



Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals

NEWSFLASH

Deal Reached on Return to Learn Bills, Vote Expected During Rare Saturday Session

With less than 18 hours to go before the Michigan Senate is slated to convene a rare Saturday session, details are becoming clearer on a proposed agreement to resolve the myriad pupil accounting issues that districts face next year. Because the proposal being debated has been developed without direct input from education stakeholders and no actual legislative language has been circulated, the summary below is based on a legislative briefing rather than a reading of the actual bills:

- Pupil count for the 2020-21 school year would be based 75% on a district's pupil count from the 2019-20 school year and 25% on the district's pupil count from the upcoming school year. The method for counting pupils for the upcoming school year would be very similar to (though somewhat more flexible than) the one used currently by cyber charter schools or

more flexible than the one used currently by cyber charter schools or other fully virtual programs and outlined in the pupil accounting manual.

- Districts would have to certify that they will provide an amount of instruction necessary to deliver the same course content that would have been provided during a non-pandemic year and that would have led to course completion. That certification would satisfy the requirement that districts provide 180 days and 1,098 hours of pupil instruction.
- Districts would be required to track pupil attendance throughout the school year using either in-person attendance or a two-way interaction log (based on the current practice for cyber charters and other virtual learning). The specific requirements for what would constitute a two-way interaction are significantly more flexible than current practice and schools would only have to document one two-way interaction per student per month to count that student in attendance.
- Districts will be required to develop an additional learning plan for the 2020-21 school year (above and beyond the Preparedness Plans due this coming Monday, August 17) which would be very similar to a seat time waiver application. The plan would have to incorporate several elements including learning goals and a description of how instruction will be delivered. Local school boards would be required to vote monthly to reaffirm their district's learning plans.
- Within the learning plan language is a requirement that districts would be required to track and report locally on the percentage of students who have at least two two-way interactions with their teacher or teachers per week. This is in addition to the pupil count and attendance requirements noted above, though it is worth noting that there is no accountability or funding tied to these reports.
- Districts would be required to administer assessments to students in grades K-8 at least two times in the upcoming year (one of which must be administered at the beginning of the year), to set and track student learning goals based on those assessment results, and to report aggregate district results to the state through the statewide data hubs. Districts would be required to choose from a list of five assessment tools identified by MDE or could use another assessment of their choice provided they submit justification of that choice to CEPI. The list of approved assessments would have to include at least one no-cost option. The results collected by the state could not be used for accountability or any similar purposes.

We know that this deal has been agreed upon by legislative leadership from both parties and the Governor's office, though it is as yet unclear whether there is support among legislators to pass the bills. Several education groups have issued a letter raising concerns with elements of the proposal. And urging the legislature to pause their efforts, share details and bill language with stakeholders, and give the education community time to evaluate the supposed deal. That letter is linked below.

As we have from the beginning, MASSP is following this issue closely and working to ensure that whatever the final requirements are for next year, they are manageable for Principals and other educators to implement and do not take away from student's education. Based on the details we've been provided we clearly have concerns, though without bill language it is difficult to know for certain how onerous some of these requirements will be. We will be covering this weekend's developments and will be sending updates to members via social media and email, so stay tuned.

[View The Letter](#)
