



Dec. 4, 2018

A-F Letter Grading

Bill Number(s): House Bill 5526 (H-1)

Status: House Floor

MASB Position: **OPPOSED**

What does it do? [House Bill 5526 \(H-1\)](#) requires each public school in Michigan be assigned a letter grade for specific categories, but not a summative grade for each school. MDE would assign grades and rankings based on how a school compares to similar schools, and how subgroups of students at the school compare to those subgroups statewide. Schools would be designated high or low performing schools based on their grades and rankings. This information would be reported to the Education Accountability Policy Commission (also created by this legislation).

The Commission is tasked with developing a statewide system of accountability measurements to improve the national educational ranking of Michigan. Low-performing schools will be identified as comprehensive support schools and improvement schools, while identifying high-achieving schools as reward schools. The Commission must also develop standards to identify schools with one or more groups of students who are consistently underperforming as targeted support and improvement schools, as well as schools where the performance of one or more groups of students would place those students in the bottom 5% of Title I schools.

The state superintendent would publish a list of comprehensive support and improvement schools and reward schools by September 1, 2019, and every three years thereafter. Finally, HB 5526 (H-1) would repeal Section 1280c, which created the offices of State School Reform and allows for the state takeover or closure of the lowest achieving 5% of schools.

How does it affect public schools? Currently, public schools are required to have a transparency dashboard available on their website, identifying certain information in relation to similar schools. The State Reform Office also ranks the bottom 5% of schools to identify those that need the most improvement and to establish partnership agreements with those districts to achieve those necessary improvements. This legislation will eliminate much of this current practice, replace it with an A-F letter grade system linked to certain criteria, as well as a statewide ranking system. While the legislation eliminates the SRO and its current abilities, the state still retains the ability to implement school improvement requirements on districts via partnership agreements.

Why is MASB Opposed? MASB opposes HB 5526 (H-1), as it is too complex to handle during the remainder of lame duck. MASB appreciates that this bill does not include summative letter grades for each school, as well as the repeal of Sec. 1280c. However, there are still significant concerns surrounding the ranking of schools based on certain populations, as well as concerns surrounding the impacts of partnership agreements. Finally, the transparency dashboard developed by MDE has been in place for less than a year, and should be given an opportunity for schools to adapt to and learn from.