


Education Policy Guide

The Mid-Michigan Regional Education Agency Perspective



Telling the story of what is really happening in public schools in the Mid-Michigan service area.

Identifying needs early and being proactive in our approach to policy.

Sharing ideas as a collective think tank, providing input from the local level directly to legislative leaders.

Working together to promote academic achievement and overall student success!

A document compiled by the Superintendents of Ingham ISD, Clinton County RESA, Eaton RESA and Shiawassee RESD.

Last Updated: February 2018

On behalf of the intermediate and local school district Superintendents representing Ingham, Eaton, Clinton and Shiawassee Counties, I am pleased to share the 2018 edition of our Education Policy Guide.

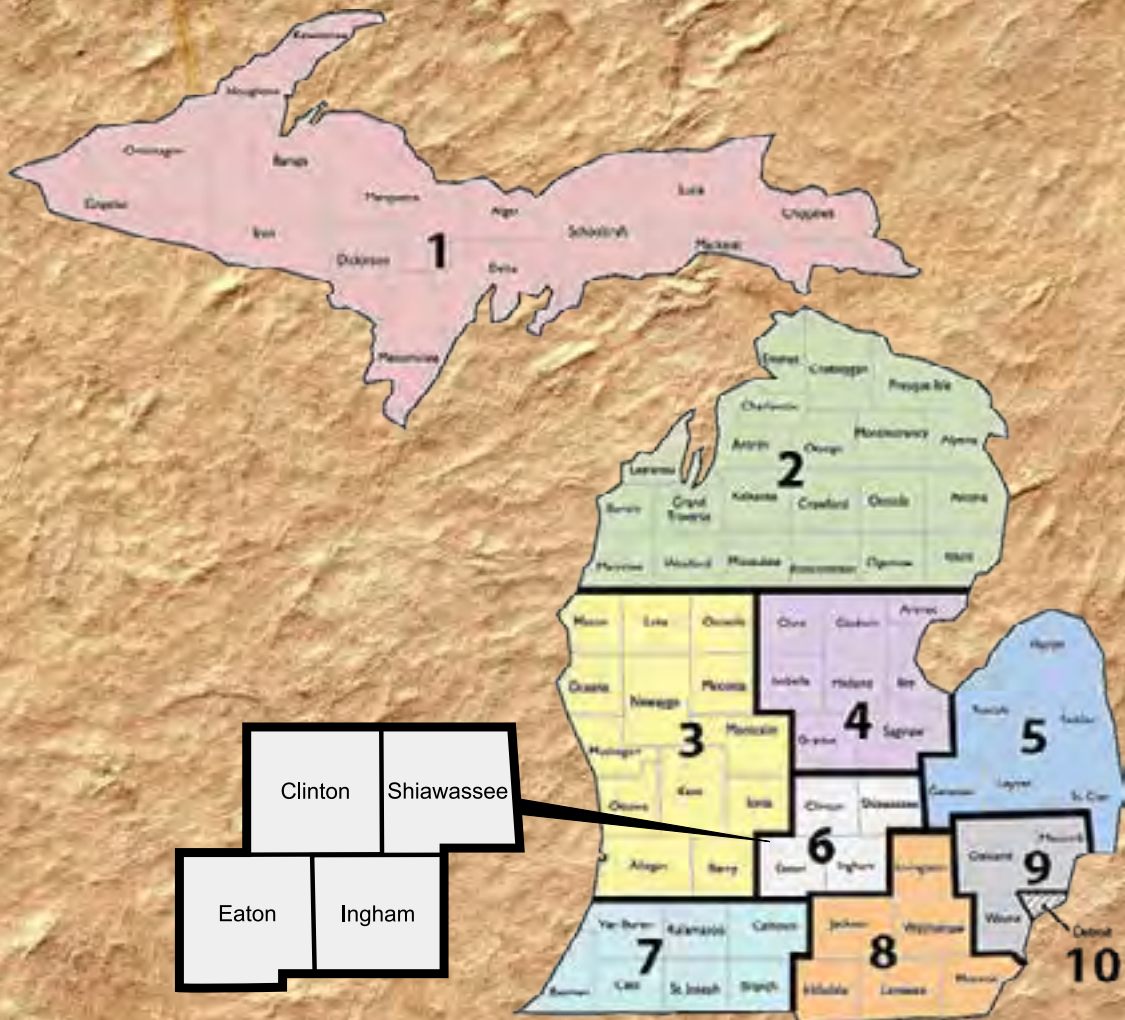
This document is designed to provide background information and belief statements from Mid-Michigan Superintendents regarding a variety of education related policy issues. By providing information and clear, solutions-based belief statements, it is our goal to inform our communities as well as the elected officials that represent the voting electorate in our region.

