

TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Tom Watkins, Superintendent

DATE: September 29, 2004

SUBJ: SCHOOL DISTRICT REPORT CARDS

At the September 14 meeting of the State Board of Education, a proposal was presented for discussion pertaining to the manner in which school district report cards would be calculated. After discussion, the State Board authorized the proposal to be shared widely with the education community for reaction and suggestions.

As a result, the proposal was faxed to all local and intermediate school district superintendents, as well as authorizers and directors of public school academies. Presentations on the proposal were also made at the fall meetings of several professional associations. Based on the reactions and suggestions received to date, the proposal has been revised to reflect what follows in this memorandum.

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Background

NCLB requires the state to issue an adequate yearly progress (AYP) report card for a school district as well as individual schools within the district. We did not do so in 2003 because of incomplete data. We are prepared to do so now, but need to define on what basis we will compute a district's AYP.

Like individual schools, the district report card must be based on the elements of:

- Minimum size of 30 students for the district, in the grades tested, using the same rules as are applied to individual schools.
- Overall student achievement – whether all 4th graders in the district, for instance, met or exceeded the state targets in English Language Arts and Mathematics (or qualified for the “safe harbor” provision).
- Whether all subgroups in the district met or exceeded the state targets (or “safe harbor”).
- Whether a minimum 95% of the district’s students were assessed, at each grade level tested, and within each student subgroup in the district.

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- Whether the district's elementary and middle school students met or exceeded the state's target for attendance, and whether the district's high school(s) met the state's graduation target.

Achievement

Some states have set a single achievement target for English Language Arts (ELA) or Mathematics that is the same for all levels (example: 45% is the Math target for elementary, middle, and high schools). These states can compute a district AYP simply by determining if all three levels met the target.

In Michigan, we have set different achievement targets for the three levels. The three scores can therefore not be combined into a single score for the district. In discussions we have had so far, we have identified three options:

- **Option 1** – A district makes AYP if:
 1. The combined achievement scores of its elementary schools meet the elementary targets in Mathematics and English Language Arts, AND
 2. the combined achievement scores of its middle schools meet the middle school targets in Mathematics and ELA, AND
 3. the combined achievement scores of its high schools meet the high school targets in Mathematics and ELA.

(In other words, the district must make AYP at all three levels).

- **Option 2** – The district makes AYP at two of the above three levels.
- **Option 3** – The district makes AYP at one of the above three levels.

95% Tested

The September 14 report to the State Board proposed that all students who were enrolled in a district at the elementary, middle school, and high school grade levels to be tested be combined together as one large group, and then determine whether a minimum of 95% of this total group took the English Language Arts test, and, separately, the Mathematics test.

We are rescinding this recommendation. It is now our recommendation that the 95%-tested requirement for the district be calculated the same as for an individual school: separately by elementary, middle, and high school.

Rationale: Combining elementary, middle, and high school students into one large group worked to the disadvantage rather than the advantage of districts.

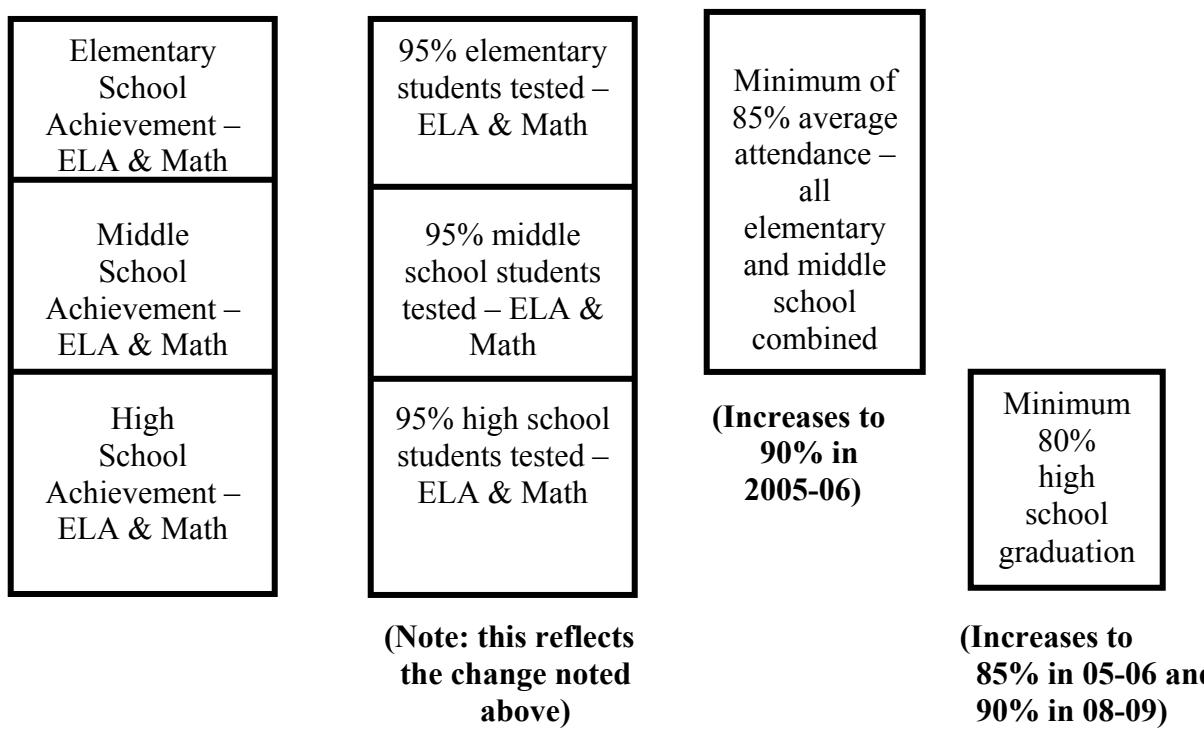
Attendance

In order for a district to make AYP on this measure, the average attendance for the students enrolled at elementary and middle school, combined, would need to exceed the state target of 85%. To calculate this, the days-in-attendance by middle and elementary students in the district would be combined, and this total divided by the total combined enrollment of the district's elementary and middle schools.

Graduation Rate

The Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) already calculates a graduation rate for each district. The most recent calculated rate is for 2003. This CEPI rate will be used to determine whether the district met the 80% graduation rate target for the state.

In graphic summary, a district would have to meet AYP targets in the following four areas:



Potential Impact

The Board had asked that simulations be run, indicating the results of applying the three options listed above for calculating AYP based on student achievement at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. High school appeals are still being processed, which may result in a change in the table below. The table, however, shows the preliminary results of basing district AYP on whether a district is required to make AYP at all three levels, two out of three levels, or one out of three levels.

District AYP Simulation

Grade Ranges Missed AYP

Number of Grade Ranges Making AYP	Number of School Districts	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Made AYP all 3	294	47.1	47.1
Made AYP 2 of 3	175	28.0	75.2
Made AYP 1 of 3	94	15.1	90.2
Missed AYP all 3	61	9.8	100.0
Total	624	100.0	

Note: the above calculations include three year averaging and the application of the “safe harbor” provision where necessary.

Recommendation

It is our recommendation that the State Board of Education approve the above proposal for calculating school district adequate yearly progress (AYP), including the proposal that the student achievement portion be based on whether or not the district as a whole made AYP at two out of the three levels (elementary, middle school, and high school), calculated separately at each level for English Language Arts and Mathematics.