



OAG

Office of the Auditor General

Report Summary

Performance Audit

Support for Low Performing Schools

Office of Partnership Districts (OPD) Michigan Department of Education (MDE)

Report Number:
313-0201-26

Released:
September 2026

OPD's mission is to provide research-based support to the State's lowest performing schools and districts to reduce barriers and identify appropriate resources to help expedite academic achievement for all students in the districts. From school years 2022-2023 through 2024-2025, MDE entered into partnership agreements to provide support for 99 schools in 45 districts. During this time, OPD disbursed \$42.4 million in Section 21(h) partnership district model grants and distributed it among the partnership districts, primarily for staff retention incentives, increased instruction time, professional development, and teacher mentors. OPD was appropriated \$3.6 million in fiscal year 2025 for 13 full-time employees.

Audit Objective			Conclusion
Objective 1: To assess the sufficiency of selected OPD efforts to support partnership districts with identified low performing schools in improving student achievement.			Sufficient, with exceptions
Findings Related to This Audit Objective	<u>Material Condition</u>	<u>Reportable Condition</u>	Agency Preliminary Response
Partnership agreement liaisons (PALs) did not document 43% of required progress meetings with partnership districts or all required information in 35% of documented meeting highlights. In addition, the meetings did not always occur within established time frames, and PALs did not communicate meeting minutes to district stakeholders for more than half of the meetings (<u>Finding 1</u>).		X	Agrees
Our audit of travel expenses noted OPD overpaid staff by 30% for delayed and erroneous reimbursement requests. The reimbursements included duplicate meal expenses, ineligible meals and mileage, and incorrect reimbursement rates and coding (<u>Finding 2</u>).		X	Agrees

Audit Objective			Conclusion
Objective 2: To assess the sufficiency of OPD's monitoring of partnership districts' use of Section 21(h) grant funds to improve student achievement in low performing schools.			Not sufficient
Findings Related to This Audit Objective	Material Condition	Reportable Condition	Agency Preliminary Response
OPD did not conduct required annual fiscal risk assessments or review any evidence to support expenditures related to \$42.4 million in grant awards to the 45 districts with partnership agreements (<u>Finding 3</u>).	X		Agrees

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