



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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GOVERNOR


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STATE SUPERINTENDENT

June 5, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: Local and Intermediate District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors and Authorizers
Consolidated Application Main Contacts

FROM: Venessa A. Keesler, Ph.D. 
Deputy Superintendent, Education Services

Joseph A. Martineau, Ph.D. 
Deputy Superintendent, Accountability Services

SUBJECT: Frequently Asked Questions on the Annual Education Report

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is releasing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and a Common Errors document regarding the Annual Education Report (AER) that is to be used this summer by local education agencies (LEAs) and schools to meet federal and state reporting requirements.

The AER is designed to meet the federal requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 (also known as NCLB) for an annual report. The report provides detailed data on state administered student assessment results, accountability results, teacher qualification information, and the state results for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). There is an AER populated with the appropriate information for the state, each LEA, and each school.

If used as designed, the AER reports and cover letters also meet the state requirement for reporting to parents and communities in an annual education report.

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The MDE reviews a sample of AERs every year. In the sample of AERs reviewed for compliance during 2013-14, 26 of 78 AERs did not meet one or more of the requirements of federal law, ESEA of 2001, or omitted elements required by state law, PA451, P.A. 1976. Please address all elements found in the AER cover letter templates to help resolve these findings and ensure your district's compliance with state and federal laws.

We hope the attached list of FAQs and the Common Errors document will help you effectively use the AER. If you have additional questions, please email Mike Radke at radkem@michigan.gov.

Attachment

cc: Michigan Education Alliance

**Frequently Asked Questions
Regarding the Annual Education Report
Updated 5/29/14**

1. Are local education agencies (LEAs) and their schools REQUIRED to use the state produced Annual Education Report (AER)?

ANSWER:

- Yes.
- All LEAs, including public districts, public school academies (PSAs), and intermediate school districts (ISDs) or regional education service agencies (RESAs) and their schools are required to use the state produced AER reports in the summer of 2014 to report their 2013-2014 performance. This is how Michigan schools and LEAs will meet the requirement of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 (ESEA or NCLB) and State law, Act 451, P.A. 1976 (and P.A. 25).
- Using the AER reduces the burden on nearly 850 LEAs and 3,000 schools to collect and format this complicated set of data for presentation to parents and community stakeholders in order to meet federal requirements. There remain only a few much simpler tasks for educators to perform. See #3 below. To meet both state and federal requirements, the AER reports and all relevant portions of the cover letter templates must be addressed.
- Audits of both state and federal requirements to notify parents noted that the AER reports and cover letter templates address all required elements adequately. However, in the sample of AERs reviewed for compliance during 2013-14, 26 of 78 AERs did not meet one or more of the requirements of federal law, ESEA of 2001, or omitted elements required by state law, PA451, P.A. 1976.
- Please address all elements found in the AER cover letter templates to help resolve these findings. MDE is considering options to enforce the state and federal laws.

2. What are the components of the AER that LEAs and schools must use?

ANSWER:

- LEA Components:
 - The "Combined District AER Report" and,
 - A cover letter using the content outlined in the district template cover letter.
- School Components:
 - The "Combined School AER Report" and,
 - A cover letter using the content outlined in the school template cover letter.

- Both the report and the cover letter templates must present information unique to the LEA or school and can be found on the MI School Data website: <https://www.mischooldata.org>.
- The combined AER is different for each LEA or school. See Q&A #9 below for a description of the content in the AER reports.

3. What do the LEA and each school need to do to meet the reporting requirements?

ANSWER:

Each LEA must:

- Save the district AER report and post it to the district website.
- Edit the district template cover letter addressing all of the requirements and post this with the district AER. The letter should include the date posted/sent <Month/Day/Year>.
- Make available paper copies of the AER report and the cover letter to parents and members of the community who do not have internet access.
- Announce to the parents and community that both the district and the school AERs and cover letters are available and how to access them.

Each school must:

- Post the school AER report and dated school cover letter on the school website, if the school has a website. If the school does not have its own website, these must be posted to the district website.
- Make paper copies of both documents available to parents and the school community members who do not have computer access.
- Notify parents that the AER and cover letters are available and how to access them.

4. When must the AERs and cover letters be posted and available?

ANSWER:

- LEAs and schools must post and make copies available 15 days before school starts in the fall of 2014, no later than August 18, 2014. Providing this information at least 15 days before school starts allows parents to make a better choice about which school to select for their child. This information should remain available on the website(s) for one year, until the next year's report is prepared. MDE will notify schools of the earliest date for public release. See #14.

5. Where will I find the Cover Letter Templates to be used in the summer of 2014?

ANSWER:

- Log in to the secure MI School Data website:
<https://www.mischooldata.org>.
- For access to the site, contact your ISD system administrator. Refer to #8 for detailed information.
- Click on the "Annual Education Report" button at the bottom of the left-hand portion of the screen. This will take you to the correct page where you will find a button labeled "Cover Letter Templates." Click on this button.

NOTE: The cover letter templates have been updated. Do not use the templates from previous years.

