STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 17, 2016

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

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

SUBJECT: 2016-17 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 2015-16 results and related information found in the 'Combined Report' and revised cover letter templates. We ask for your cooperation in meeting these responsibilities.

MDE is releasing its Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) regarding the process to be used by local education agencies (LEAs) and schools to meet federal and state reporting requirements and the revised deadlines for the 2016-17 AER cycle.

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The timelines for meeting the 2016-17 AER requirements are:

ACTIONS REQUIRED	TIMELINE
All 'Combined Reports' are available for preview but are embargoed (not to be saved for final AERs)	Beginning December 8, 2016
Districts and schools finalize AER cover letters	December 8-14, 2016
First date 'Combined Reports' and cover letters may be posted for public review	December 15, 2016
Date for all districts and schools to post final 'Combined Reports' and cover letters	January 27, 2017

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, updated due to transition to the new M-STEP assessments and transition away from the ESEA Flexibility Waiver requirements.

We hope the attached list of FAQs will help you effectively use the AER. If you have additional questions, please email Mike Radke at radkem@michigan.gov or David Judd at juddd@michigan.gov.

Attachment

cc: Michigan Education Alliance

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
REGARDING THE ANNUAL EDUCATION REPORT (AER)
Updated 11-14-16

Q.1   What are the changes for the 2016-17 AER?

A.1   Important information for this AER cycle:
- M-STEP (Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress) replaces MEAP (Michigan Educational Assessment Program) data for the assessment component
- MI-Access data is still included
- Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) results are being reported for Evidence Based Reading and Writing, and Mathematics
- Accountability data required for this year includes participation and proficiency levels, graduation rates (for high schools only), and attendance rates
- Accountability Scorecard returns for the 2016-17 AERs (based on 2015-16 data)
- Data tables are condensed
- AERs are now 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 their AER, instead of posting a static PDF on the school or district website. Linking is easier than downloading and posting a PDF for the AER, however the ability to download a PDF 'Combined Report' for posting is still an option and may be utilized. See A.17 below for detailed directions.
- For the 2016-17 year, no new Priority or Focus schools were named; some Priority or Focus schools did exit their status because they met the exit criteria. New Reward schools were identified using school rankings and Beating the Odds information. Priority and Focus schools identified in previous years, and newly identified Reward Schools for 2016-17, have been notified by MDE and will be identified in the EEM as well as in a list shared on the secure login cover letters landing page on MI School Data. Schools that are identified as Focus and Priority schools in 2013-14 and were not exited, as well as new Reward schools are required to be identified in the 2016-17 AER cover letters. See Q.8 below.
- Reporting deadline for posting 2016-17 AERs (based on the data results from the 2015-16 school year) has changed. See Q.9 and Q.12.

Q.2   Are local education 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 2015-16 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 nearly 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 Focus, Priority, or Reward

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 Focus, Priority, or Reward

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: (https://www.mischooldata.org)
- 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.
- To access the existing Focus, Priority and Reward designations for your schools, utilize the list of existing Focus, Priority and Reward schools which will be made available once accountability data has been released to the public on December 8, 2016. This list can be found on the Cover Letters page on the MI School Data website. (Please note that this link is only available behind secure login.)
- See Q.8 and A.8 for detailed information.

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. What changed?

A.4   Districts and schools are now able to provide a link to their AER on the MI School Data website. Once you obtain the appropriate school or district level report, you can **link** it to your district or school website. These changes allow

each district and school the ability to provide parents and the public access to the AER in a location that is easy to find and compliant with the AER requirements.

The data are important because it provides the public with detailed information and helps school districts easily 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 (see A.4 above), but you may use the former method if you prefer.

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 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>.
- 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 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>.
- 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. For access issues, refer to A.10 below.
- Click on the 'Annual Education Report' tab at the bottom of the left-hand navigation. This will take you to the correct page where you will find a tab labeled 'Cover Letters.' Click on this tab at the top right of the screen.

Q.8   How do schools and districts report designations of Priority, Focus, and Reward schools in their cover letters this year? Where do I find the information regarding schools in my district that are designated as existing Priority, Focus and new Reward schools?

A.8   For the 2016-17 year, no new Priority or Focus schools were named; some Priority or Focus schools did exit their status because they met the exit criteria. New Reward schools were identified using school rankings and Beating the Odds information. Existing Priority and Focus Schools for 2016-17 have been notified by MDE and will be identified in the EEM. Newly identified Reward Schools are identified on the accountability scorecards available in the Secure Site (https://baa.state.mi.us/BAASecure/Login.aspx) or MI School Data. Schools that are identified as Focus and Priority schools in 2013-14 and were not exited, as well as new Reward schools are required to be identified in the 2016-17 AER cover letters. (See A.7 for location of cover letters.)

