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**Date:** December 11, 2013

**To:** Members of the Michigan Senate Education Committee

**Re:** **Support for adding flexibility to the Michigan Merit Curriculum and amending SB 66**

Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) is the state's largest general farm organization with more than 48,500 farm family members. Since our beginning in 1919, we have operated under a grass roots policy process where members at the local level develop, debate and adopt our policy on an annual basis.

MFB is currently neutral on SB 66 (S-2) which is in front of the Senate Education Committee today. We suggest incorporating the attached amendments which help to fulfill MFB policy and if adopted, would allow our organization to support the legislation. The bill would make numerous warranted changes to the personal curriculum portion of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) however there is more to be done. The bill does not make any changes to the 18 credit hours required under the current MMC.

Michigan Farm Bureau policy supports a comprehensive, well-rounded education that contains both college-prep opportunities and career technical education (CTE) opportunities. We believe more emphasis needs to be placed on government, economics and communication skills. We support allowing flexibility to the MMC so there are more opportunities for students to enroll in CTE programs.

Our state's food and agriculture system accounts for \$94.1 billion in economic activity annually. It takes roughly 22 percent of Michigan's workforce to fill the diverse job opportunities available in agriculture—and more students need the ability to enroll in CTE programs regardless of whether they go on to obtain a two- or four-year degree, or technical certificates.

We appreciate the work of Sen. Proos and Chairman Pavlov and so many others in exploring the challenges students have in fulfilling all required credit hours while at the same time engaging in hands-on learning through CTE programs. We believe more can and should be done. We look forward to working toward a goal of flexibility for students wishing to engage in CTE while ensuring that our college-prep students still have the opportunities best suited for their career plans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Rebecca R. Park'.

Rebecca R. Park  
Legislative Counsel

## SB 66 (S-2) Draft 1 Suggested Amendments

1. Amend page 3, line 11 after "1278b" by inserting: ", or at least 1/2 credit in health aligned with guidelines developed by the department and approved by the state board under section 1278B and at least 1/2 credit awarded by the school district or public school academy for approved participation in extracurricular athletics or other extracurricular activities involving physical activity."
2. Amend page 4, line 8 after "(1)," by striking: "beginning with pupils entering grade 3 in 2006,"
3. Amend page 4, line 11 after "grades" by striking "9" and inserting "K".
4. Amend page 4, line 12 after "credits," by striking "as determined by the department" and inserting "that are grade appropriate"
5. Amend page 4, line 13 after "English" by striking ", or the pupil has successfully completed at any time during grades K to 12 and inserting "or"
6. Amend page 4, line 19 after "English" by inserting " however, a pupil may partially or fully fulfill this requirement by completing a department-approved formal career and technical education program or curriculum or by completing visual or performing arts instruction that is in addition to the requirements under subsection (1)(A)(iv)."
7. Amend page 8, line 21 after "chemistry" by striking "or" and inserting ", " and after "physics" by inserting ", or agricultural science." and strike through the "." on line 25.
8. Amend page 15, line 20 after "analysis" by inserting "or technical math"
9. Amend page 16, line 2 after "English" by inserting "or requires the pupil to complete a formal career and technical education program"