

**TOP TEN FOR EDUCATION:
NOT BY CHANCE**



The Education Trust—Midwest

The Education Trust-Midwest

The Education Trust-Midwest works for the high academic achievement of all Michigan's students, pre-kindergarten through college. Our goal is to close the gaps in opportunity and achievement for all children, particularly those from low-income families or who are African American, Latino or American Indian.

As a nonpartisan, data-driven education policy, research and advocacy organization, we are focused first and foremost on doing what is right for Michigan children, working alongside partners to raise the quality of teaching and learning in our public schools.

Find all of our reports, including examinations of what works in leading education states, as well as fact sheets and other information at www.edtrustmidwest.org.



The Michigan Achieves campaign

In 2015, The Education Trust-Midwest launched the Michigan Achieves campaign to make Michigan a top ten education state by 2030. Each year, we report on how Michigan is making progress toward that top ten goal based on both student outcome performance metrics and opportunity to learn metrics that signal the health of the conditions that Michigan is creating that help support — or stagnate — teaching and learning in Michigan public schools. This year's State of Michigan Education Report includes an up-to-date report card on many of the same benchmarks. For more on those outcomes, please see page 36.

Since then, a growing number of partners around the state have come to work together to advance the best practices and strategies from leading education states to Michigan, in order to close achievement gaps and ensure every Michigan student is learning — and being taught — at high levels.

Join the movement at www.michiganachieves.org.

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PARKVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WYOMING, MI

PHOTO CREDITS

ALL PHOTOS BY REX LARSEN, EXCEPT PAGES 13 AND 16.

An Open Letter to Michiganders

Dear Fellow Michiganders,

Like many of you, I'm a native Michigander. I've always been proud of what I think are many of our shared Michigan values: a hard work ethic, a passion for the Great Lakes and a shared industrial heritage, and a commitment to taking care of our shared institutions. Our public education system is one such shared institution. And for decades, we could boast of having one of the nation's better K-12 systems. Sadly, our public schools are not what they once were.



As we lay out in our 2018 State of Michigan Education report, a new analysis by The Education Trust-Midwest shows Michigan's third-graders are the lowest performing students in the U.S. among peers based on the state's assessment. Michigan is one of only a few states in the country that actually lost ground in third-grade reading in recent years. This decline has come as state leaders have invested nearly \$80 million in raising third-grade reading. What's more, students of every background — black, white, brown, low-income, higher-income — are among the nation's bottom ten performers as measured by the most important metrics for learning. It's a devastating decline — yet it can and must be turned around.

That's why we launched the Michigan Achieves campaign to make Michigan a top ten education state. Each year, we report on how Michigan is making progress toward that top ten goal for *all* students not only based on data-driven metrics but also on process: Is the state putting into place the research-based best practices and high-leverage systems that have been proven to work in leading education states? This year, the answer is a resounding no.

For that reason, in this 2018 State of Michigan Education report, Ed Trust-Midwest goes deeper into the "how" of Michigan's early literacy initiative, an important case study for the state's larger K-12 improvement challenges. Our team spent two years researching what best practices and implementation looks like in top states. And with input from Michigan educators, we developed recommendations tailored for Michigan based both on best practice and the state's needs. It's clear we, as a state, need to improve our effectiveness of the "how" of raising teaching and learning: the implementation of systemic improvement.

Today, Michigan is implementing a third-grade retention law that could potentially hold back tens of thousands of the state's current kindergarten and first-grade students who aren't reading on grade level by the end of third grade. My daughter is one of the students who could be held back. There is great urgency for her and every young student who could be held back: students who are held back a grade are less likely to graduate from high school. African American and Latino students are at greater risk of being held back. The end result could mean Michigan's lack of strategic, well-coordinated statewide plan and effective implementation — combined with mandatory retention — could exacerbate the unequal outcomes of Michigan's educational system in one of the worst states in the U.S. to be African American, Latino or poor. Indeed, Michigan's approach to early literacy improvement leaves it far too much to chance that young students' reading levels will improve.

Yet there's a great opportunity in the new third-grade reading retention law, too. Today thousands of educators and parents are digging more deeply into their practices to figure out how they can better educate and support young children's reading development. Philanthropy is investing in boosting these outcomes. There's great consensus on the topic of early literacy. That's the good news. Too often, however, principals, teachers and parents are taking on these efforts without the high-caliber systems of training, regular feedback, and proper support and tools that leading states provide their principals and teachers. That's not right — and we can change it.

