



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

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INTERIM STATE SUPERINTENDENT

December 18, 2018

Members of the Michigan Senate:

The Michigan Department of Education opposes HB 5526 (H-3) as currently written. This legislation undermines two years of investment and stakeholder input by adding new requirements that either conflict with Michigan's federally-approved Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan or violate federal law. The bill's requirements would include the following:

- All students must be included in the state's accountability system. Exempting special education students from the participation rate for the state assessment would violate ESSA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Pupil subgroup performance compared to pupils in the same subgroup statewide is not required for ESSA accountability and would be separate from the Michigan's ESSA State Plan. However, this information is available in the Parent Dashboard for School Transparency.
- Identifying schools that receive the lowest grade on only proficiency, growth, and comparable school performance as Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools is not aligned with ESSA requirements. The federal law requires Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) identification to be based on all indicators in the state accountability system.
- ESSA requires all schools to be included in a single accountability system that uses the same methodology for all schools. Omitting schools designated as an alternative education campus from the system would violate ESSA.
- The deadlines specified throughout the bill are misaligned with MDE's current work and the timeline of available data. Accountability data go through a rigorous quality and validation process that cannot start until growth data are calculated and available, which is typically September-October. Changing the existing timelines would cause confusion in the field, especially for schools that already have been identified as CSI schools.

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If enacted, HB 5526 (H-3) will result in two separate accountability systems until we are able to apply to the U.S. Department of Education and request an amendment to Michigan's ESSA plan to conform to both, if possible. To do so, MDE would be required to engage in further stakeholder input and ensure this input is reflected in the amendments. In the meantime, the accountability clock for our schools will have been reset and the goal post moved yet again.

The vision for Michigan always has been to have one transparent and coherent accountability system for parents to use in choosing a school for their children. HB 5526 (H-3) would be disruptive for local school districts and create confusion for families, students, and educators across Michigan.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sheila A. Alles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sheila A. Alles
Interim State Superintendent