6. How will the state monitor implementation of the reporting requirements?

ANSWER:

- Both the state and the federal government will be monitoring district and school websites for AER reports and cover letters. MDE will also ask to review the paper copies during on site monitoring activities of the ESEA programs.

7. How do school staff members preview the AER and find the template cover letters?

ANSWER:

- MDE will provide early access to the AER reports so that LEAs can have them ready to distribute and post within the required timeline. Districts and schools should finalize the related cover letters after reviewing this data. The cover letter templates have been updated to reflect Michigan's federally approved Flexibility request and updated specifics to reflect the new data.

8. The embargoed AER reports will be available tentatively on August 4, 2014 at <https://www.mischooldata.org> for preview of the final data. The assigned district and school staff members responsible for these annual reports should finalize the cover letters and prepare to post or distribute AER reports and cover letters in final form no sooner than August 4, 2014 and no later than August 18, 2014. The parents must be notified when the district and school release these annual reports. If my staff does not have a log-in name and password to the MI School Data website, how do I establish one for them?

ANSWER:

- Contact your ISD/RESA. For a list of these contacts, visit https://www.mischooldata.org/Downloads/isdresa_key_contacts_2011_12.pdf.

- Please send an email to helpdesk@misd.net for additional assistance.

9. What will we find in the AER Report on the MI School Data website?

ANSWER:

- The content of the report is presented in several sections:
 - Teacher Quality: This report identifies teacher qualifications in relation to requirements. Here you can find how many teachers in a school, district, or across the state possess specific qualifications.
 - Student Assessment: This report presents assessment information for English language arts (reading and writing), mathematics, social studies and science (where relevant) for grades 3 to 9 and grade 11 compared to targets for all students as well as subgroups of students. The report helps users to understand achievement and progress within grades and schools, and to make comparisons to district, state, and national achievement benchmarks.
 - National Assessment of Educational Programs (NAEP) assessment data (state results) as required by federal law.
 - Accountability data as revised and required in the federally approved Flexibility request, including designations as Reward, Priority, and Focus schools.
 - Combined Report: This report provides all of the information of Teacher Quality, Student Assessment, Accountability, and state NAEP data for schools, LEAs, and the state in one convenient place. This is the report that districts and schools need to obtain the AER report for posting on their websites with edited cover letters, and print for parents and community members who do not have internet access.
- NOTE: The data in AER reports appropriately address all required subgroups consistent with federal requirements with appropriate cell suppression for small "n" size subgroups.

10. When will the REAL data be available for preview?

ANSWER:

- The 2013-14 data needed for the reporting during the summer of 2014 will be available tentatively on August 4, 2014 to LEAs and schools, as soon as the high school MME and accountability data are finalized. This information is embargoed until the state publicly releases the information. See #14.

11. Where does this data come from? Will we have a chance to appeal the data presented?

ANSWER:

- The data in the AER report has been extracted directly from a variety of state databases. For example, the assessment data comes directly from the MEAP, MME, MI-Access, and NAEP reports prepared by the MDE, Division of Accountability Services (DAS). Teacher Quality data comes from the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) as reported in the Registry for Educational Performance (REP). Some accountability data comes from DAS and some data comes from CEPI.
- LEAs and schools will have had the opportunity to appeal this data during the appeal or correction windows of the source reports. For example, a district that wanted to appeal assessment results or participation rates had the opportunity to do so during the assessment appeal window. Districts that wanted to correct the teacher quality data had the opportunity to do so shortly after submitting the REP data.
- To appeal or correct next year's data, take full advantage of the assessment and accountability appeal or CEPI data correction opportunities. There are no appeals of data once it is part of the AER.

12. What can I do now to prepare for the release of the 2014-15 AER (which is based on assessment and accountability data from the 2013-14 school year).

ANSWER:

- Go to the MI School Data website <https://www.mischooldata.org> and log in. Open the AER for your LEA or school. Familiarize yourself with the data from last year. Learn how to navigate the reports. Identify how to print the "Combined" report and how to export it to your website.
- Find the new 2014-15 district and school cover letter templates on the MI School Data website. When you have assessment results, you can start drafting your cover letters. The accountability sections of the cover letter will have to wait until you can preview the 2013-14 data on the MI School Data website, beginning tentatively July 28, 2014.
- Elementary and middle schools have received the 2013-14 MEAP, MME, and MI-Access assessment data. High schools will receive their preliminary MME assessment data soon. Familiarize yourself with this information. Begin drafting your AER cover letters using the templates found on the website.
- All schools and districts will receive their preliminary accountability data in late June/early July. If it is not being appealed, you can also start drafting the district and school AER cover letters. If it is being appealed, you will soon know the outcome of the appeal and can start drafting the LEA and school cover letters.
- As soon as the embargoed 2013-14 data is forwarded to the AER (tentatively no later than August 4, 2014), it will be released to LEAs and districts. At this time you should do final edits on your cover

letters. Prepare to export and print the AER reports and cover letters for the LEA and schools.

