

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION (Pre-K-12) IN MICHIGAN**

**Structure, Financing, and Goals adopted 1969, 1970, 1972; Section A.1.C. added 1993; LWVUS position on Equality of Opportunity adopted 1969, revised 1989; portions of the LWVUS positions on The Role of the Federal Government in Education (2012) and Privatization of Government Services (2012) are also relevant. Public School Academies adopted 2001. Teacher Certification in Michigan adopted 1984. Positions Updated and Compiled 2014.**

LWVMI supports:

1. The development of a publicly financed public education system in which there is equal opportunity for an excellent education available to all children in Michigan.
2. An educational structure that provides transparency and accountability at all levels and in all venues.

### **I. Structure**

#### **A. Traditional Public Schools**

The educational structure should provide that

1. There be a State Board of Education.
2. All local districts offer a pre-K program for all 4 year olds. Participation in this program should not be mandatory.
3. Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) and Intermediate Districts (ISDs) offer effective services.
4. Educational programs be available to all persons who wish to complete their high school education.
5. The primary factor in annexation and consolidation decisions is improving the educational potential of the affected districts. Local officials and staff must be involved in these decisions and the resulting arrangements should not lead to a reduction in educational quality for the students in any of the participating districts.

#### **B. Charter Schools**

1. The LWVMI supports the concept of educational choices for parents and students within the public school system. Choices should include input from parents, students, educators, and the public. Charter schools, public school academies, and school districts created through inter local agreements may be some of the publicly funded choices available to parents and students, (For convenience the term charter schools will be used throughout Section B for all of the above options.)
2. There should be a moratorium on new charter schools until the State of Michigan can provide adequate oversight. Public funds should not be distributed to establish and/or fund new charter schools until existing

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*(Charter Schools, cont)*

charter schools can be shown to be consistently effective. There should be a cumulative assessment as to whether or not children are benefitting.

3. Qualified staff at the authorizing institutions must provide well developed oversight of charter schools. Oversight must include evaluation of curriculum, compliance with legal requirements, and financial management that follows accepted government auditing standards.

a. Academic: Curriculum that follows core curriculum standards, promotes educational achievement of students, and enables students to maintain academic progress if transfer to another school becomes necessary.

b. Legal: Compliance with all laws including completion of contract requirements with authorizing institutions, selection of governing boards, conflicts of interest, competitive contracts, and services to special needs students.

c. Financial: Managing, auditing, and reporting financial performance according to generally accepted accounting standards and government auditing standards, as do other public schools.

4. The State Board of Education should ensure that authorizing institutions are performing their oversight and accountability functions. Charter schools and authorizing institutions must provide required data to the the State Board in a timely fashion. In turn, the State Board must promptly provide such information to the public. Charter schools and their governing boards must provide parents, students and the public with assurance and evidence of adequate supervision of the school.

5. All charter schools must comply with state laws to ensure that student selection by mental or physical disability, athletic ability, economic status, race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, gender expression, or level of parental involvement is not practiced in fact or by innuendo or pressure.

6. Effective procedures should be developed to identify, evaluate, replicate, and disseminate innovations that may be tested or practiced by charter schools, provided such development does not divert students from the task of learning.

7. Although the law requires that a state standardized test be administered, this is not sufficient. Additional criteria are needed, particularly for K-3. All public schools, including charter schools, should use testing programs based on the same standards. Evaluation should include whether or not charter schools are meeting their mission statements and goals as reflected in their authorizing contracts.

8. Authorizing institutions must provide diligent oversight of management companies which provide educational services.

a. Publicly funded schools and educational institutions operated by

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*(Charter Schools, cont)*

management companies must comply with legal safeguards preventing the exclusion of board, parent, public official and staff input by such companies.

b. Oversight must include ethical matters, conflicts of interest, the appearance of conflicts of interest, and the management and expenditures of public monies.

c. Student achievement should be the focus of management companies, not profit. The goal of site-based decision-making should be preserved when a management company controls the school

d. The costs of management company services should be compared with costs in other public schools, and must not exceed an acceptable percent for administration, fees, and profit. Information regarding management service expenditures must be available to the public.

### **C. Schools of Choice**

1. The LWVMI recognizes that permitting a student in one local district to attend a traditional school in another district is also an option for parents and students.

2. All arrangements should be subject to the basic requirements of accessibility, accountability, and transparency. The costs and benefits for the participating students, as well as for the sending and receiving schools, should be thoroughly evaluated and the results made readily available to the public.

### **D. Post-secondary Education for High School Students**

1. The LWVMI supports cooperation between community colleges (and other post-secondary publicly funded schools) and local schools, school districts, RESAs and ISDs to provide educational opportunities, including but not limited to, advanced courses, early transition into college, or assistance with under performing students.

2. The responsibility for the student's progress should be clearly defined.

3. Every student should have access to support services either at the college or the school district of origin.

4. All arrangements should be subject to the basic requirements of accessibility, accountability, and transparency.

### **E. New Forms of Instruction - Technology**

1. The LWVMI supports the use of innovative forms of technology for preK-12 instruction. The availability of online, distance learning, computer assisted programs and mobile information networking in all grades, classrooms and schools should be a goal at the state and local levels.

2. The State and local districts should move swiftly and with the best

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### *New Forms of Instruction - Technology (cont)*

knowledge available to adjust and equalize funding for all students to benefit from digital learning.

