



## Michigan Alliance for Student Opportunity

The Michigan Alliance for Student Opportunity is an association composed of member school districts that serve students with the greatest educational needs. We develop solutions and advocate for public policy that will create an equitable educational system in Michigan, one that prioritizes individual student needs. The Alliance is active in school restructuring, finance, and education reform efforts. Many of our staff and members serve on state policy committees and advisory groups, which grants us direct input into state-level decision making.

## Priorities for the 102<sup>nd</sup> Legislature

### **EQUITY FUNDING**

After nearly 30 years, Michigan's foundation allowance has been by-and-large equalized. As we look to the next phase of funding for schools The Alliance encourages implementing a full equity-based funding model that recognizes the unique learning needs of every Michigan child. The Alliance encourages the inclusion of multipliers for poverty, English language learners, and special education. The Alliance encourages policymakers to avoid cutting state revenue and look for ways to grow school revenues to fully-fund Michigan's academic requirements and support the individual needs of each child.

### **ADDRESS THE EDUCATOR SHORTAGE**

Myriad circumstances have led to a severe educator shortage in Michigan, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Alliance calls on policymakers to meaningfully address the educator shortage at all levels to equitably fill vacancies. Long-term and short-term solutions will be necessary to address Michigan's educator shortage and to ensure a diverse candidate pool. Examples of policy solutions include but are not limited to elimination of barriers for qualified individuals to be certified; changes to Michigan's evaluation laws; funding for grow-your-own programs; equity-based scholarships for aspiring educators; a more competitive retirement system for Michigan educators; regional considerations for salaries that recognize cost-of-living discrepancies

### **ELIMINATE THIRD GRADE RETENTION**

Michigan's third grade reading law is not without its merits; however, the archaic philosophy of broadly applied retention must be repealed. The Alliance supports increased funding and access to literacy initiatives and the repeal of Michigan's third grade retention law (MCL 380.1280f). Supporting early learners will improve outcomes, retention will not.





## REFORM MICHIGAN'S ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

The Alliance supports repealing Michigan's A-F letter grading rankings and Michigan's index accountability system and replacing it with one aligned with best practices that emphasize student growth and outcomes. Currently, Michigan's dual accountability systems over emphasize a snapshot of student performance instead of aiming to improve outcomes. Along-side reforming the accountability system, Michigan should look to true measures of student growth in assessment.

## INCREASED SUPPORTS FOR PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS/DISTRICTS

The Michigan School Index System reports an overall index value ranging from 0-100 for each school based on: student growth, proficiency, graduation rates, English learner progress, attendance rates, advanced coursework completion, postsecondary enrollment, and staffing ratios. Schools with low index values may be identified as one of three low-performing school types defined by the federal requirements specified in Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA). However, these schools are not provided adequate resources to support improved achievement. The Alliance supports adequately funding partnership schools and districts over a longer period of time to ensure gains are not short-lived.



## Connect With Us



Peter Spadafore serves as the executive director of the Michigan Alliance for Student Opportunity. Peter oversees the day-to-day operation of The Alliance, the Michigan Schools Energy Cooperative, and Middle Cities Risk Management Services. You can contact Peter at [pspadafore@mialliance.com](mailto:pspadafore@mialliance.com).