Further, the intermediate and local school district Superintendents commit to serving as a resource and conduit for information on the issues discussed herein in an attempt to help our legislators make the most informed decisions when acting on legislation that impacts the children, families and communities we serve.

Dr. Scott M. Koenigsknecht
Ingham ISD, Superintendent



Mid-Michigan Region 6



Ingham ISD

Dansville Schools
 East Lansing Public Schools
 Haslett Public Schools
 Holt Public Schools
 Lansing School District
 Leslie Public Schools
 Mason Public Schools
 Okemos Public Schools
 Stockbridge Comm. Schools
 Waverly Community Schools
 Webberville Comm. Schools
 Williamston Comm. Schools

Eaton RESA

Charlotte Public Schools
 Eaton Rapids Public Schools
 Grand Ledge Public Schools
 Maple Valley Schools
 Oneida Twp. School Dist. 3
 Pottersville Public Schools

Clinton County RESA

Bath Community Schools
 DeWitt Public Schools
 Fowler Public Schools
 Ovid-Elsie Area Schools
 Pewamo-Westphalia Schools
 St. Johns Public Schools

Shiawassee RESD

Byron Area Schools
 Corunna Public Schools
 Durand Area Schools
 Laingsburg Comm. Schools
 Morrice Area Schools
 New Lothrop Public Schools
 Owosso Public Schools
 Perry Public Schools



Topic: Pre-Labor Day Start

The typical summer recess for Michigan schools is a 12-week break. Allowing schools to begin before Labor Day and utilize a balanced calendar would reduce the amount of material students forget over the summer. This change would also increase opportunities for remediation to keep students caught up throughout the year.

One obstacle teachers must overcome in the fall is combating the "summer slide." Summer slide is the term given for the learning loss students typically endure over the long summer break. The longer the summer, the more material they forget; thus, the longer it can take teachers to bring students back to the level reached at the end of the previous year.

The amount of "catch-up" time depends on the student and the subject, but teachers say it can be two to nine weeks. Research shows lower socio-economic status (SES) students have a greater loss, which is cumulative over successive summers.

Belief Statement

The Superintendents encourage the removal of the post-Labor Day start date legislation. Furthermore, we support the expansion of calendar opportunities for school districts and buildings that have illustrated student academic advancement and growth. Allow districts local control and the ability to select the 180 days that work best for their community without limitations.



Current Legislation:

Senate Bill 271
House Bill 5157
House Bill 4163



Benefits/Data:

Continuity of Instruction

Provides additional time and support for remediation

Reduces summer learning loss and teacher burnout

Responsive to community needs



Supported By:

All Superintendents

National Association for Year-round Education (NAYRE)



Education Contacts:

Dr. David Hornak
Holt Public Schools
dhornak@hpsk12.net
517.694.5715

Ryan Cunningham
Ovid-Elsie Area Schools
ryan.cunningham@ovidelsie.org
989.834.2271

Michelle Falcon
Maple Valley Schools
mfalcon@mvs.k12.mi.us
517.852.9699



Topic: Qualified Substitute Shortage

The Superintendents appreciate the passage of Public Act 219 of 2015, which addresses the critical shortage of employees within certain fields of education. We believe, however, there is more work that needs to be done in order to put the most highly qualified substitute teachers in our classrooms.

New legislation that allows retired teachers to substitute in our classrooms has made providing/hiring substitutes more costly. There is an additional Unfunded Actuarial Accrued Liability (UAAL) charge of 20.96 percent going to MPSERS.

Additional funding in the foundation would allow for an increase in sub pay and subsequent increase to the pool.

Substitute credit and planned program of study requirements make it difficult to find substitutes in several areas. Some of MDE's policies and procedures also make it challenging.

Belief Statement

The Superintendents support legislation that would increase flexibility for potential substitute teacher certification by reducing the number of credit hours required from 90 to 60 and by removing a planned program of study requirement. We also support legislation that lifts the cap on retiree earnings and allows our retired teachers to be substitutes without an additional financial impact to the foundation allowance.



Current Legislation:

House Bill 4421
House Bill 4422
House Bill 4869



Benefits/Data:

An additional UAAL charge fee of 20.96 percent goes to MPSERS and impacts school funding.



