



John Bretschneider, President
Carolyn Smith-Gerdes, President-Elect
Janis Weckstein, Past President

Anthony S. Thaxton, Ph.D., Executive Director,
4769 Crestridge Ct. Holland, Mi 49423
Phone: 616.283-0597 Fax: 616.335.2811
E-Mail: anthonythaxton@mac.com

MAASE Official Input Statement
Proposed Early On® Funding Formula
December 1, 2012

This statement is submitted on behalf of the Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education (MAASE), a professional organization of over 600 administrators serving local and intermediate school districts and who are responsible for coordinating the delivery of special education programs/services to students throughout the state of Michigan.

MAASE has been attentive to the issue of ensuring that students with disabilities receive quality early intervention services, whether provided by Early On® or special education staff. We appreciate the opportunity to react to the document and provide the following comments for the Department's consideration.

MAASE **supports** the efforts of the Michigan Department of Education, Office of the Great Start for striving for an equitable formula for all ISDs to provide quality services through Early On®.

MAASE **supports** a funding formula based on data of children birth through 2 in each ISD using accurate demographic data.

MAASE **supports** the 5-year window for establishing level funding rather than moving to a new formula in just one year. Having multiple years to adjust to a new formula will be very beneficial.

MAASE **supports** the inclusion of a new factor in the formula that recognizes the actual number of children served with IFSP's. Both the current formula and the proposed formula allow ISD's to receive money to coordinate and provide services while not actually being required to serve anywhere near the target for number of children served. The existing inequities among ISDs as to numbers served needs to be addressed.

While MAASE **supports** a formula that eliminates the extreme disparity between districts of varying sizes in the base amount, we **do not support** the formula as it stands given that a new disparity would be created over the 5 year period in the base amount and the total amounts between the smallest ISDs and the largest. Regardless of the number of children served, there are several requirements for Early On® each ISD must satisfy regardless of size. By year 5, the smallest ISDs will receive approximately \$25,000 while the largest will receive \$700,000 to \$1.5 million regardless of how many children they actually serve. Given this scenario, the smallest ISDs will not even be able to hire a part-time coordinator or staff to manage the grant and monitoring activities for \$25,000 let alone coordinate services for children.

MAASE **does not support** a formula, or its implementation, that allows staff at MDE to make changes in the formula without public comment. In the proposed funding formula and its implementation, the MDE can change the base grant amount and the power factor with only the requirement of obtaining input from the MICC which does not fully represent all of the constituents involved with Early On®. Any changes to formulas should not have this flexibility and should require any modification to go through the public comment process.

We thank you for this opportunity to provide input on this critical issue. Please do not hesitate to contact us if MAASE can provide further information. The primary contact for this public comment is President, John Bretschneider, 231-876-2279.

For the Executive Board,

John Bretschneider
Director of Special Education
Wexford-Missaukee ISD
9907 E. 13th Street
Cadillac, MI 49601
Email: jbret@wmisd.org
Phone: (231) 876-2279

Anthony S. Thaxton, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education
4769 Crestridge Court
Holland, MI 49423
Email: anthonythaxton@mac.com
616-283-0597