



# *News Release*

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## **Superintendent Keeps Pushing on Lawmakers on Days, Hours, Attendance, Enrollment and Funding** ***State Strategic Education Plan Approved by SBE***

August 12, 2020

LANSING – State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice once again called on state lawmakers to pass revisions to state laws regarding requirements for school days, hours, attendance, and enrollment amidst the pandemic for the 2020-21 school year.

“It’s important to establish these parameters to remove the elements of uncertainty that we’re able to remove in the midst of the pandemic,” Rice said during yesterday’s monthly State Board of Education meeting.

Dr. Rice has pressed the state legislature for clarity in state law about the upcoming school year around days, hours, attendance, and enrollment. Specifically, he recommends no change in the minimum number of required 180 days of instruction; a waiver of the minimum annual requirement of 1,098 hours, given that many children will be learning at a distance and should not be subject to the same number of hours online as they are in person; a waiver of the 75 percent daily attendance law; and the use of the 2019-20 enrollment count as the 2020-21 enrollment for each district.

Dr. Rice and the executive directors of seven of the major statewide education organizations have consistently called for these parameters.

Dr. Rice once again called on Congress to approve needed funds for local school districts for personal protective equipment (PPE), for foregone state education revenue lost during the pandemic, and for catch-up growth in student achievement.

“These dollars are badly needed. It’s been known for months that they’re badly needed. Congress needs to do its job,” Rice said.

In other important news, the State Board of Education gave its approval to a revised strategic plan for Michigan to become a top 10 education state in the nation.

Dr. Rice and staff at the Michigan Department of Education worked with a broad group of education stakeholders from across the state to update the state’s strategic plan to become a top 10 education state. The updated plan includes a list of measures to help gauge progress.

“This is a strategic plan that has important long-term goals,” Dr. Rice said. “They are goals that are relevant pre-pandemic, during the pandemic, and after the pandemic. The goals are focused on what we are doing for our children whether we’re in a pandemic or not. The addition of metrics permits the ability to track progress over a period of years.”

Dr. Rice said the state’s original Top 10 strategic plan, adopted in 2016, was a very good beginning, but needed to be updated with directional goals and clear and concise metrics.

“The revised strategic education plan maintains the spirit of the original Top 10 in 10 plan,” said Chief Deputy Superintendent Sheila Alles, who served as interim state superintendent after the death of State Superintendent Brian Whiston, who spearheaded the original initiative. “The newly approved plan provides a focused direction on education in Michigan and supports the students whom we serve.”

“This has been a very thorough and inclusive process,” said State Board of Education President Dr. Casandra Ulbrich. “We need to have a strategic plan. We understand that this is a time when districts are dealing with really serious issues and decisions. This plan is a living document and will be adjusted over time. It’s important to strengthen our strategic plan.”

Michigan’s revised Top 10 strategic education plan is a state-wide effort in which local school districts can participate and see their connection to the plan and their collaborative role in its implementation. Districts will be encouraged to share their efforts relative to the state’s strategic education plan as a means to share and learn from each other.

The goals of the state’s revised strategic education plan are:

- Expand early childhood learning opportunities
- Improve early literacy achievement
- Improve the health, safety, and wellness of all learners
- Expand secondary learning opportunities for all students
- Increase the percentage of all students who graduate from high school
- Increase the percentage of adults with a post-secondary credential
- Increase the numbers of certified teachers in areas of shortage
- Provide adequate and equitable funding

MDE conducted personal interviews and focus groups with state board of education members; education, business, and legislative leaders; tribal partners; and MDE staff. The department also conducted a public online survey this winter, which had nearly 12,000 respondents. Of those surveyed, adequate and equitable school funding and the teacher shortage were the top two important goals that need to be addressed. Quality instruction for all students was the third most important goal identified by those who took the survey.

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