- Post your AER reports and cover letters as soon as the state publicly releases Accountability results, but no later than 15 calendar days before school starts on September 2, 2014.

13. Does a district, PSA, ISD/RESA, or LEA that has ONLY ONE SCHOOL need to produce and distribute both district and school AERs and cover letters?

ANSWER:

- No.
- If there is only one school in your LEA, ISD/RESA or PSA, you only need to produce and distribute a school level AER report and cover letter. Do NOT produce, post, or distribute district level reports or cover letters.

14. How will the 2013-2014 Accountability public release and the AER tool public release be coordinated?

ANSWER:

- The AER reports with 2013-2014 data will be made publicly available tentatively on August 4, 2014. School districts will have access to data tentatively by July 28, 2014. The 2013-2014 Accountability results are embargoed by MDE until the mid-August public AYP release.
- RELEASE OF SCHOOL AND DISTRICT AYP DATA FROM THE ANNUAL EDUCATION REPORT IN ADVANCE OF THE PUBLIC RELEASE DATE IN MID-AUGUST BY THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MAY JEOPARDIZE THIS ADVANCE AER POSTING IN THE FUTURE.

15. Can I just link to the MI School Data site to provide the AER report for my LEA and each of my schools?

ANSWER:

- No. Do not link the MI School Data website to make your AERs available.
- Instead, export your LEA and school reports and post them on your LEA or school websites with the appropriate cover letters. Directions for this process are:
 - Log in to the MI School Data website:
<https://www.mischooldata.org>
 - For access to the site, contact your ISD/RESA system administrator. Refer to #8 for detailed information.
 - Click on the "Combined Report" button at the bottom of the left-hand portion of the screen. This is the report you use. It contains all required data elements if used properly.
 - Find your ISD name and LEA/district or school name from the drop down to produce the appropriate AER. Click on the "View Results" button to generate the AER report.

- To export the required "Combined Report," scroll to the bottom and click on the "Export All Tab Reports" button. (Don't make the mistake of clicking on the "Export Current Tab" button, as this will only give you a portion of the required data.) Click "Save" and specify where on your computer you would like to save the PDF file.
- Verify that you have the right report for your school or district AND that you have the complete report containing all elements (assessment, accountability, and teacher qualifications data for your school/district, and the required NAEP Data for the state).
- You must have successfully saved the data portion of the LEA or school AER. Now you must download and complete the appropriate cover letter from the template available under the "Cover Letters" button on the left-hand navigation bar. Once the cover letter is edited and approved, the letter must be posted with the AER report on the appropriate LEA or school website.

Common Errors found during AER Compliance Reviews

1. No AER was reported.
 - AERs must be completed for every district/school that has an AER at <https://mischooldata.org> regardless of the timeframe the school has been in operation.
 - Provide the information that is available. All pertinent existing data should be used to complete the report.
2. AERs were not posted on the district and school websites in a place easily found by parents and members of the community. In addition, they were not labeled as Annual Education Reports.
 - MDE strongly encourages that all URL links for districts and schools be easily found on the home page of the district's website, improving accessibility for parents and the community.
 - Please refer to <https://mischooldata.org> for additional information. Click on Annual Education Report button.
3. Wrong year of data was posted.
 - The AERs posted were for the wrong school year.
 - The year in which the AER is posted requires AERs for the school year just completed.
 - For 2014-15, districts/schools will be posting AER cover letters and combined AER data reports for the 2013-14 school year.
4. The wrong report was posted. The district/school posted the statewide AER instead of the AER for the district.
 - When retrieving the combined AER data report from the Michigan School Data website, carefully pull down the ISD/District/School to obtain the proper combined report.
 - If one clicks on the combined report without delineating the specified data, the report displays the statewide AER.
5. Partial reports were posted or the school provided selected data from the full AER and did not attach or link the full AER from MDE to the cover letter.
 - Full AERs must be downloaded for each district and school, linked with an active URL.
6. The link in the AER cover letter guided the reader to the district's web page with no direction on how to access the full AER.
 - Having a direct URL to the district/school combined AER documents allows accessing the results more efficiently.
7. The district/school placed a link to the Michigan School Data website.
 - This is not acceptable.
 - District/school reports must be posted on the district/school websites with the appropriate cover letters. See FAQ #15.

8. District/school did not use the current/required AER cover letter templates or the required information in the cover letters was incomplete.
 - If used as designed, the AER cover letters and reports meet the federal and state requirements for reporting to parents and communities in an annual report.
9. Key initiatives to accelerating student achievement were not identified.
 - The AER cover letter template includes an explanation of the contents of the full AER downloaded from MDE and contains a table listing all of the schools in the district, stating the status of each school and identifying key initiatives to accelerate achievement.
 - Regardless of the status of the school, and even if the school was not given a status label, key initiatives to accelerate achievement must be identified.
10. Parent teacher conference data was incomplete.
 - Parent teacher conference data must be reported both in number and percentage for a two-year period, i.e., both fall and spring for two full school years.