In this report, we lay out how Michigan can build smarter, more effective improvement systems to become a top ten education state, using Michigan's implementation of third-grade reading as a case study of how to do so. Other states have been modernizing their public school systems to prepare all students to succeed in a global knowledge economy. As the recent loss of the bid to win Amazon second headquarters and nearly 50,000 jobs to Detroit and Grand Rapids shows, Michigan must do so, too. It's essential to Michigan's democracy and collective future — and most important, to our students' lives.

We also celebrate some of Michigan's highest-improving, high-poverty schools that are showing dramatic improvement can happen with the right systems, leadership and strategies. In partnership with the Steelcase Foundation and district partners Wyoming Public Schools and Grand Rapids Public Schools, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has brought leading state models for building school-level systems to Michigan. Today Wyoming's Parkview Elementary ranks among the state's highest-improving, high-poverty schools for subjects such as third-grade reading and math. In Grand Rapids, district and school efforts supported by CETL have resulted in Stocking and Sibley Elementary Schools becoming not only among the top-improving buildings in their district, but also among *all* schools in Michigan.

Indeed, I strongly believe we *can* turn things around in Michigan. Just as Michiganders worked together to turn around our ailing auto industry during the Great Recession and continue to move toward a more vibrant economy, today we need to work together to turn around our P-12 public school system in transformative and effective ways.

Join us. Go to www.edtrustmidwest.org to join our movement to make Michigan a top ten education state for *all* groups of students. Join us in being a voice for great public schools for all children.

We can do this. We need your help.

Onward,



Amber Arellano

Executive Director

The Education Trust-Midwest

I.

OVERVIEW: A CRITICAL MOMENT



PARKVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WYOMING, MI

By The Education Trust-Midwest

Michigan is at a critical moment in time — a historic moment where our citizens and leaders must choose whether we will take advantage of new opportunities to become a top ten education state — or face a continued and dramatic educational decline. Today, national data reveal that Michigan’s public education system is among the poorest performing in the country, a problem we can ill afford to ignore.

The next two to three years provide a critical opportunity to reverse this trajectory. The 2018 election provides a key window of opportunity to advance an equity and excellence education agenda in Michigan. Moreover, as the federal government hands down more authority over education to states, state-level leadership is more important than ever before in influencing thoughtful and sustained policy and practice.

This period is also important in ensuring attentive long-term implementation of high-leverage strategies Michigan has adopted, including a statewide educator evaluation, feedback and support system, and college- and career-readiness academic standards for all students. New opportunities are also on the horizon, including more equitable school funding in exchange for greater accountability for schools and districts.

Indeed, the urgency for change is more important today than ever before. Michigan’s K-12 public education’s learning outcomes have been declining dramatically compared to other states around the nation for more than a decade — and that devastating trend has continued for third-grade reading. As we lay out in this 2018 State of Michigan Education report, a new analysis by The Education Trust-Midwest shows Michigan’s third-graders are the lowest performing students in the U.S among those states that participated in the same multistate assessment consortium. Michigan is one of only a few states in the country that actually produced a negative change in third-grade reading levels in recent years. Michigan’s third-grade reading levels have fallen considerably since the first year of M-STEP implementation in school year 2014-2015.

Many staff and partners contributed to the research and development of this report, including: ETM policy and research analyst Mary Grech; executive director Amber Arellano; senior advisor Terry Gallagher; former assistant director of research and policy Sunil Joy; former policy and data analyst Suneet Bedi; and Education Trust President and CEO John King Jr. We also thank the Michigan teachers and principals who provided early input on the recommendations in this report.

This decline has come as state leaders have invested nearly \$80 million to raise third-grade reading levels — and during the same period when many other states that also adopted higher standards for teaching and learning produced notable learning gains for their students in the same metric.

In some respects, Michigan’s continued decline should come as no surprise. As our organization has documented in recent years through its Michigan Achieves campaign to make Michigan a top ten education state, Michigan student achievement has fallen steeply for every group of students — black, brown and white — compared to other states since the early 2000s. Less well known is the story behind that data: Despite the state’s growing educational crisis, Michigan’s achievement efforts to date do not reflect a fundamental shift on how our state approaches improvement strategies, such as educator capacity-building and public reporting — a shift which will be absolutely necessary moving forward. For that reason, the state’s ongoing statewide investment in raising third-grade reading levels provides an important case study to examine how Michigan’s K-12 improvement strategies, design and delivery systems stack up compared to the nation’s top states.