Supported By:

All Superintendents



Education Contacts:

Susan Tinney
Ingham ISD
stinney@inghamisd.org
517.244.1289

Neil Hufnagel
Fowler Public Schools
nhufnagel@fowerschools.net
989.593.2296

Mark Rosekrans
Charlotte Public Schools
rosekrm@charlottenet.org
517.541.5100



Topic: School Reporting, Ranking and Accountability

The Superintendents understand the need for a transparent, flexible, state-accountability system that provides schools and parents with the necessary data to make informed decisions and promote student success; and that aims to support, rather than sanction, schools in their efforts to positively influence student growth.

It is important, however, to remember schools are a multi-faceted and unique asset to each community they serve. Ranking them on one measure is not indicative of their performance or value to their community.

As ranking and accountability measures are developed, input from practitioners should be included with a focus on student outcomes and the impact poverty has on a child.

Michigan is the most complicated state in the nation when it comes to school accountability. Don't exceed federal requirements in what is required from schools.

Belief Statement

The Superintendents support a school accountability system like the Michigan Department of Education Parent Dashboard that was implemented as a part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as it focuses on multiple measures, both academic and non-academic. Any changes to the accountability system should include local measures, in addition to state measurements of accountability.



Current Legislation:



Benefits/Data:

MDE Parent Dashboard Information:

<http://www.mischooldata.org/ParentDashboard>



Supported By:

All Superintendents



Education Contacts:

Yvonne Caamal Canul
Lansing School District
yvonne.caamalcanul@lansingschools.net
517.755.1050

Dr. William DeFrance
Eaton Rapids Public Schools
wdefrance@erpsk12.org
517.663.8155



Topic: Weapons-Free Zone

Schools should be weapons-free zones at all times, with the exception of the presence of law enforcement officials. When schools go into lockdown, it disrupts the educational environment and it is impossible for bystanders to know who is allowed to have weapons under the law. Weapons in schools put safety in jeopardy. This also puts law enforcement in a difficult position to determine who the perpetrator is in the event of a lockdown.

Michigan's high court is expected to weigh in sometime in 2018 on whether school districts can ban anyone not in law enforcement from carrying guns onto school grounds. The legal battle stems from a 2016 appellate court ruling that public schools can ban guns from their premises,

citing more than two dozen state laws with language referencing "weapon-free school zones." Two gun rights groups are challenging firearm bans in Ann Arbor and Clio, but other school districts have similar policies.

Belief Statement

To that end, the Superintendents oppose both open and concealed carry in our schools, and support the modification of Michigan's open carry law to expressly prohibit the loophole that allows for the carrying of a firearm on school property.



Current Legislation:

Senate Bills 584-586



Benefits/Data:

According to CDC's School Associated Violent Death Study, between 14 and 34 school-age children are victims of homicide on school grounds or on their way to and from school—each and every year.



Supported By:

All Superintendents



Education Contacts:

Will Heath
Portland Public Schools
wheath@portlandk12.org
517.647.4161

Ryan Cunningham
Ovid-Elsie Area Schools
ryan.cunningham@ovidelsie.org
989.834.2271

Dr. William DeFrance
Eaton Rapids Public Schools
wdefrance@erpsk12.org
517.663.8155

Topic: School Aid Fund - Foundation Allowance - Categoricals - Proposal A

Michigan's public schools are struggling financially. While funding has increased, it is extremely difficult for school systems to reduce their expenditures in the same fashion as our private sector colleagues. It is extremely challenging to cut quickly enough, and the cutting of programs often leads to students selecting other "schools of choice." This, combined with a low birthrate statewide, results in financial woes for many districts.

Work is needed to close the equity gap with a focus on providing necessary and sufficient resources for impoverished, English-language learning and special needs students. Proposal A, the Michigan Education Finance Study, the School Finance Research Collaborative and the Lt. Governor's Special Education Funding Report should be reviewed in order to protect the School Aid Fund tax

base and eliminate structural deficits. During this process, it is imperative to reduce the vulnerability of declining-enrollment districts. At the same time, the state of Michigan should provide incentives to districts that continue to balance their budgets while implementing innovative programs.

Belief Statement

To remedy this, the Superintendents call on the Governor and our legislators to fully fund a flexible Student Foundation Grant and categoricals including Cost of Living Adjustment increases with emphasis on at-risk, low-income, English-language learners, special education students and a 2x formula. Funding existing categoricals should continue with any new money being rolled into the foundation allowance.



