



Welcome to the
Office of Partnership Districts
Technical Assistance Updates
for Cohort Five Partnership Districts

December 10, 2025
Dr. Yvonne Dixon, Interim Director

Introductions – OPD Team

Dr. Yvonne Dixon, Interim Director

Jill Baynes, Office Manager

Lisa Francisco, Partnership Agreement
Liaison Unit Manager & PAL

Dan LaDue, Accountability, Research, &
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Judy Reynolds, Office Executive
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Sheri Riggle, Office Analyst

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Partnership Agreement Liaisons (PALs)

Dr. Liesel Carlson

Kimberly Davis

Dr. Althanie Gardner

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Dr. Eleanor Harris

Lynn Hogan

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Dr. Traci Teasley

Today's Topics for Cohort Five



Questions:

Email: MDE-OfficeofPartnershipDistricts@michigan.gov

- Partnership Model
- Partnership Agreement
- Needs Assessment/Areas of Inquiry/Goal Areas
- Benchmarks and Outcomes
- Technical Assistance and Support
- Exit Criteria & Accountability Measures
- Section 21(h) Funding
- What's Next . . .



Why the Office of Partnership Districts Exists

State and Federal Requirements

- Michigan Law requires districts with low-performing schools to identify needs, develop intervention plans, and *partner* with organizations to coordinate resources and improve student achievement. ([MCL 388.1621h](#) & [388.1622p](#))
- [Elementary and Secondary Education Act \(ESEA\) of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#)
 - ✓ states must provide intensive, evidence-based interventions for schools identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI).



Impact and Outcomes of Partnership

Partnership District Progress

36–Month Progress 44 Districts	Count of Schools (N=98)	Percent of Schools
Increase in ELA Proficiency	79	80.6%
Increase in Math Proficiency	65	66.3%
Increase in Graduation Rate	29 (38)	76.3%
Increase in MI School Index Value	90	91.8%
MI School Index Value above the Bottom 5% (35.33)	56	57.1%
Increase ELA and math proficiency in both 2024 and 2025	33	33.7%



Partnership Assignment Identification

District Supports

For each district, count the schools identified for each category of support (CSI, ATS, or TSI)

Does the district have any schools identified for CSI?

Yes

Adjust the district's CSI count by subtracting schools that meet one or more of the following conditions:

1. Alternative education school
2. Virtual school
3. Not in the bottom 5% and not having low graduation rate but are identified for CSI due to not exiting ATS

(Please note adjustments to district CSI counts only apply to determining which office within MDE will provide support to the district.)

Does the district have an adjusted CSI count of 1 or more?

