



STATE OF MICHIGAN
EXECUTIVE OFFICE
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

BRIAN CALLEY
LT. GOVERNOR

April 17, 2017

I want to thank Superintendent Whiston and the staff at the Michigan Department of Education for their hard work and dedication in crafting Michigan's plan for the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act. By signing, I am acknowledging that I was timely and meaningfully consulted during the development of the plan. The plan represents a positive step forward for Michigan parents and students. However, I believe that we can do even better. Given Michigan's historically low performance nationally, we must ensure that our accountability system is transparent, honest, and works for every student in the state.

The first aspect we can do even better on is the subgroup size, commonly referred to as the "n-size". Michigan's current accountability system uses an n-size of 10 for reporting and 30 for accountability purposes. This plan proposes using an n-size of 30, but this would leave out many students who deserve transparency and accountability just as much as every other student. Parents of these students have a right to know that their schools are providing a quality education for their child. I'm glad to see that the Department chose an n-size of 10 for English Learners. If Michigan is going to turn around our performance, we need to ensure that every student is achieving. I understand the privacy and methodological concerns of a lower n-size, and I hope that we can work together to find a thoughtful way of ensuring that the accountability system works for all parents and students.

The second aspect is A-F letter grades. I am excited to see the Michigan Department of Education taking the step to grade every school in an understandable and transparent way. I also appreciated their inclusion of CTE, AP, and IB course completions in that system. These are achievement outcomes that represent real student success. A-F letter grades for schools are common sense. A 2014 national survey conducted by McLaughlin & Associates found that 84% of parents supported assigning schools a letter grade regarding how well they educate students. Further, to reach our goal of increasing Michigan's national rankings to make Michigan a top 10 state for education, we need to be honest about performance. The plan proposes three options for an accountability system. I support Options 1 or 2. Option 3 does not contain letter grades. A summative A-F letter grade for schools empowers parents, offers transparency, and focuses resources where they are needed most. Further, we've seen with the Department's Partnership Model how communities rally around schools once their performance is made clear.

We owe it to our students and parents that we celebrate success and address low performance, even though school accountability can be uncomfortable. Michigan can once again be a top 10 state in the nation, as long as we always strive to improve. I look forward to working with our partners in the legislature on crafting a school accountability system that works for Michigan students and parents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rick Snyder".

Rick Snyder
Governor