given in the winter, M-STEP is given in the spring.

**Accountability:** The accountability portion of the AER includes assessment proficiency and participation rates, graduation or attendance rates, as well as accountability index values showing school performance on a 0-100 scale. Here you can identify how well the school and district are serving the overall academic needs of students. More information is available at [MDE Accountability](#).

**Civil Rights:** This is a new ESSA requirement. Information is available through a linked data file and covers school environment areas like discipline, safety, and chronic absenteeism.

**\*NOTE\***

The AER has been developed to prevent the display of data that might allow for identification of individual student level information. The report utilizes two sets of suppression rules.

**Assessment Data** – If there is a subgroup that has less than 10 students, the entire row will show asterisks. Additional suppression is applied; for further details, please see the AER M-STEP, SAT, and MI-ACCESS suppression rules documentation.

**Accountability Data** – If there is a subgroup that has less than 10 students, you will see a label of <10 in place of the data.



**Q.14 Where does this data come from? Will we have a chance to appeal the data presented?**

A.14 The data in the 'Combined Report' has been extracted directly from a variety of state databases. For example, the assessment data comes directly from the M-STEP, MI-Access, SAT, and NAEP reports prepared by the MDE, Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA). Teacher Quality data comes from the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) as reported in the Registry for Educational Performance (REP). Some accountability data comes from OEAA and some data comes from CEPI. Civil Rights data is submitted by schools and districts directly to the federal Office of Civil Rights.

LEAs and schools have had the opportunity to appeal this data during the appeal or correction windows of the source reports. For example, a district that wanted to appeal graduation rates or participation rates had the opportunity to do so during the appropriate appeals windows. Districts that wanted to correct the teacher quality data had the opportunity to do so shortly after submitting the REP data.

To appeal or correct next year's data, take full advantage of the assessment and accountability appeal or CEPI data correction opportunities. There are no appeals of data once it is part of the AER.

**Q.15 What can I do now to prepare for the release of the 2018-19 AER (based on assessment and accountability data from the 2017-18 school year)?**

A.15 Go to the [MI School Data website](#) and log in as soon as they are available. See Q.12. Open the 'Combined Report' for your LEA or school. Familiarize yourself with the data from last year. Learn how to navigate the reports. Identify how to print the 'Combined Report' and how to **link it** to your website.

Find the revised 2018-19 district and school cover letter templates on the secure [MI School Data website](#). When you have assessment and accountability results, you can begin drafting your AER cover letters using the templates found on the website. (See A.6 above.)

**Q.16 Does a LEA, PSA, or ISD/RESA that has ONLY ONE SCHOOL need to produce and distribute both district and school 'Combined Reports' and cover letters?**

A.16 No. If your LEA, PSA, or ISD/RESA is a single building school district, you only need to produce and distribute a school level 'Combined Report' and a school level cover letter. Do NOT produce, post, or distribute district level reports or district cover letters. If there is any question, please contact Fred Williams [williamsf3@michigan.gov](mailto:williamsf3@michigan.gov) or Dave Judd [judd@michigan.gov](mailto:judd@michigan.gov)

**Q.17 I'm new to the district. What are the necessary steps in the process?**

A.17 Once the determination has been made as to the staff member(s) responsible for preparing and posting the AER, these are the steps:

1. Provide access to [MI School Data](#). A logon and password are required to access the AER cover letter templates at [MI School Data](#). If you do not have a secure login and require one, or if you do not remember your username/password, please contact the [Technical Contact for your ISD](#) for assistance. (For access issues, refer to A.10 above.)
2. Provide access to district and school data.
3. Logon to [MI School Data](#) to review the required information for the district and cover letter templates. These letters are updated annually. Do not use a cover letter from a previous year. The narrative on the cover letter page provides a good overview.
4. Retrieve a separate 'Combined Report' from [MI School Data](#) for the district and each of its schools. Either link the report into the cover letter (preferred) or save the report as a PDF. Linking ensures the most current data are reflected. A PDF copy may become outdated since it is current only as of the date the report was retrieved and saved. The Combined Report Help pages provide a good overview of the data contained in the Combined Report.
5. Prepare the district and school cover letters.
6. Post the AER for the district, including the district cover letter and the district 'Combined Report,' in a location that allows for easy access. NOTE: If the district is a single building district, use the school cover letter instead of the district letter for the district.
7. Post the AERs for each school, including the school cover letter and the school's 'Combined Report,' in a location that allows for easy access. It should follow a consistent pattern as the districts to allow for easy access.
8. Make available paper copies of the AER in the main office for parents and members of the community that do not have internet access.
9. Announce to parents and the community that both the district and the school AERs are available and how to access them.

**Q.18 Why are there two dates referenced in AERs? What date do we use when we post the AER to our website?**

A.18 2018-19 refers to the name of the current AER due by April 12, 2019. It reports on data results from 2017-18, the most recently completed school year. The AER should be posted on websites as the 2018-19 Annual Education Report.