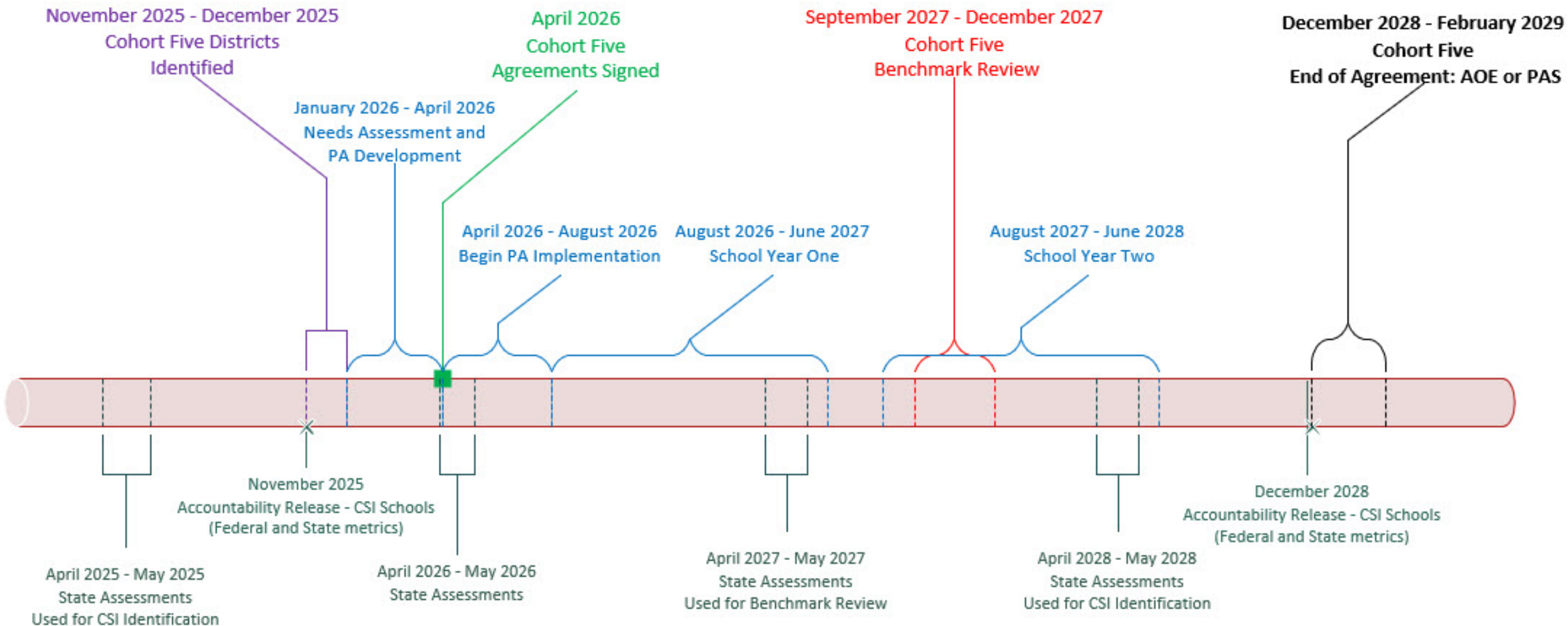
Yes

Partnership Agreement (PA) Supported by Office of Partnership Districts (OPD)

No

Office of Educational Supports (OES)

Partnership Districts Cohort Five Timeline



Changes in Cohort Five Partnership Agreement

REMOVED OR DE-EMPHASIZED CONTENT

- No longer requires 2-5 accountability measures, recommends at least 2, requires 1
- EPIC/MSU Research
- Levels of Support Table
- Optional Community Meetings
- 18-month benchmark review no longer results in an evaluative statement; it is only used for review of progress

NEW OR EXPANDED CONTENT

- Attendance and Graduation (if applicable) benchmarks and outcomes - Required.
- Structured Literacy - Suggests LETRS training and class size reduction for K–3.
- Stronger integration with MICIP for planning.
- Accountability Language - direct citations of MCL 388.1622p and 388.1621h.
- Monitoring and Adjustments - Emphasizes that strategies and activities may be adjusted; goals, benchmarks, and outcomes remain fixed.



Partnership Agreement Liaison and Partnership Agreement Development

Partnership Agreement Liaison Standard of Practice

Purpose

The Partnership Agreement Liaison (PAL) serves as a critical connector between Partnership Districts and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), ensuring alignment, communication, and support for successful implementation of Partnership Agreements. PALs operate under the Office of Partnership Districts (OPD) and are grounded in research-based practices and continuous improvement principles.

Partnership Agreement Liaison

Standard of Practice - Core Roles & Responsibilities

Navigator

- Guide districts through the Partnership Model and complex MDE platforms and systems.
- Connect districts with appropriate MDE units, offices, and programs.
- Collaborate with Intermediate School Districts (ISDs/RESAs) to identify measurable goals, Interim Target Benchmarks/End Target Outcomes (ITBs/ETOs), strategies, and activities, and ensure quality and alignment.
- Ensure metrics are in place to monitor progress and impact of Section 21(h) funded items.

Neutral Facilitator

- Serve as an unbiased facilitator in meetings when requested.
- Utilize problem resolution in support of Partnership Agreement goals.
- Help maintain focus on outcomes and shared understanding across perspectives.