After almost two years of research, including conversations with educators working at the classroom, school, district, intermediate school district and state level, our team found a profound need for far more robust implementation and improvement systems, guided by sustained and visionary leadership. Indeed, the lack of coherent systems and accountability for consistent improvement are holding back third-grade literacy efforts and squandering millions of dollars. As it stands, the only real accountability for Michigan’s third-grade reading investment exists for the state’s students: under the state’s 2016 policy, students are at-risk for retention in third grade if they are unable to meet grade-level reading expectations.¹

And while leading states like Tennessee have invested in strategic improvement systems for ongoing training and support for their teachers and principals — by far the most critical lever for improving literacy outcomes — no such strategic support system exists in Michigan. Meanwhile, the Legislature has done its part to create better support for educators and approved the creation of Michigan’s first statewide system of educator support and evaluation. But weak implementation has sabotaged this high-leverage opportunity for widespread improvement of teaching and learning — the very lever that top states such as Tennessee have used to lift all students’ learning outcomes.

Michigan’s Third Grade Reading Law

In October 2016, Governor Rick Snyder signed into law Michigan’s third grade reading law (Public Act 306 of 2016), which requires that third-grade students meet state-determined reading proficiency requirements in order to be promoted to the fourth grade,² beginning with third-grade students in the 2019-2020 school year. Specifically, students must either score within one grade-level of third-grade reading proficiency on the state assessment; demonstrate third-grade-level reading proficiency on an alternative standardized reading assessment or through a student portfolio; or receive a “good cause” exemption.³ Students may only be retained once for reading deficiencies.

Michigan’s third-grade reading law also requires districts to adopt reading assessment and intervention systems to support all students in grades K-3 in their

progress towards proficiency. These include assessing all students in grades K-3 at least three times a year to identify struggling readers and then providing targeted, evidence-based literacy interventions to ensure struggling students improve by third grade. Families must be notified if their student is at risk of retention and be included in the creation of their student’s individual reading improvement plan.

Additionally, Michigan’s third-grade reading law requires the Michigan Department of Education to develop a literacy coaching model. Early literacy coaches must provide targeted professional development to K-3 teachers around early literacy instruction, student data analysis, and differentiated instruction and intervention strategies.

In short, at a time when Michigan could be overhauling its approach to implementation, building clear accountability levers, and deploying research-based improvement systems that have been so effective in the nation's top education states, Michigan is simply sticking with the same approach it has used for decades — one that largely leaves improvement up to chance and leaves local teachers, principals and district leaders to figure out how to implement the best practices in the U.S. today, without strong support, training and resources. This approach may have served Michigan decades ago, but today overwhelming evidence from the best states show there are far more strategic and effective ways to lead and support public schools' efforts to raise teaching and learning — and both Michigan educators and students would benefit greatly. The state's future vitality depends on this overdue shift.

Despite Michigan's disappointing trajectory towards educational improvement, our organization is deeply hopeful about the potential for positive change in the foreseeable future. A growing number of leaders and stakeholders across sectors in Michigan see the need for real change. Organizations such as the Steelcase Foundation and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in west Michigan, and districts such as Grand Rapids Public Schools and Wyoming Public Schools, are demonstrating that the best practices of the nation's top states not only can work in Michigan,

they can produce major gains in learning for low-income students and students of color, too. We highlight some of these promising efforts and local leaders in this report with the hope they will be useful models that may be expanded over time.

For an in-depth look at the many partners producing notable gains in third-grade literacy in west Michigan's high-poverty schools, please see page 15.

We're also buoyed by the broad consensus on third-grade learning outcomes as the place to start Michigan's educational comeback. The state legislature, K-12 organizations and many leaders in the philanthropic and non-profit communities have agreed that Michigan needs a major, multi-year investment in third-grade literacy. We are also encouraged by recent investments by policymakers in early reading including roughly \$50 million over the last two years, with an additional \$30 million or more expected in the current fiscal year.⁴

Decades of research demonstrates that the right place to start improving education overall is by promoting early literacy. When children read well by third grade, they are dramatically more likely to succeed not only in school, but in life. They're much more likely to go to college, participate in the job market and even have greater lifetime employment earnings.



