



**Michigan Association of  
Secondary School Principals**



**MEMSPA**  
MICHIGAN ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE  
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION

September 25, 2023

Representative Matt Koleszar, Chair  
Michigan House Committee on Education  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Rep. Koleszar:

We are writing on behalf of the more than 3,000 elementary, middle-level, high school, and CTE principals and assistant principals represented by the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals and the Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association to express our support for SB 395-96 and to thank you for taking action on this important legislation.

These bills directly address all of the most pressing items identified by building administrators as their top priorities when it comes to educator evaluation reform, specifically:

- The requirement to use student growth for 40% of a teacher or school administrator's evaluation is too high and should be lowered or eliminated.
- Decisions on how to measure student growth should be made at the local level. The requirement to rely on state test data like M-STEP is inappropriate as it does not accurately reflect students' learning and teachers' instructional ability.
- The requirement to conduct annual evaluations for already effective educators creates a significant burden and detracts from the capacity of building and district administrators to support those educators with the greatest need.
- The distinction between effective and highly effective educators should be eliminated as it is counterproductive to an improvement-focused system and leads to attention being focused on ratings rather than specific feedback for growth.

In addition to the important changes to teacher and administrator evaluations just noted, SB 395-96 make other important changes to promote an improvement focused system of educator evaluations for school administrators. Because most building principals are effectively at will employees, the feedback and due process provided by a quality evaluation system are especially important to them. As such, we would like to voice our strong support and appreciation for the following additional provisions in these bills specific to school administrators:

- For the first time, school administrators would receive a mid-year review each year they are evaluated. The process outlined would mirror that for teachers and include specific performance goals and recommended training. We believe that this additional touchpoint will address concerns we hear from administrators who reach the end of the school year only to be told that they are less than effective with no prior notice or warning.

- For the first time, building-level administrators would receive something akin to the classroom observations provided to teachers. The person evaluating a building-level administrator would need to visit the administrator's school building, review the school improvement plan, and observe classrooms to collect evidence on the school improvement strategies being used and their impact on learning. We believe that this will help make administrator evaluations more evidence-based and less perfunctory and will give each principal a chance to highlight the important work happening in their building.
- An administrator would automatically receive an annual evaluation in any year in which their supervisor or evaluator changes. We believe this change will alleviate the problems we hear when district leadership changes and administrators are not told about problems or concerns from the new evaluator until it is too late to remedy.
- For the first time, school administrators would be able to appeal their evaluations using the same process afforded to teachers. Administrators currently have no appeal process.

In their 2013 report "Building an Improvement-Focused System of Educator Evaluation in Michigan," the Michigan Council on Educator Effectiveness (MCEE) noted that every educator "deserves the opportunity to develop and continue to refine his or her professional skill—to receive targeted feedback and professional learning opportunities to improve instruction." Further, they were clear that "a system of educator evaluation should be grounded in improvement-focused feedback, not in punitive action" and that "the system should, at its core, serve to raise the performance of all educators because this is what our students need and deserve."

The changes proposed in SB 395-96 will move Michigan a long way toward fulfilling the original vision of the MCEE by emphasizing feedback leading to improvement, supported by training. Further, deemphasizing the punitive elements of the system will create space for all educators to use the research-based tools and regular observation that are at the core of this work in the way they were designed: as mechanisms to support continuous improvement rather than a means to justify personnel decisions.

Again, thank you for introducing and taking action on this important legislation and for all your work to support Michigan's educators.

Sincerely,



Wendy Zdeb  
Executive Director  
Michigan Association of Secondary  
School Principals



Paul Liabenow  
Executive Director  
Michigan Elementary and Middle School  
Principals Association

CC: Senate Education Committee