Communications Broker

- Build and maintain professional relationships and trust across MDE, ISD/RESAs, and districts.
- Advocate for districts within MDE and other organizations to access needed and available support.
- Ensure inclusion in all relevant MDE communications and serve as a liaison among MDE stakeholders when necessary.

Primary Point of Contact

- Serve as the main contact for district and ISD/RESA superintendents and designees.
- Provide timely responses to district and ISD/RESA inquiries and needs.
- Attend monthly onsite partnership meetings and other meetings upon request.
- Share relevant district and ISD/RESA information with OPD and MDE leadership as needed.

Partnership Agreement Liaison

Standard of Practice - Strategic Support Areas

Partnership Agreement Liaison Standard of Practice

MICIP Alignment: Understand and support districts with the Michigan Integrated Continuous Improvement Process (MICIP) and platform, including needs assessments, goal development, and resource allocation.

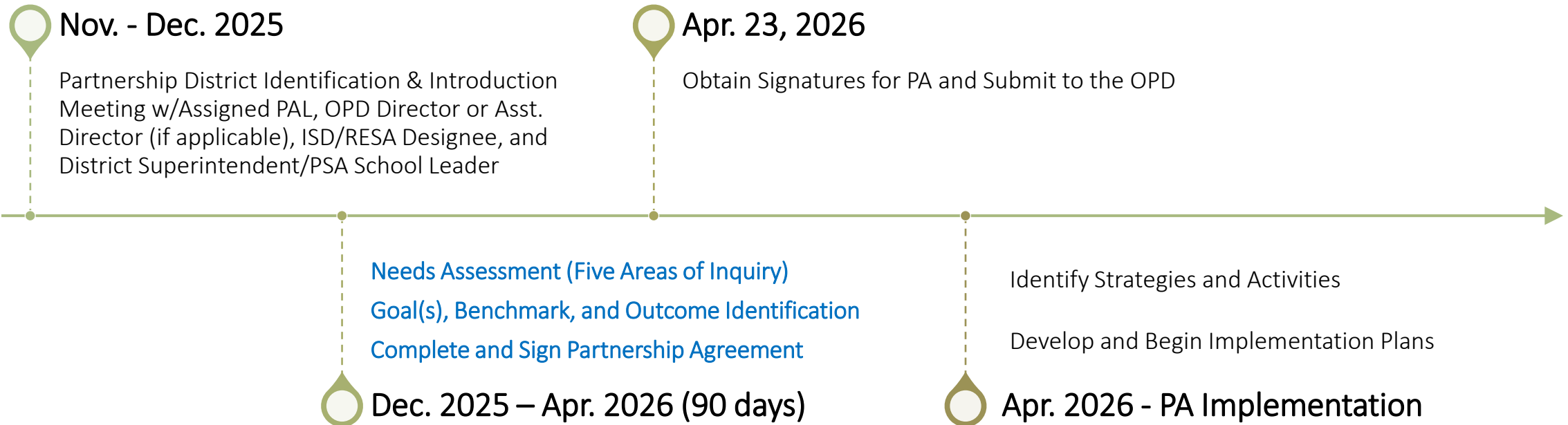
Section 21(h) Grant: Support districts with the application and amendment process in NexSys, ensuring alignment with Partnership Agreement goals and evidence-based practices.

OPD - Accountability, Research, and Evaluation (ARE) Unit Collaboration: Refer to the ARE Unit for guidance with the Section 21(h) Implementation and Effectiveness worksheets and related effectiveness metrics; collaborate on the development of the 18-month Benchmark Review and 36-month Partnership Agreement Summary/Academic Outcome Evaluation reports.

Tiered Support: Provide differentiated support based on district needs and ensure improvement priorities are addressed in monthly meetings.

Partnership Agreement Development: Ensure completion of all required components—needs assessments, benchmarks, outcomes, accountability measures, and assurances.

