



Michigan Association of School Administrators Priorities for the 98th Legislative Session

The Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA) is the professional association serving superintendents and their first line of assistants, who serve as CEOs for their community's public schools. MASA serves as an information-rich source of advice and support in areas critical to over 700 public school superintendents and first-line assistants in 584 school districts and 56 intermediate school districts. MASA provides technical, personal, and legal services in addition to a wide array of print and electronic publications, government relations, and professional development opportunities targeted especially for Michigan's top-level school leaders. The mission of MASA is to develop leadership and unity within its membership to achieve the continuous improvement of public education in Michigan.

Highlights of MASA Legislative Priorities:

- **Remove Cumbersome Reporting Requirements:** Michigan school districts are mandated to prepare and submit hundreds of education reports and data to state and federal entities. These reports can be time-consuming and tedious to produce, and are often obsolete by the submission date. The preparation and distribution of education reports that are not useful to decision-makers should be eliminated. Proposed changes to state policies will empower districts by eliminating barriers to improving student achievement.
- **Evidence Based Practices and Student Support:** Changes in education policy should support research and evidence based practices that promote student success and academic growth. Priority should be given to the following:
 - Continued support of GSRP expansion promoted by Governor Snyder. Assure all Michigan students have equitable access to high quality 4-year old preschool.
 - Increase access, transferability, and remove barriers to college for high school students.
 - Balanced calendar (Year-Round School) expansion.
 - Truancy Intervention.
 - Removal of the *post-Labor Day start date*.
- **Improve 3rd grade Reading Proficiency:** Research stresses the importance of early identification and intervention strategies in achieving third grade reading proficiency. Investment in intervention strategies in the earlier years can receive a far greater return on investment in the future.
- **Provide Additional Flexibility for Seat Time Waivers:** Current state law prohibits additional access for more than two online courses per semester without prior approval from the state.
- **Infrastructure and Fiscal Health:**
 - Develop and support legislation to address the serious building infrastructure and security needs of public school districts, including sinking fund reforms that provide flexibility to local districts.
 - Improve and support legislation that funds the implementation of an *early warning system* and supports the steps necessary to prevent school districts from falling into financial debt.

**MASA Legislative Committee's
Priorities for the 98th Legislative Session
2015 - 2016**

Priorities for MASA lobbying and grassroots action will evolve based on both legislative initiative and opportunity, i.e. the opportunity to move forward an MASA sponsored or supported initiative. To that end, the MASA Legislation Committee establishes an evolving list of priorities for each legislative session which serves as the focus for MASA's proactive advocacy.

- Achieve K-12 funding levels that:
 - Provide universal access to quality early childhood and preschool programs, including clear directions and funding for transportation.
 - Fully fund the Student Foundation Grant and categoricals, including COLA increases, with emphasis on at-risk, low-income, English language learners, special education categoricals, and a 2x formula.
 - Work to close the equity gap with a focus on providing necessary and sufficient resources for impoverished, English language learning, and special needs students.
 - Protect the SAF tax base and eliminate structural deficits.
 - Reduce vulnerability of declining enrollment districts.
 - Provide incentives to districts that continue to balance their budget while implementing innovative programs.
 - Prevent the shift of General Fund programs to the School Aid Fund.
 - Return the funding of certain programs from the School Aid Fund back to the General Fund, from which they were originally funded.
 - Align services for children for a coherent P-20 educational system, while protecting SAF dollars for Pre-K through 12 participants.
- Remove cumbersome reporting requirements and proactively address unfunded mandates in statute.
- Develop and support legislation to address the serious building infrastructure and security needs of public school districts, including sinking fund reform that provides flexibility to local districts, while protecting the SBLF.
- Support flexibility in the MMC that will better enable students to attain their career readiness goals and thereby promote greater student success.
- Continue lobbying and education efforts in advocating federal issues, i.e. Medicaid, ESEA, N Size, IDEA (40% Federal funding).
- Work to improve the current measurement systems for accountability and federal waivers.
- Work to promote quality assurances for charter and cyber school expansion and ensure that they meet quality and transparency requirements.
- Increase access and remove barriers to college for high school students.
- Support additional flexibility for seat time waivers.
- Modify Michigan bond law to allow for expansion of textbooks, e-textbooks, and maintenance vehicles
- Eliminate Title I priority set asides.
- Support modification of Michigan's open carry law to expressly prohibit the loophole that allows for the carrying of a concealed firearm on school property.
- Develop and support legislation that funds the implementation of an early warning system and supports the steps necessary to prevent school districts from falling into financial debt.
- Work to extend the prohibited subjects of bargaining to all school employees, specifically support staff and other professionals who are not teachers (e.g., school psychologists, social workers, etc.).
- Promote flexibility in the administration of the Michigan assessment law and ensure alignment with state standards.
- Support research- and evidence-based practices that promote student success and effective student academic growth. Practices should include a balanced calendar, removal of post-Labor Day start, reading intervention support, truancy intervention support.
- Ensure a transparent, flexible state accountability system that provides schools with the necessary data to make informed decisions that promote student success and that aims to support, rather than sanction, schools in their efforts to positively influence student growth.