3. The State and school districts should provide high standards for staff development and require appropriate certification of teachers to ensure the benefit of the technology investment and the self-renewal of the teaching profession.

4. All programs should be thoroughly evaluated to ensure that they are truly beneficial to the educational process and the results should be made available to the public.

## **II. Financing**

A. State, federal and local governments should share the responsibility for fully financing education in both basic foundation and categorical programs.

B. State income tax, state and local property taxes and state sales tax should all be used as sources of revenue. Public funds should not be used for nonpublic education except for shared time in the public schools, auxiliary services and transportation.

C. The State should:

1. Bear the greatest primary responsibility for fully financing PreK-12 education.
2. Provide a financially accountable and transparent distribution system which ensures equal educational opportunity for all children.
3. Organize an effective and efficient administrative structure.
4. Provide additional support to schools in disadvantaged districts.
5. Provide funding and intervention support services in a timely manner to reduce the risk of school financial failure.

D. Local districts should:

1. Continue to bear some additional responsibility for financing education with the option of raising additional revenue.
2. Retain the major control in the spending of the educational dollar under state guidelines.
3. Publish budgets which clearly indicate all sources of revenue and all programs and services for which the funds are spent.

E. The financial distribution system should:

1. Ensure equality of educational opportunity to all children.

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### *Financing, cont)*

2. Be funded at a level aimed at achieving an excellent program for all school children.
3. Exclude the use of any voucher system.
4. Require the same standards of fiscal responsibility and transparency of all educational entities receiving public funds.
5. Ensure that contracts involving the use of public school funds made with outside entities, whether for profit or nonprofit, follow guidelines such as those supported by the LWVUS in its position on Privatization of Government Services.

### **III. Goals**

Goals should be established for the educational system.

- A. There should be statewide goals, goals for the intermediate districts (Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) and Intermediate School Districts (ISDs) and goals for the local school districts.
- B. The goals should include, but not be limited to, the full implementation of the Common Core State Standards (or similarly developed standards) from which the State and school districts should develop teaching curriculum and assessment.
- D. The State should provide support to school districts and teachers to achieve full implementation of these standards.
- E. Achievement should be addressed in reference to these goals, taking local factors into consideration in the analysis of assessment results.
- F. Flexible responses, including support services, are needed when assessment has disclosed that goals are not being met.
- G. Locally elected school officials and staff should be involved in determining remedial actions for schools which fail to meet their goals.
- H. The state should provide funding and intervention support services in a timely manner to prevent a school's failure to meet its academic goals.

### **IV. Certification of Instructors and Administrators**

- A. Teacher Preparation and Professional Development
  1. The State of Michigan should:
    - a. Have responsibility for a system of professional development for educators.
    - b. Develop a standard for approval of teacher education programs in Michigan institutions of higher education.
    - c. Periodically review and evaluate the curricula in Michigan institutions of teacher education.

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### *Teacher Preparation and Professional Development (cont)*

2. The professional development staffs of the Michigan Department of Education, the intermediate districts (RESAs and ISDs) and local school districts, the institutions of higher education, the professional associations, and educators themselves should have a role in the professional development of educators.
3. An educator's professional development should be a dynamic, continuing career-long process subject to periodic review for maintaining valid certification.
4. The state system of review of teacher education programs and a state system of certification of educators should be complementary parts of a state system of professional development of educators.

#### B. Certification of Educators

1. The State of Michigan should develop standards for initial and continuing certification of educators.
2. Initial certification should require a demonstrated ability to meet an established standard for pedagogical skills, mastery of subject area and knowledge of the developmental learning stages of children and youth. Continuing certification should require a demonstration of continued ability to meet standards established by the state.
3. The State Board of Education, the Michigan Department of Education, Michigan institutions for teacher education and the professional associations, with input from local school boards and concerned citizens, should have a role in establishing the standards for certification.
4. The State of Michigan should comply with all 'Highly Qualified' or similar requirements established under federal law.
5. The State should provide for certification of educators of pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students
6. The State of Michigan should have the authority to establish rules and regulations regarding the certification of teachers.
7. The certification system should include a separate middle school/junior high school certification level.
8. Certification endorsements should be available and required for all subjects taught in middle school through high school.
9. Certification endorsements should be related to developmental growth levels.
10. State certifications should require a pre-kindergarten endorsement for educators with pre-kindergarten educational responsibilities.
11. State certification should restrict assignment of middle school through high school educators to areas of major/minor endorsement.

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### *Certification of Educators (cont.)*

12. State certification of educators delivering instruction to students should be consistent in all venues. These venues include, but are not limited to, traditional public schools, charter schools, online charter schools, dual enrollment programs, virtual labs, alternative education programs, and distance learning. Educators teaching college classes may be exempt from this requirement.

13. Alternative certification paths may be developed by the state of Michigan for teachers of certain career technical classes.

### **C. Certification of Administrators**

1. The State of Michigan should establish specific administrative certification and endorsement requirements for those persons administering programs and evaluating certified staff.

2. Administrative certification should be consistent in all venues. These venues include, but are not limited to, traditional public schools, charter schools, online charter schools, dual enrollment programs, virtual labs, alternative education programs and distance learning.

### **V. Statewide Teacher Evaluation**

A. The LWVMI supports a statewide teacher evaluation plan based on established observation tools.

B. No more than one half, preferably less, of a teacher's evaluation should be based on student assessment.