Partnership Agreement (PA) Development 90-Day Timeline



Timeline for Districts

December 2025- April 2026

[External 30-60-90 Day Partnership Agreement Development Timeline for Districts](#)

Days 1-30

(December 2025)

- Introduction Meeting
- Schedule PA Development Meetings

Days 31 – 60

(January-February 2026)

- PA Development
 - ✓ *Review Current MICIP*
 - ✓ *Complete Needs Assessment*
 - ✓ *Create Goal(s), Benchmarks, Outcomes*
- Begin PA Template Draft

Days 61-90

(March 2026)

(March 23, 2026)

- Complete and Submit for Review PA Template Draft
- Revise PA Template As Needed

(April 23, 2026)

- Sign and Submit Final PA Template

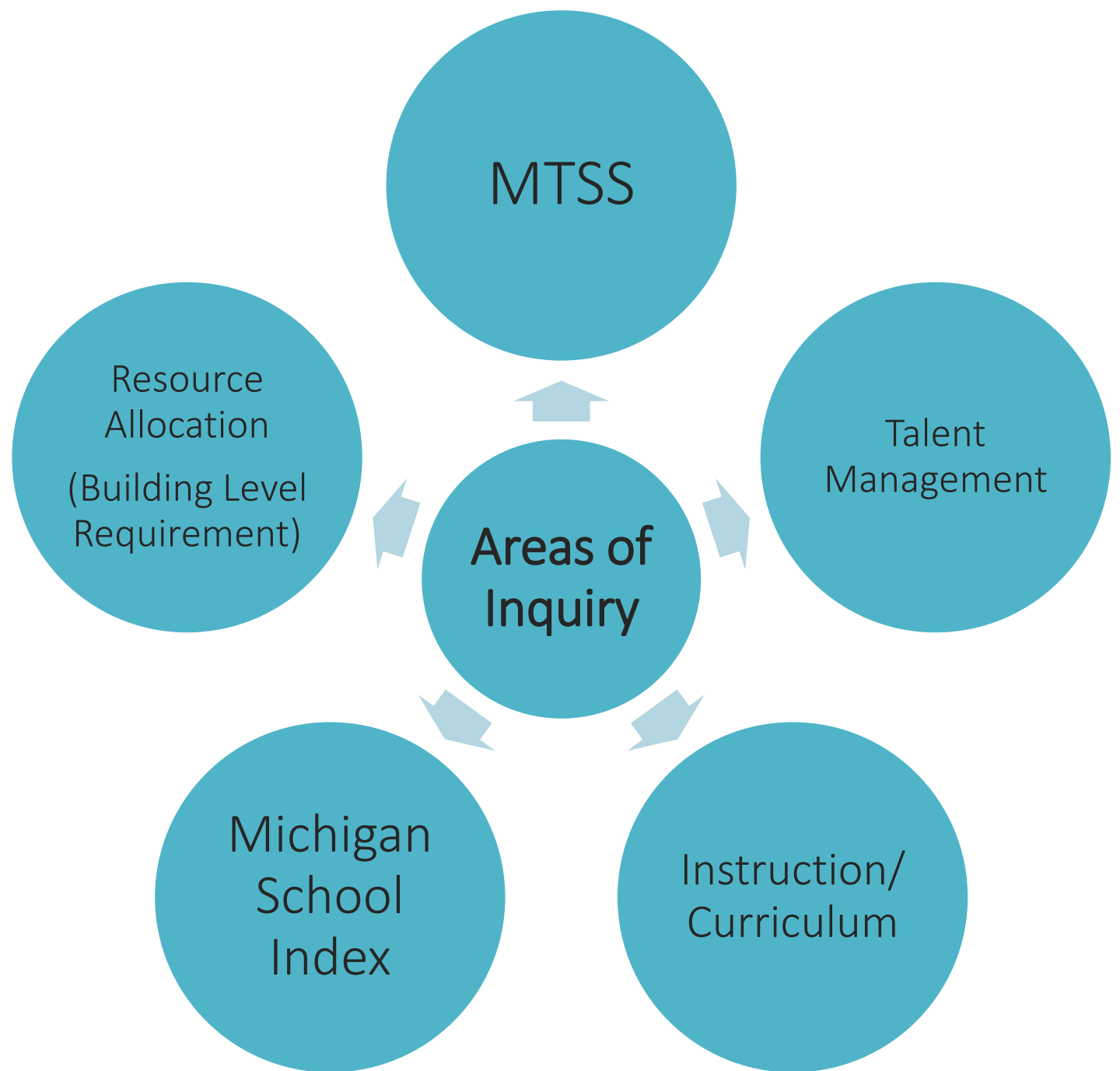


Areas of Inquiry, Needs Assessment, and Goal Area(s)

