

79 Schools Released from Priority Status – Highest Number in Michigan School Reform History

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SRO publishes 2016 list of schools in bottom 5 percent – 38 schools at risk of closure

Today the Michigan School Reform Office (SRO) announced the release of 79 schools from the Priority School list after meeting exit criteria. Priority Schools are those identified for improvement due to low achievement.

“For the first time in the history of the SRO, more schools are being released from Priority School status than are being identified,” said School Reform Officer Natasha Baker. “It is our mission to turn Priority Schools into the highest performing schools in the state. We do this through academic accountability because every child – regardless of their demographics -- deserves access to quality educational opportunities. When kids are well educated, they can go to college or access a high-wage job or career after high school.”

Today’s release includes schools identified between 2010 and 2014. Each year, schools in the bottom 5 percent of all public schools in Michigan are identified as Priority Schools and monitored for turnaround in subsequent years. Schools are eligible to exit Priority School status if they meet the three exit criteria after four years of implementing their redesign plans. The plans include support and additional resources from the U.S. Department of Education, Michigan Department of Education (MDE), and local Intermediate School District (ISD).

State law requires that schools identified in the bottom 5 percent write plans and receive support services. The SRO’s vision is for every kid in Michigan to have access to a globally competitive education.

“Many times the additional resources from the MDE and ISDs improve conditions; other times, more action is necessary so kids can be prepared for a good life after high school,” Baker said. “Because we want all kids to have a good life after high school, our office is responsible for taking action when schools have been chronically failing for several years.”

Over the next 30 to 45 days the SRO will examine the geographic, academic, and enrollment capacity of other public school options for children attending one of the 38 failing schools. It is possible that closing a school is not feasible due to unreasonable hardship for the children attending that school because no better options are available. If that is determined, the SRO will rescind the closure notice for that school and implement a different turnaround option. The other options include naming a CEO, changing the redesign plan, or placement into the State School Reform District.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The list of schools being released from Priority School status, the 38 schools identified for a next level of accountability, as well as schools in the bottom 5% are provided here <http://www.michigan.gov/sro>.