Specific instructions for researching existing Focus and Priority designations:

To access the existing Focus, Priority and Reward designations for your schools, utilize the list of existing Focus, Priority and Reward schools; which will be made available once accountability data has been released to the public on December 8, 2016. This list can be found on the Cover Letters page on the MI School Data website. (Please note that this link is only available behind secure login.)

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 **December 15, 2016**, but no later than **January 27, 2017**. 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 (https://www.mischooldata.org), 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

For additional assistance, please contact MI School Data at 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 December 8, 2016.**

MDE will provide early access to the 'Combined Reports' so that LEAs can PREVIEW their embargoed data at the MI School Data website beginning December 8, 2016, 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 2016-17 AERs (based on data from the 2015-16 school year). **Please do not post or link any data reports prior to December 15, 2016.** 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 **January 27, 2017**.

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:
NOTE - *UPDATED INFORMATION*
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 2015. 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 to determine if the school and district are 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 [Accountability Scorecards](#).

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, Division of Accountability Services (DAS). 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 DAS 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 2016-17 AER (based on assessment and accountability data from the 2015-16 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 2016-17 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.

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

A.16   No. If there is only one school in your LEA, ISD/RESA or PSA, 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 Mike Radke radkem@michigan.gov or Dave Judd juddd@michigan.gov for clarification.

Q.17 Can I link to the MI School Data website to provide the 'Combined Report' for the LEA and each of the schools?

A.17. Yes. 'Combined Reports' can now be LINKED directly from the [MI School Data website](#) to your district's or school's websites. Use the link when you have filtered to the appropriate report and LINK it to your district's AER webpage.

Also acceptable are 'Combined Reports' that are retrieved, saved as a pdf file, and posted to the district or school websites and linked in your cover letters.

DIRECTIONS FOR RETRIEVING 'COMBINED REPORTS'

[Log in to the MI School Data website](#) (https://www.mischooldata.org). For access to the site, contact your ISD/RESA system administrator. Refer to A.10 for detailed information.

Click on the 'Combined Report' tab at the top center portion of the screen. This is the report you use after selecting your entity by providing the report parameter selections (see 'Instructions to generate your AER and save the report by either a URL link or PDF' below). The 'Combined Report' contains all required data elements if used properly.

Instructions to download your district or school cover letter template
1. Go to the MI School Data website (https://mischooldata.org).
2. Sign into the MI School Data website.
    a. Click on the 'Login' text located in the top left corner of the page
    b. Enter your username and password and click the 'Login' tab. If you do not remember your username/password, please email the CEPI Help Desk for assistance (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 (http://i.mischooldata.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/MISchoolData_Contacts.pdf).
3. After logging in, click on the 'Annual Education Report' tab located on the left-hand navigation.
4. Click on the 'Cover Letters' tab.

Instructions to generate your AER and save the report by either a URL link or PDF
1. Go to the MI School Data website (https://mischooldata.org).
2. Click on the 'Annual Education Report' tab located on the left-hand navigation.
3. Click on the 'Combined Report' tab; this will automatically generate a Statewide AER if you have not already selected your entity in a prior inquiry or report. If you need to specify a different location (district or school) for your AER, click on the 'Edit Report' button at the top of the page. This will provide a report parameter selection page that will allow you to select your specific location.
4. For Districts:
    a. ISD - Pull down list to the appropriate ISD from the top drop down.
    b. DISTRICT – Pull down your DISTRICT NAME from middle drop down.
    c. SCHOOL – Pull down to "All Schools in District" or if Academy, pull down to the Academy's Name. It will produce the AER for that district or academy.
5. For Schools:
    a. ISD - Pull down list to the appropriate ISD from the top drop down.
    b. DISTRICT – Pull down your DISTRICT NAME from middle drop down.
    c. SCHOOL – Pull down list to the appropriate school from the bottom drop down. It will produce the AER for that school.

6. Once you have confirmed that you generated the correct AER for your entity, choose your desired method for saving your AER (Link or PDF):
7. To save as a PDF, do the following:
   a. Click on the 'Download/Print' text located at the top of your AER.
   b. This will present a PDF icon for your report. Click on the 'As a PDF' text. This will download your PDF to your computer. You may now use the static PDF for posting on your district/school website.
8. To save a link, do the following:
   a. Click on the 'Link to Report' text located above your AER.
   b. This opens a text box that has generated a specific URL link to your AER. Highlight this URL and copy it. This link may be used for websites or embedded in documents. All that is necessary for a user to do to access the generated AER is to simply click on this URL link.
9. Prepare to post this link or PDF to your district or school website no earlier than December 15, 2016, and no later than January 27, 2017.

   Confirm that clicking on this link in your cover letter gets you directly to the correct 'Combined Report'.
   a. Once the link has been inserted in the document, test the link by clicking on it.
   b. Your browser (Internet Explorer, Chrome, etc.) should open to MI School Data.
   c. The link should automatically open the Annual Education Report that you had previously generated. Verify that the entity being displayed is the one intended.
   d. Any user that clicks on this embedded link will be able to navigate through the AER report within MI School Data.