Current Legislation:



Benefits/Data:

www.fundmischools.org/

www.michigan.gov/documents/budget/Michigan_Education_Finance_Study_527806_7.pdf

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/calley/Special_Education_Finance_Report_-_final_2017_606751_7.pdf



Supported By:

All Superintendents

MASA
MAISA
MASB
MSBO



Education Contacts:

Dr. Scott Koenigs knecht
Ingham ISD
drk@inghamisd.org
517.244.1214

Dr. John Deiter
DeWitt Public Schools
deiter@dewittschools.net
517.668.3000

Dr. Brian Metcalf
Grand Ledge Public Schools
metcalfb@glcomets.net
517.925.5400

Topic: School Aid Fund, continued - MPSERS

Legacy costs associated with retirement benefits continue to increase. There are now more Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System (MPSERS) retirees than there are active MPSERS employees paying into the system. The stranding of costs associated with privatizing and early retirement incentives really hurt the system. Exempting entities like the Education Achievement Authority and charter schools further exacerbates the problem.

Consistent application of the Retirement Information Manual needs to be a focus of the Office of Retirement Services.

Belief Statement

The Superintendents appreciate the Governor's commitment to MPSERS and financing the increases through relief from the state in Sec. 147a of the State Aid Act. We encourage continued relief and support in the form of "off the top" payments so as to recognize not all public school entities participate in MPSERS.

Current and future stranded costs need to be minimized in order to ensure the fiscal solvency of the program. All schools receiving public dollars should be required to pay into MPSERS.



Current Legislation:



Benefits/Data:

Current MPSERS rate is 36 percent of salary and is unsustainable.



Supported By:

All Superintendents



Education Contacts:

Dr. Scott Koenigsnecht
Ingham ISD
drk@inghamisd.org
517.244.1214

Dr. Brian Metcalf
Grand Ledge Public
Schools
metcalfb@glcomets.net
517.925.5400

Topic: School Aid Fund, continued - Sinking Funds, Millages

The State of Michigan is facing a crisis regarding aging fleets of school buses in school districts. In Ingham County, there are 170 buses more than ten years old. Expanding sinking funds to cover school busses would allow local communities to have greater decision making power about the safety and efficiency of their bus fleets.

Belief Statement

The Superintendents support legislation to address the serious need for school buses to be covered under sinking funds. We also support that any changes to the law should be retroactive.

Recently a law passed that allowed sinking funds to be used for technology and security reasons. We appreciate the flexibility and use of the money and advocate for additional flexibility including using the money toward school buses.



Current Legislation:

Senate Bill 384
House Bill 4046



Benefits/Data:



Supported By:

All Superintendents



Education Contacts:

Dr. Scott Koenigsknecht
Ingham ISD
drk@inghamisd.org
517.244.1214

Dr. William DeFrance
Eaton Rapids Public
Schools
wdefrance@erpsk12.org
517.663.8155

Topic: School Aid Fund, continued - Community Colleges and Higher Education

Since 2003, Michigan's School Aid Fund has had \$703,527,300 of expenses shifted into it from other budgets. At the same time, the amount the School Aid Fund has received from the General Fund in the form of a transfer has decreased by \$158,900,000. The net of these two actions is approximately \$860,000,000 less (more than \$590 per pupil) to spend on K-12 education.

Left alone in 2003, the 2017-18 School Aid Fund would be in much better condition than it is now.

Belief Statement

The Superintendents call for an immediate halt of the shifting of General Fund programs to the School Aid Fund and call for a return of the funding of certain programs from the School Aid Fund back to the General Fund, from which they were originally funded.

If Community Colleges and Higher Education continue to be funded out of the School Aid Fund, The Region 6 Superintendents suggest policy changes that would include significantly lowering and leveling the cost of dual enrollment and early college credits across the state, providing in-district rates for all students, and allowing credits to transferred to any community college and/or university regardless of where they are earned.



Current Legislation:



Benefits/Data:

More than \$1 billion less (more than \$700 per pupil) to spend on K-12 education since 2003.