State & Federal Statute: Areas of Inquiry

MCL Section 388.1621h

Every Student Succeeds Act
Sec. 1111.c.4.D]



Needs Assessment

Area(s) of Inquiry Identification

Data Discovery

Initial Initiative Inventory

Gap Analysis

Data Story Summary

Root Cause Analysis

Challenge Identification



Aligned Benchmarks and Outcomes
and
Comprehensive Support and Improvement
(CSI) Plan

Required Aligned Benchmarks/Outcomes

*See Section II.B .2
Partnership Agreement Template
for Cohort Five Partnership Districts

Proficiency* - State

Growth* – State or Local Assessments

Attendance

Graduation Rate

Process

Sample Outcomes and Benchmark Table

MICIP Goal Area	Type	Data Source & Evidence	Baseline Value	18-month Interim Target Benchmarks	36-month End Target Outcomes
Student Achievement	Local Academic	NWEA Report	39%	During the 2026-27 school year at least 50% of full academic year students will meet their growth target on NWEA Reading MAP growth.	During the 2027-28 school year at least 67% of full academic year students will meet their growth target on NWEA Reading MAP growth.
Student Achievement	State Academic	MSTEP Report	7.2%	Student mathematics proficiency based on MSTEP will increase at least 7 percentage points (14.2%) from 2025 to 2027	Student mathematics proficiency based on MSTEP will increase at least 11 percentage points (18.2%) from 2025 to 2028
Systems	Process	Staff Roster	51%	At least 75% of certified teachers will be retained from the 2025-26 school year to the 2026-27 school year.	At least 85% of certified teachers will be retained from the 2026-27 school year to the 2027-28 school year.

Design and Implementation of CSI Plans

OPD assists partnership districts in the design and implementation of a comprehensive support and improvement plan through the creation of the partnership agreement. ESEA Section 1111(d)(1)(B)

Evidence-Based Strategies

- Identify the needs to be addressed
- Identify the evidence-based strategies to effectively impact that need

Implementation Plan

- Adequately resource strategies (e.g., funds, people, time, materials)
- Develop an implementation plan for each strategy
- Monitor the plan for implementation with fidelity

Monitor and Adjust

- Collect and analyze data measuring the impact of the strategy
- Adjust the implementation plan to sustain and improve impact



Technical Assistance and Support

Expectations of Partnership Districts

Districts are expected to do the following:

- Engage and complete a comprehensive needs assessment
- Identify goals, outcomes, and strategies in critical areas to improve climate/culture and student achievement
- Develop and implement plans for defined strategies
- Monitor the plan for fidelity of implementation, progress, and impact
- Mitigate barriers, adjust the plan as needed and discern if a more rigorous intervention is required
- Provide and request appropriate resources for strategies and activities to enable full implementation
- Coordinate efforts with the ISD/RESA and other partners to support implementation

How ISD/RESA Support Partnership Districts

Tailored Support

- Delivered support based on each district's Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Continuous Improvement Facilitator/Consultant

- A consultant to guide planning, implementation, and problem-solving

Rigorous Data-Driven Accountability and Evaluation

- In collaboration with OPD, data and systems are used to ensure districts monitor progress and adjust improvement plans to meet benchmarks and outcomes

Resource Allocation Support

- Assistance to ensure the Regional Assistance Grant (RAG) meets CSI building needs

Coordination of Partnerships and Technical Assistance

- Connect districts with coaches and professional learning
- Provide ongoing communication and networking opportunities to ensure districts can access available opportunities to strengthen their implementation of evidence-based strategies
- Ensure continuous collaboration, shared learning, and capacity building among districts, ISDs, and OPD staff