Michigan's Approach To Early Literacy Investment & Implementation

- *Isolated strategies without coordination:* While Michigan's early literacy investment covers several areas (e.g. tutoring for students, coaching for educators, etc.), there has been no strategic vision around a comprehensive, statewide strategy. Each strategy is treated in isolation, with little thought on how they might work together and leverage one another.
- *A lack of a strategic approach to training or professional development for educators:* Unlike leading states — which harness the talent of each state's top educators through a "train-the-trainer" model — Michigan does not have a rigorous protocol for identifying top teachers who have both content mastery along with expertise in working with adults.
- *Lack of oversight and accountability for results:* Under the state's current investment, there is no accountability for local districts or intermediate school districts for using dollars most effectively. One key obstacle to holding districts accountable is the lack of quality statewide data collection and evaluation.
- *No method of continuous collective learning:* Leading states constantly refine their strategies based on the best data available and evaluation — and share results and best practices with major state stakeholders to drive continuous improvement and learning.

On the other hand, students unable to read by third grade are at greater risk to drop out of school, break the law and require government assistance.⁵ If there is a gift Michiganders can give to their children, it is insuring that every child — no matter where they live or the color of their skin — learns how to read well by third grade.

To make that noble and necessary goal happen, Michigan must make some essential shifts in its approach to P-12 improvement efforts, starting with state leadership that is dedicated, committed and focused on implementing effective systems. To get there, we need to fundamentally rethink not only the “what” of public education, but also the “how.” We’ve got to get smarter — and a lot

more strategic — about how our statewide improvement systems are organized, overseen, supported and held accountable.

For that reason, in this report we dig deeply into the experience of leading education states with a focus on the “how”: how did these states dramatically raise their third-grade reading levels in relatively short periods of time? Over the last two years, our team of researchers visited and talked with more than 50 leaders in these states, mined national and state data, and examined the approaches they used to lift learning for all of their children.

MICHIGAN’S PROGRESS ON KEY STATEWIDE STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

LEADING STATE STRATEGIES

MICHIGAN’S PROGRESS

College- and career-ready standards



After adopting standards, Michigan left it up to districts and ISDs to implement on their own, with no guidance or protocols, little support and no accountability.

Quality implementation of educator feedback and support systems



While Michigan created a statewide evaluation system, implementation remains weak. For example, there is no statewide definition of “effective” teaching.

Aligned data system



After adopting a high-quality assessment aligned to the state standards to inform teaching progress, there is now talk of dropping the assessment—likely for a less rigorous, unaligned assessment.

Educator capacity building



Michigan has not developed a statewide system of teacher and school leader professional development.

Research-based coaching models



Unlike leading states, Michigan lacks a sound and strategic approach to systems change through literacy coaching.