Supported By:

All Superintendents



Education Contacts:

Dr. Scott Koenigsknecht
Ingham ISD
drk@inghamisd.org
517.244.1214

Neil Hufnagel
Fowler Public Schools
nhufnagel@fowerschools.net
989.593.2296

Dr. Brian Metcalf
Grand Ledge Public Schools
metcalfb@glcomets.net
517.925.5400

Topic: School Aid Fund, continued - Michigan Education Finance Studies

In June 2016, the results from the Michigan Education Finance Study were released. The study indicated inadequate funding for students and suggests that at-risk students require 30 percent more money, while English-language learners require 40 percent more. In addition, special education was not considered in the study.

We would stress the importance of equity, but it cannot be achieved at the expense of others. Adequacy is synonymous with mediocrity - we encourage legislators to look beyond what is adequate and strive for what is eminent.

In November of 2017, the Lieutenant Governor's Task Force on Special Education released a study that identified a shortfall of approximately \$700 million in special education funding. This equates to \$459 per pupil and \$11,498

per special education FTE.

Another study, The School Finance Resource Collaborative, is set to be released in February 2018 with the recommended base foundation of \$9,590, with additional consideration given to students with disabilities, English-language learners and students in poverty. There is also suggested additional funding for transportation.

Belief Statement

The Superintendents expect a thorough, transparent review of the findings and support the alignment of programs, services and funding for a coherent P-20 educational system while protecting School Aid Funding dollars for Pre-K through 12 participants.



Current Legislation:



Benefits/Data:

www.fundmischools.org/

www.michigan.gov/documents/budget/Michigan_Education_Finance_Study_527806_7.pdf

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/calley/Special_Education_Finance_Report_-_final_2017_606751_7.pdf



Supported By:

All Superintendents



Education Contacts:

Yvonne Caamal Canul
Lansing Public Schools
yvonne.caamalcanul@lansingschools.net
517.755.1050

Dr. John Deiter
DeWitt Public Schools
deiter@dewittschools.net
517.668.3000

Dr. William DeFrance
Eaton Rapids Public Schools
wdefrance@erpsk12.org
517.663.8155

Topic: School Aid Fund, continued - Cyber vs. Traditional (Bricks and Mortar)

Technology certainly has become increasingly important in today's classrooms. We encourage MDE and policymakers to work to promote quality assurances for charter and cyber school expansion, and to ensure they meet quality and transparency requirements. Approximately \$83 million is spent on cyber schools each year.

We hope to see the collection and publication of longitudinal data from these programs that includes student achievement data, completion rates, drops/adds in enrollment, demographic make-up of students served and the true cost of education per student.

Belief Statement

The Superintendents encourage legislators to work to promote quality assurances for charter and cyber schools and ensure they meet quality, transparency and accountability requirements for all students, including children with disabilities and those to whom English is a second language.

Furthermore, we recommend research be conducted on the true cost of educating a student through online programming, and that the per pupil foundation allowance be adjusted accordingly between traditional and cyber schools, with a specific focus on for-profit charters.



Current Legislation:

House Bill 5384



Benefits/Data:

Traditional public schools have significant costs to operate and maintain buildings in which students learn every day.

Cyber schools have little to no facility costs in an online environment.



Supported By:

All Superintendents



Education Contacts:

Ron Drzewicki
Mason Public Schools
drzewickir@masonk12.net
517.676.6489

Dr. William DeFrance
Eaton Rapids Public Schools
wdefrance@erpsk12.org
517.663.8155



Topic: Truancy and Chronic Student Absenteeism

In Michigan, 15.6 percent of K-12 students, or 233,582 students, were chronically absent in 2016-17, up from the year before at 14.7 percent. Missing school a few days a month may not seem like much, but educators say if you do the math, it adds up. Being absent two days a month during the school year amounts to four weeks of missed instruction.

Last school year, kindergartners had the highest rates of chronic absenteeism among all grades, with seniors being close behind, according to state data. About 20.4 percent of kindergartners were chronically absent last year while 20.2 of seniors were, too. Fifth and sixth graders had the smallest group of chronically absent students at 12.9 percent and 12.6 percent respectively.

Data shows that as students miss more and more class time, graduation rates go down and delinquency rates go up. It is a commonly known fact that students who miss school tend to struggle academically and are more likely to drop out.

The problem is then magnified because dropouts are less likely to be employed, and are often more likely to face poverty or prison time. In fact, of the 8,800 people sentenced to prison in Michigan in 2012, 49 percent did not have a GED or high school diploma.