How OPD Supports Partnership Districts

Tailored Monthly Support

- Delivered support based on each district's Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Dedicated Partnership Agreement Liaison (PAL)

- A PAL is assigned to each district to guide planning, implementation, and problem-solving

Rigorous Data-Driven Accountability and Evaluation

- In collaboration with ISD/RESAs, data and systems are used to ensure districts monitor progress and adjust improvement plans to meet benchmarks and outcomes

Resource Allocation Support

- Assistance to ensure resources - including Section 21(h) funding - needed to meet benchmarks and outcomes are adequate and equitable

Coordination of Partnerships and Technical Assistance

- Connect districts with internal and external resources, agencies, experts, and professional learning
- Provide ongoing communication and networking opportunities to ensure districts can access available opportunities to strengthen their implementation of evidence-based strategies
- Ensure continuous collaboration, shared learning, and capacity building among districts, ISDs, and OPD staff

OPD's Responsive Approach to Partnership District Needs (1 of 2)

TIER 1 SUPPORTS

Supports OPD provides to all partnership districts.

- Reviews and analyzes progress on the district's Goal Area(s), Interim Target Benchmarks (ITBs) and End Target Outcomes (ETOs)
- Collaborates with districts to identify supports and adjust activities to ensure continued progress
- Determines if more intensive, i.e., Tier 2 or 3 interventions are needed
- Completes and submits Section 21(h) funding applications. Reviews Section 21(h) utilization and identifies modifications as needed

Tier 1: Partnership District Supports

Work Through the
Assess Needs
Process

Within 90
days

Develop the
Partnership
Agreement

Within 90
days

Complete the
Resource Allocation
Review and
Periodic-Resource
Allocation Review (if
applicable)

Within 90
days

Establish Goal(s),
Benchmarks, and
Outcomes

Within 90
days

Create the
Continuous
Improvement Plan
in the MICIP
platform

By
May/June
TBD

Conduct Partnership
Agreement
Meetings

Monthly

Tier 2 Enhanced & Tier 3 Intense Support

Systems Implementation

Leadership

Instructional Practices

Resource Allocation

Additional...

OPD's Responsive Approach to Partnership District Needs (2 of 2)

TIER 2 ENHANCED & TIER 3 INTENSE SUPPORT

Provide focused guidance/assistance in areas where a district needs more support. These areas may include:

- Systems Implementation
- Leadership
- Instructional Practices
- Resource Allocation

The amount and depth of support determines if it is Tier 2 (more frequent, targeted support) or Tier 3 (more intensive, in-depth support).

These supports are designed to help districts make significant progress in their areas of greatest need.



Partnership Agreement Benchmark Review

Partnership Agreement Progress Benchmark Review

The Benchmark Review (BR) is a collaborative process that occurs midway through the three-year partnership agreement. It is designed to assess progress toward interim target benchmarks and identify contributing factors.

Documentation of Evidence

18-Month Benchmark Progress Topic
at Partnership Agreement Meeting

Benchmark Review Summary



Partnership Agreement Exit Criteria and Accountability Measures

Completing the Partnership Agreement Determined by CSI Exit Criteria



OR



PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT
SUMMARY MEETING & REPORT

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES
EVALUATION

CSI Exit Criteria

To exit CSI status a school must:

1) Not be in the bottom 5% of MI School Index, and

2) Have a graduation higher than 67%, and

3) Improve proficiency in **BOTH** Math and ELA MSTEP/SAT in the Spring of 2027 and 2028 from Spring 2025

Accountability Measures

A school that **is required** to apply an accountability measure has met one-third (33.33%) or less of local and state academic outcomes, including graduation rate

A school that **is NOT required** to apply an accountability measure has met **more than** one-third (33.33%) of local and state academic outcomes including graduation rate

State Statute - Accountability Measures

MCL Section
388.1622p

Partnership districts operating schools in the partnership agreement reidentified for CSI in the 2028 identification cycle,

and

those that do not achieve the 36-month academic end target outcomes **must** impose accountability measures:

- A **traditional district** assigned as a partnership district, accountability measures **must include the reconstitution** of the school [MCL Section 388.1622p]
- A **PSA** assigned as a partnership district, accountability measures **may include the reconstitution** of the school [MCL Section 388.1622p]

State Statute - Accountability Measures

MCL Section
388.1622p

Reconstitution of the school is defined by [MCL Section 388.1622p]:

- The district shall make significant changes to the instructional and non-instructional programming of the school based on the needs identified through a comprehensive review of data,
- The district shall review whether the current principal of the school should remain as principal or be replaced, and
- The reconstitution plan for the school must require the adoption of goals similar to the goals included in the partnership agreement, with a limit of 3 years to achieve the goals

The partnership agreement requires districts to identify **at least one** accountability measure in Section XVI.

Accountability measures must be imposed no later than the 2029-30 school year for schools re-identified for CSI and failing to satisfy more than one-third of the academic outcomes



Section 21(h) Funding

MCL 388.1621(h)

Requirements for districts to receive funds:

- Complete a needs assessment utilizing MICIP
- Develop an intervention plan which is incorporated into the agreement
- Utilize funds to support the attainment of:
 - *18-month interim target benchmarks*
 - *36-month end target outcomes*
- Demonstrate effectiveness and meet a minimum utilization rate

Funds may be used for:

1. Professional development for teachers, district, or school leadership,
2. Increased instructional time,
3. Teacher mentors,
4. Literacy,
5. Numeracy,
6. Reducing K-3 class sizes
7. Reducing chronic absenteeism, or
8. Other expenditures that directly impact student achievement and cannot be paid from existing district financial resources

Section 21h Funding FY24-FY25

MCL 388.1621(h)

Examples

Literacy

(materials, tutoring programs, teachers/interventionists, professional development)

Mathematics

(materials, tutoring programs, teachers/interventionists, professional development)

Attendance/Graduation Rate (staff, professional learning)

Whole Child

(climate/culture, social-emotional learning programs, behavior intervention support programs, staff)

Teacher Retention/Recruitment

(stipends, bonuses)

NEW: Formula Based

MCL 388.1621(h)

The Michigan Legislature allocated funds for partnership districts.

District funding is based upon district's identified partnership school(s) and student count, and identified needs (using MI School Index).

Funding is dedicated to improving instruction and learning in districts and their respective schools.

Partnership districts create and submit line items for approval on an annual basis via NexSys.

Webpage:
[Office of Partnership
Districts](#)

Email:
[MDE-
OfficeofPartnershipDistricts
@michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-OfficeofPartnershipDistricts@michigan.gov)

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Office of Partnership Districts. At the top, the Michigan Department of Education logo is on the left, and a navigation menu with 'About Us', 'Services', 'Resources', 'News & Info', and 'Contact Us' is on the right. Below the navigation is a dark blue header with the text 'Office of Partnership Districts'. Underneath the header is a breadcrumb trail: 'Michigan Department of Education > Services > School Performance & Supports > Partnership Districts'. The main content area features a paragraph of text: 'In March 2017, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) began discussions with 10 school districts to develop partnership agreements with the goal of improving achievement levels at the lowest performing schools in Michigan. With multiple partners at the table, districts identify a plan of support and interventions that will improve student outcomes, while prioritizing academic outcomes. Moreover, the Office of Partnership Districts (OPD) is dedicated to providing timely and targeted comprehensive support to the state's lowest performing schools and districts. Through increased collaboration and positive relationships, our mission is to reduce barriers and identify appropriate resources to help expedite the district's academic achievement for all students.' Below the text are five circular icons with labels: 'Partnership District Agreements' (pencil and paper), 'Resources' (stack of papers and magnifying glass), 'Education Policy Innovation Collaborative (EPIC)' (bar chart with upward arrow), 'OPD Communications' (document with lines), and 'Contact Us' (mobile phone with speech bubble). At the bottom, there is a 'Follow us' section with icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.