Guiding Principles

The Grand Rapids Board of Education wants the State of Michigan to be a “Top 10 State” in the nation for student achievement. This includes building an inclusive team and setting statewide priorities; studying and learning from top performing states and nations; creating a shared statewide vision; benchmarking policies; and adequately and equitably investing to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of all students.

The Board is focused on policy and appropriations that help achieve student-centered goals of kindergarten readiness, 3rd grade reading proficiency, 8th grade math proficiency, and college-career readiness. These goals are aligned regionally with the Education Advocates of West Michigan (formerly the West Michigan Talent Triangle), Talent 2025, the Kent Intermediate School District, and the Michigan School Finance Research Collaborative.

All legislative advocacy by the Grand Rapids Board of Education will be based on whether the legislation and/or appropriation meets the following three core principles:

- It must be based on the individual needs of students.
- It must reflect the individual characteristics of districts.
- It must provide for local control to implement evidenced-based reforms to support the individual needs and characteristics of students and districts.
Comprehensive Educator and Support Staff Workforce Development
- Allow for immediate access to the critical shortage list. Extend the sunset and expand the list of teaching positions on the critical shortage list.
- Allow school employees to substitute teach with less than 60 credit hours
- For 2021-2022, suspend substitute teacher permit fees.
- Scholarships and student teacher stipends to recruit people into colleges of education, school counselors, psychologists, and more.
- Create alternative pathways for school counselors, psychologists, and social workers to receive certification.

Equitable and Adequate Funding to Meet Student Needs
- Establish a needs-based state funding formula to ensure there is equitable and adequate funding to meet the individual needs of ALL children.
- The recent historic per pupil increase has established parity in base per pupil funding. Now is the time to adjust the funding formula based on the Michigan School Finance Research Collaborative and other studies with emphasis on special education, English learners, and at-risk youth.

COVID Flexibility and Stability on Pupil Accounting, Teacher and Administrator Evaluation
- Flexibility with ESSER and 31A funds to meet academic, social, emotional, mental needs of students.
- For the 2021-2022 school year, amend pupil accounting rules to allow for students in quarantine to be counted as “in attendance” for funding.
- For the 2021-2022 school year, allow students who enroll after the count day period to be counted in membership.
- For the 2021-2022 school year, temporarily suspend teacher/administrator evaluations and the growth component; provide for local accountability measures.

Read by Grade 3 Law Reform
- Temporarily suspend or eliminate the mandatory retention component of the Read by Grade 3 law.

Headlee Rollback Exception
- Eliminate the Headlee Rollback to prevent the need for costly and confusing non-Homestead millage ballot measures.

Protect Voting Rights
- Increase the effectiveness of local control by protecting voting rights and increasing participation in elections.