Belief Statement

The Superintendents support a statewide definition of chronic absenteeism that allows for the development and implementation of a statutory, multijurisdictional, statewide system to address the issues of educational neglect and truancy. The system needs to be consistent and legally require the involvement of the probate courts, including their judges and prosecutors. The system should recognize and combat, to the extent possible, the loopholes currently being utilized, including families turning to homeschooling when truancy issues arise. It should also require that districts not utilize suspension and expulsion as a consequence for truant students.



Current Legislation:

Senate Bill 103-106



Benefits/Data:



Supported By:

All Superintendents



Education Contact:

Michelle Falcon
Maple Valley Schools
mfalcon@mvs.k12.
mi.us
517.852.9699



Topic: Academic Distress - State School Reform Office

We support legislation that funds the implementation of an early warning system and supports the steps necessary to prevent school districts from falling into academic distress.

There is also a need to define criteria for academic distress and make the information transparent and consistent for all districts.

In the fall of 2017, the State Reform Officer and the State School Reform Office were returned to the oversight of the Michigan Department of Education. This represents a significant step forward in providing supports, not punitive measures, to academically struggling buildings and districts.

Belief Statement

The Superintendents support the development, funding and implementation of a well researched and evidenced-based early warning system, and support the steps necessary to provide collaborative academic interventions that prevent school districts from falling into academic distress.

Though we appreciate the partnership model instituted by MDE, we support a full repeal of 1280c and a complete and comprehensive analysis of research-based, turn-around solutions with input from practitioners in the field.



Current Legislation:

Senate Bill 27



Benefits/Data:



Supported By:

All Superintendents



Education Contacts:

Yvonne Caamal Canul
Lansing School District
yvonne.caamalcanul@lansingschools.net
517.755.1050

Alena Zachery-Ross
Okemos Public Schools
alena.zachery-ross@oke-mosk12.net
517.706.5009

Sean Williams
Eaton RESA
swilliams@eatonresa.org
517.543.5500



Topic: Consistent Formative and Summative State Testing Requirements

Since moving away from the MEAP in 2014, Michigan's summative assessment test used for measuring achievement has continually changed. After revising the MEAP into a different form in 2014-2015, the MSTEP was introduced in 2015 and 2016 and has continued to change. Changing tests results in establishing new baselines, which makes prior years' data difficult to use. Apples to apples comparisons cannot be done, and the collected data cannot be used to improve curriculum or instruction.

High performing states like Massachusetts, Minnesota and Tennessee have been using long term, consistent and aligned state assessments. Tennessee has been using the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program, or TCAP, since 1988. Minnesota has been using the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills, or MTAS, since 2007. Massachusetts has been using the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment

System, or MCAS, since 1998. Consistent curriculum, assessment delivery, assessment standards and expectations can lead to greater academic achievement.

Belief Statement

The Superintendents support the development and implementation of a clear, long term, consistent system of formative and summative state testing requirements that inform instruction as opposed to punishing districts. We support a testing framework that provides immediate, consistent, reliable feedback for a ten-year period.

If legislated, we endorse a super majority to change state testing requirements.



Current Legislation:



Benefits/Data:



Supported By:

All Superintendents



Education Contacts:

Wayne Petroelje
Clinton County RESA
wpetroelje@ccresa.org
989.224.6831

Dr. Anthony Berthiaume
New Lothrop Area Public
Schools
aberthiaume@newlo-
thropk12.mi.us
810.638.5091

Sean Williams
Eaton RESA
swilliams@eatonresa.org
517.543.5500

Topic: Early Childhood

We hope to advance the development of a state-wide early childhood system to:

- Partner with the Office of Great Start (OGS), Michigan Head Start Association (MHSA) and the Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education (MAASE) to address alignment among the geographic boundaries impacting service areas for Head Start, Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE).
- Advocate for policy change that increases funding for GSRP.
- Partner with OGS to establish a pilot program to extend GSRP to the most at-risk, three-year old children.
- Develop a crosswalk between Program Quality Assessment (PQA), Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and the Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten (ECSQ-PK) to support and advocate for increased flexibility to GSRP program quality tools.
- Advocate for increased, flexible funding to provide services to families and children birth through age three.
- Lead birth through grade three alignment in collaboration with General Education Leadership Network (GELN) and other key stakeholders.
- Support the implementation of the Michigan Kindergarten Entry Observation, utilizing the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) tool.
- Promote high quality, relevant professional development and support resources for the early childhood community.
- Support the implementation of timely and efficient Pre K-third grade student data collection systems through collaboration with stakeholder groups.
- Promote and support inclusive preschool environments.