Proposed Legislative Action to Reduce School Reporting Requirements

Michigan School Districts are mandated to prepare and submit hundreds of education reporting information to state and federal entities. These reports can be time-consuming and tedious to produce, and are often obsolete by the submission date. The preparation and distribution of education reports that are not useful to decision-makers should be eliminated.

Education reporting requirements are randomly located throughout Michigan law, not only in the state's Education Code. Unfortunately, there is no published comprehensive index to easily locate all mandated reports. These reports are costly, often taking a great deal of staff time and funds.

In 2011, the Michigan Department of Education alleviated several reporting burdens by eliminating and collapsing several reporting requirements. The Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA) is requesting legislative action to further reduce the burden of red tape and state mandates faced by school districts across the state. Proposed changes to state policies will empower districts by eliminating barriers to improving student achievement.

MASA stands ready to assist you during this process.

Recommendations:

1. **Eliminate unnecessary and redundant reports.** MASA has identified several reports within school districts and the Department of Education that can be eliminated or collapsed with existing data from other government reporting requirements.
2. **Develop an infrastructure to identify and reduce unnecessary reporting requirements.** The following legislative action or executive orders should be taken.
 - a. Create a Red Tape Review and Removal Taskforce to examine additional and comprehensive solutions to unnecessarily burdensome state regulations and mandates. The Taskforce will review and meet over the school year, soliciting input from all stakeholders, specifically boards of education, superintendents, school leaders, teachers and parents as appropriate. The task force will also review department audits and develop recommendations and report to the Governor and legislature.
 - b. **Audit All School Reporting Requirements.** Every state agency that requests data from school districts shall prepare and submit to the task force, legislature and governor, on or before December 31, 2015, a report that identifies data it receives from local governments and school districts, explains the agency's or authority's need for the report and makes a recommendation to eliminate or continue the reporting requirement.

POLICY BRIEF

Where the recommendation is to continue the reporting requirement it shall make additional recommendations including but not limited to the secure electronic transmission of data directly to state agencies and authorities to reduce the burden the reporting requirement imposes on school district. The report shall also identify overlaps of data collection between departments and recommendations to reduce redundancy and streamline the collection process

In determining whether reports may no longer be of significant value, the following issues should be considered:

- Whether the report is the result of a specific budget bill and the required information is no longer timely or relevant;
- Whether the report is still relevant or necessary given a change in law or circumstances;
- Whether other sources of information or other reports provide the same or similar information; and
- Whether interested stakeholders continue to rely on the report, or whether there are other public interests in continuing to prepare the report.

c. Require all future legislation creating a mandated report to include a sunset provision with a maximum of two years.

d. Prohibit the implementation of any new state reporting requirements and mandates until after the start of the school fiscal year unless required by executive order or federal law, or made optional to the school district.

e. Require state agencies to make every effort to share existing data and to pre-populate reports in an effort to avoid duplication of reporting requirements and that they work to eliminate duplication of data across departments.

f. By the start of the 16-17 school year all state departments shall require digital only submission of data.

3. **Complete data system to promote collaboration.** Continued support for the unified electronic data integration system (component of the section 22i categorical) in order to reduce the enormous costs of paperwork, mailing, processing and filing done by the department and education system. The data integration system is designed to streamline the use of educational information statewide through common data & common solutions by eliminating the need for redundant data entry, validate accuracy; data can be shared between systems and allows all data to be viewed in one place.