



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** April 12, 2018

**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:** 2017-18 Annual Education Report: Frequently Asked Questions,  
Important Changes, and Revised Posting Deadlines

For the past several years, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has required districts and schools to communicate Annual Education Reports (AERs) to parents and the community in August, before the start of the school year, to fulfill requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). However, new assessment and accountability processes delayed the production of AERs until now.

Based on directions given by the U. S. Department of Education, districts and schools must prepare and communicate AERs using the 2016-17 results and related information found in the 'Combined Report' and revised cover letter templates. We ask for your cooperation in meeting these responsibilities.

The MDE is releasing its Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) regarding the process to be used by local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools to meet federal and state reporting requirements and the revised deadlines for the 2017-18 AER cycle.

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The timelines for meeting the 2017-18 AER requirements 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 April 12, 2018
Districts and schools finalize AER cover letters	April 12-18, 2018
First date 'Combined Reports' and cover letters may be posted for public review	April 19, 2018
Date for all districts and schools to post final 'Combined Reports' and cover letters	May 31, 2018

The AER is designed to meet the federal requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 for an annual report. The 'Combined Report' provides detailed data on state administered student assessment results, accountability results, teacher qualification 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.

The FAQs also provide links to the revised district and school cover letter templates, due to the identification of schools using new definitions and labels as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

We hope the attached list of FAQs will help you effectively use the AER. 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 3-23-18\*\*

**Q.1 What's Important to know about the 2017-18 AER?**

A.1 Important information for this AER cycle:

- Accountability data required for this year includes participation and proficiency levels, graduation rates (for high schools only), attendance rates, as well as accountability index values showing school performance on a 0-100 scale
- Data tables are condensed
- AER Combined Reports are ALLOWED to be linked. See Q.4 below.
  - Linking is an option that schools/districts may be interested in utilizing. Linking allows a school or district to post a URL link that points directly to each specific 'Combined Report.' If any data updates occur, posting the direct link ensures the most current data are reflected.
  - The ability to download a static PDF 'Combined Report' for posting is still an option and may be utilized. If any data updates occur, the static PDF file will be outdated. See A. 4 below for detailed directions.
- For the 2017-18 school year, schools were identified using new definitions and labels as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
  - A Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school is one that has at least one underperforming student subgroup.
  - An Additional Targeted Support (ATS) school is one that has at least three underperforming student subgroups.
  - A Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school is one whose performance is in the lowest 5% of all schools in the state.
  - Some schools are not identified with any of these labels.
- Reporting deadline for posting 2017-18 AERs (based on the data results from the 2016-17 school year) has changed. See Q.9 and Q.12.

**Q.2 Are local educational agencies (LEAs) and their schools REQUIRED to use the state produced Annual Education Report (AER)?**

A.2 Yes. All LEAs, including public districts, public school academies (PSAs), and intermediate school districts (ISDs) or regional education service agencies (RESAs) are required to report their 2016-17 performance. This is how Michigan schools and LEAs will meet the requirement of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 (ESEA) and State law, Act 451, P.A. 1976 (and P.A. 25).

- Using the AER reduces the burden on approximately 850 LEAs and 3,000 schools to collect and format this complicated set of data for presentation to parents and community stakeholders to meet federal requirements. There remain only a few much simpler tasks for educators to perform (see A.6 below). To meet both state and

federal requirements, the 'Combined Report' and all relevant portions of the cover letter templates must be addressed.

**Q.3 What are the components of the AER that LEAs and schools must use? Where is the information found?**

**A.3 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 Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), Additional Targeted Support (ATS), Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), or No Label

**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 Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), Additional Targeted Support (ATS), Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), or No Label

**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.7 and A.7.

**Q.4 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.4 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, to save valuable time and resources.

#### **Q.5 Can we retrieve our 'Combined Report', save it as a pdf copy, and then post it to our website as in the past?**

A.5 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.4 above).

#### **Q.6 What is required of each LEA and each school to meet reporting requirements?**

A.6 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.7 and A.7 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.7 and A.7 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.7 Where will I find the cover letter templates to be used?**

#### **A.7 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](#).

- For secure access to the site, contact your [ISD system administrator](#). If you do not remember your username/password, please email the CEPI Help Desk for assistance ([CEPI@michigan.gov](mailto:CEPI@michigan.gov)). If you do not have a secure login and require one, please visit this link and find the [Technical Contact for your specific ISD](#) for further 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.8 How do schools and districts report designations of Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Additional Targeted Support (ATS), and those identified as No Label in their cover letters this year?**

- A.8 For the 2017-18 school year, schools were identified using some new 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.
  - A Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school is one whose performance is in the lowest 5% of all schools in the state.
  - An Additional Targeted Support (ATS) school is one that has at least three underperforming student subgroups.
  - Some schools are not identified with any of these labels. In these cases, no label is given.

**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 April 19, 2018, but no later than May 31, 2018. 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 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.

For additional assistance, please contact MI School Data at [CEPI@michigan.gov](mailto:CEPI@michigan.gov).

**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 April 12, 2018.**

MDE will provide early access to the 'Combined Reports' so that LEAs can **PREVIEW** their embargoed data at the [MI School Data website](#) beginning April 12, 2018, 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 2017-18 AERs (based on data from the 2016-17 school year). **Please do not post or link any data reports prior to April 19, 2018.** 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 May 31, 2018.

**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:** Displays the professional qualifications of teachers within the state, district, and school. You can view percentages of teachers with emergency or provisional certifications, and percentages of core academic subjects not taught by highly qualified teachers, within the state, district, and school.

**Student Assessment:** Includes the following three assessments: M-STEP (Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress), MI-Access (Alternate Assessment), and College Board SAT assessment information for English language arts and mathematics for grade 3 to 8 and 11, and 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:** 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 administers a state level assessment in mathematics and reading every two years. The most current results are from the year 2017. Results from the 2017 NAEP will replace 2015 results on the AER when they become available. 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:** Uses information from assessments, graduation and attendance rates, and several other indicators to determine if the school is meeting accountability targets. 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](#).

**\*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, you will see a label of <10 in place of the data.

**Accountability Data** – If there is a subgroup that has less than 30 students, you will see a label of <30 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.

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 2017-18 AER (based on assessment and accountability data from the 2016-17 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 2017-18 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.7 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 [juddd@michigan.gov](mailto:juddd@michigan.gov) for clarification.