Source: MAISA Early Childhood Committee 2017-18

Belief Statement

The Superintendents support a universally accessible early childhood education system (ages birth to five) including early prevention, intervention and school readiness programs. Additionally, we support home visiting opportunities that promote parent education and involvement. We also request no-cost universal preschool. Revenues to support additions to existing programs as well as new programs should be derived from new funding sources. Revenues should not be drawn from funds dedicated to the foundation grant.



Current Legislation:



Benefits/Data:

More than 5,700 applications for preschool, Head Start and Great Start Readiness Programs were processed in Ingham, Clinton, Eaton and Shiawassee Counties during the 2017-18 school year.



Supported By:

All Superintendents



Education Contacts:

Michelle Nicholson
Ingham ISD
mnichols@inghamisd.org
517.244.1384

Dr. John Deiter
DeWitt Public Schools
deiter@dewittschools.net
517.668.3000

Dr. Andrew Tuttle
Owosso Public Schools
tuttle@owosso.k12.mi.us
989.723.8131

Topic: Career and Technical Education

The reason we educate our students is to help them become college and career ready. We support full-funding of comprehensive programs that provide career planning and development, career training and work-related basic skills. Additionally, we support increased flexibility relative to the Michigan Merit Curriculum so students learn in a culture that encourages career exploration and development, and do not have to seek out a personal curriculum to achieve their post-secondary goals.

CTE programs are often operated through a career and technical education center and offer multiple programs accessed by local districts, which pay into the millage. Students from anywhere in the service area can attend a program;

this economies-of-scale system makes CTE opportunities affordable for all. Local school districts also offer CTE programs in their high schools. In addition, Ingham ISD, Lansing School District and Clinton and Eaton RESAs have a tri-county agreement that provides access to programs through a set tuition arrangement, providing even more opportunities to students.

Belief Statement

The Superintendents appreciate the emphasis on career and technical education and they support continued funding relative to categorical (Section 61) and Federal CTE Perkins. In addition, we would like to see continued support and promotion at the state level regarding the importance of K-12 CTE programs and services, including work based learning opportunities.



Current Legislation:



Benefits/Data:

Approximately 40 percent of Ingham, Clinton, Eaton and Shiawassee grade 11 and 12 students participate in CTE programs.

In 2017-18, 139 CTE programs were offered in our region.



Supported By:

All Superintendents

MAISA



Education Contacts:

Karl Heidrich
Stockbridge Community Schools
heidrick@panthernet.net
517.851.7188 Ext. 5501

Jennifer Branch
Clinton County RESA
jbranch@ccresa.org
989.224.6831 Ext. 2334

Dr. Anthony Berthiaume
New Lothrop Area Schools
aberthiaume@newlothropk12.mi.us
810.638.5091

Topic: Special Education

The intermediate school districts and their local school districts wish to see special education mandates fully funded while increasing flexibility and cost efficiency in the delivery of special education services. This includes:

- The creation of a full continuum of services, which includes the use of all state agencies.
- The development of special education identification program rules that eliminate stereotypes, prejudices and barriers to effective programming, such as restricting caseloads and class sizes that are not based on research.
- The removal of restrictions in the area of staff qualifications that serve to limit the provision of more flexible and integrative services.

- Academic performance standards and assessments that are appropriate for the unique learning needs of students with disabilities. Source: MASA Legislative Program 2013-14

Belief Statement

In order to ensure a safe and effective learning environment for all students, the Superintendents support amending IDEA and Section 504 to ensure equitable treatment of all students.

Additionally, it is requested that special education teachers be given more flexibility in their schedules. With this provision, school districts could be more creative in how they assign their special education classroom teachers to use various classroom activities.



Current Legislation:



Benefits/Data:

Across Region 6 IDS/ RESAs, the special education rate population* varies from 10.2 percent - 16.3 percent, for an average of 13.4 percent.

The state average: 13 percent
*(MISchoolData.org)



Supported By:

All Superintendents



Education Contacts:

Dr. Scott Koenigsknecht
Ingham ISD
drk@inghamisd.org
517.244.1214

Andrew Rable
Ingham ISD
arable@inghamisd.org
517.244.1263

Cindy Anderson
Eaton RESA
canderson@eatonresa.org
517.543.5500



Topic: Lame Duck and Term Limits

There were 620 bills passed by the legislature in 2012. Of these bills 282 (45%) were passed during the 10-day lame duck session of 2012, with 43 percent of these bills passing on the last day of session. The flurry of lame duck bill passing, coupled with the many well-intended, but inexperienced, lawmakers is a recipe for disaster.

Many states have lame duck laws that are designed to prevent the instance above, which occurs frequently in Michigan. Laws and public policy should be created utilizing the democratic process that allow the input of the electorate in an open and accessible setting.

Belief Statement

The Superintendents support the concept of revisiting term limits and modifying them so as to allow for a more experienced law-making body. We also call for legislation that would regulate the political process during the end of the session or year in an effort to allow for proper committee hearings, to ensure lawmakers understand what they are voting on, and to avoid middle of the night passage of bills. We encourage legislators to look at other state models.



Current Legislation:



Benefits/Data:

282 (45 percent) of bills passed in 2012 were passed during the 10-day lame duck session, with 43 percent of these bills passing on the last day of session.



Supported By:

All Superintendents



Education Contacts:

Dr. John Deiter
DeWitt Public Schools
deiter@dewittschools.net
517.668.3000

Dr. Brian Metcalf
Grand Ledge Public Schools
metcalfb@glcomets.net
517.925.5400



Topic: Public Education Profession

Public education as a profession has been under attack for the last ten years. Funding cuts, tax cuts, attack on unions, the unregulated proliferation of charter and cyber schools, and the reduction of benefits has resulted in fewer young adults entering the profession. Teacher Education programs report a 40 percent reduction in applicants. Research shows 46 percent of teachers leave within the first five years. Reduction in retirement options will likely reduce the number of people pursuing the profession, thus damaging public education and the children served by it.

In Finland, a top performing country, they select the top 10 percent of high school graduates and pay their way through six years of teacher education. Would-be teachers are placed in classrooms for two years before going on their own. Teachers are allowed the opportunity to make collaborative and substantive changes in both what and how they teach. The prin-

cipals of the schools are trained educational experts, not the public relations person in the office and the discipline officer of the school. Teachers are required to continually hone their skills, aided by an evaluation system refined by the principal and the teacher.

Finland decided to professionalize education — to view all educators not as employees, but as professional educators. Sadly, most Americans still believe that it is the teacher's "job" to teach.

Belief Statement

The Superintendents discourage public policy and/or legislation that is designed to degrade, devalue and result in the demise of public education in the state of Michigan. We encourage legislators from both parties at all levels to view public education as an investment and a way to develop talent, enhance economic growth and provide a high quality of living in the state.



Current Legislation:



Benefits/Data:

Teacher Education programs report a 40 percent reduction in applicants since 2011.

Research shows 46 percent of teachers leave within the first five years.



Supported By:

All Superintendents



Education Contacts:

Alena Zachery-Ross
Okemos Public Schools
alena.zachery-ross@okemosk12.net
517.706.5009

Neil Hufnagel
Fowler Public Schools
nhufnagel@fowlerschools.net
989.593.2296

Tricia Murphy-Alderman
Byron Area Schools
murphyalderman@byron.k12.mi.us
810.266.4881



Ingham ISD

Michigan State Senate

Curtis Hertel, D-23
517.373.1731
senchertel@
senate.michigan.gov

Rick Jones, D-24
517.373.3447
senrjones@
senate.michigan.gov

Michigan House of Representatives

Tom Cochran, D-67
517.373.0587
TomCochran@
house.mi.gov

Vacant, D-68
517.373.0826
District068@
house.mi.gov

Sam Singh, D-69
517.373.1786
SamSingh@
house.mi.gov

Tom Barrett, R-71
517.373.0853
TomBarrett@
house.mi.gov

Clinton County RESA

Michigan State Senate

Rick Jones, D-24
517.373.3447
senrjones@
senate.michigan.gov

Michigan House of Representatives

Tom Leonard, D-93
517.373.1778
TomLeonard@house.
mi.gov

Eaton RESA

Michigan State Senate

Rick Jones, D-24
517.373.3447
senrjones@
senate.michigan.gov

Michigan House of Representatives

Tom Barrett, R-71
517.373.0853
TomBarrett@
house.mi.gov

Shiawassee RESD

Michigan State Senate

Rick Jones, D-24
517.373.3447
senrjones@
senate.michigan.gov

Michigan House of Representatives

Ben Frederick, R-85
517.373.0841
BenFrederick@
house.mi.gov

Original concept and
design provided by
our partners at Berrien
RESA.

Additional design
support provided by
Lansing School District.