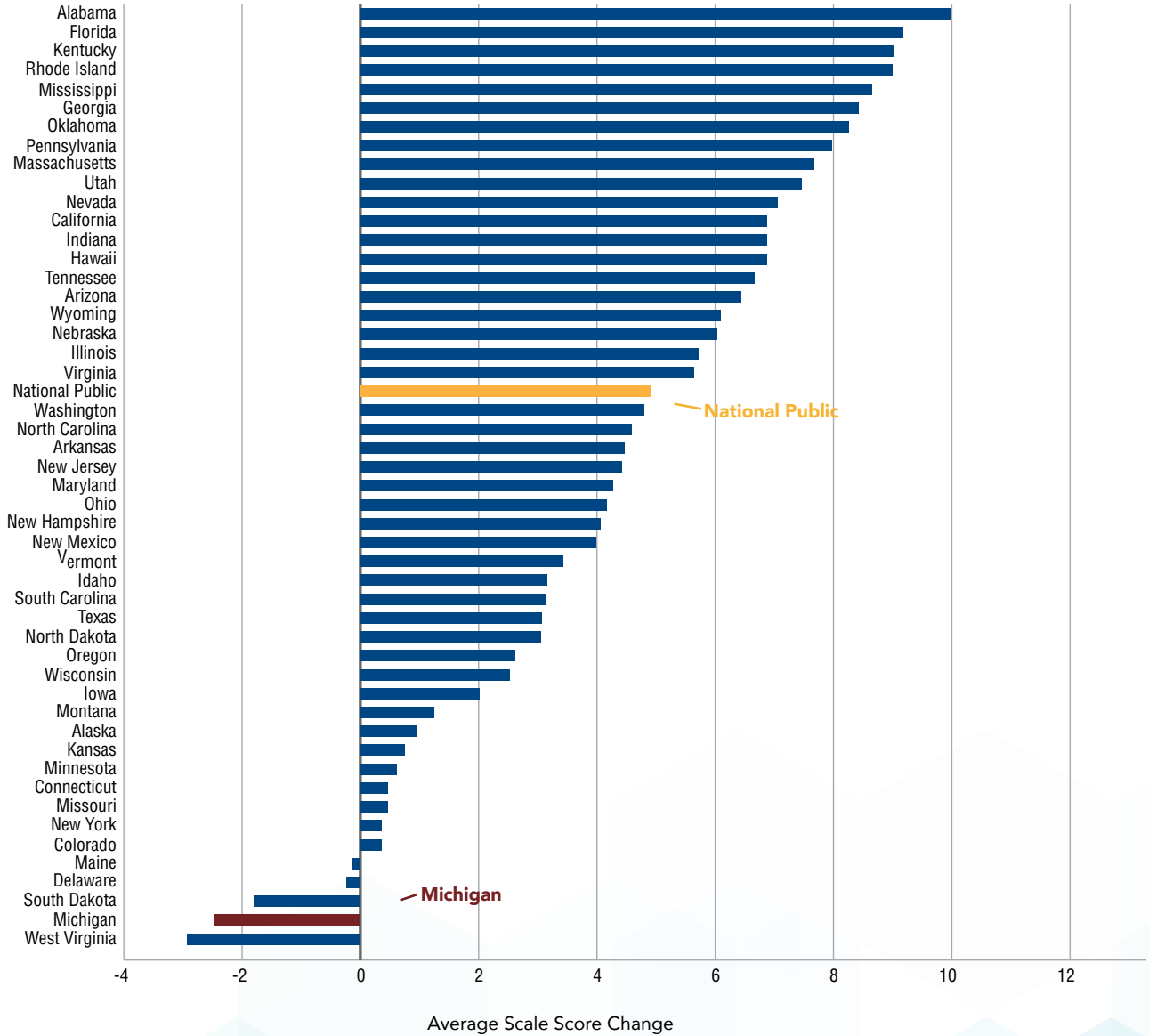
Strong accountability, including for third grade



The state does not have a track record of identifying and effectively supporting its lowest performing schools. At the same time, state-led data, public-reporting and accountability systems have been weakened.

Michigan is One of Only Five States That Show Negative Improvement for Early Reading Since 2003

Average Scale Score Change, NAEP Grade 4 - Reading - All Students (2003-15)



Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Basic Scale Score = 208; Proficient Scale Score = 238), 2003-15

II.

STATE OF EDUCATION TODAY



PARKVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WYOMING, MI

MICHIGAN'S STUDENT READING LEVELS

National assessment data show that Michigan students are not keeping up in either performance or improvement with the rest of the U.S. For example:

- Michigan's students ranked 41st in the nation in 2015 in fourth-grade reading performance overall, down from ranking 38th in 2013 and 28th in 2003.⁶
- The state's African American students rank either at or near the very bottom in elementary reading and math performance compared to their peers nationally.⁷
- Michigan's low-income students have fallen in relative rank from 37th in 2013 to 45th in 2015 for fourth-grade reading performance.⁸
- Michigan is one of only five states that has declined in actual performance in fourth-grade reading since 2003 for all students. The other states with declines are West Virginia, South Dakota, Delaware and Maine.⁹

Simply put, Michigan's students are not only behind, but they are far away from catching up to their peers nationwide.

Those who think that Michigan's unacceptable educational performance is due to our large share of poor students and students of color need only look around the country: states with similar demographics are making enormous learning gains for their most vulnerable children. On the national assessment for early reading, white students and higher-income students in Michigan rank nearly last in the country.

Results from the latest state assessment data also confirm that Michigan is going backwards in performance in early literacy:

- In 2016-2017, Michigan's results showed only 44 percent of all third graders were proficient in reading, down from 50 percent in 2014-2015.

- The results are more devastating for students of color and low-income students: just 29 percent of low-income students were proficient in third-grade reading and only about one-third of Latino students, and a fifth of African American students were proficient in third-grade reading.¹⁰

While Michigan posted declines in third-grade reading performance across all groups of students over the past three years of state assessment data, other states demonstrated gains. We know this because Michigan’s adoption of the M-STEP allows us to both benchmark students performance to rigorous standards as well as the performance of their peers in other states.

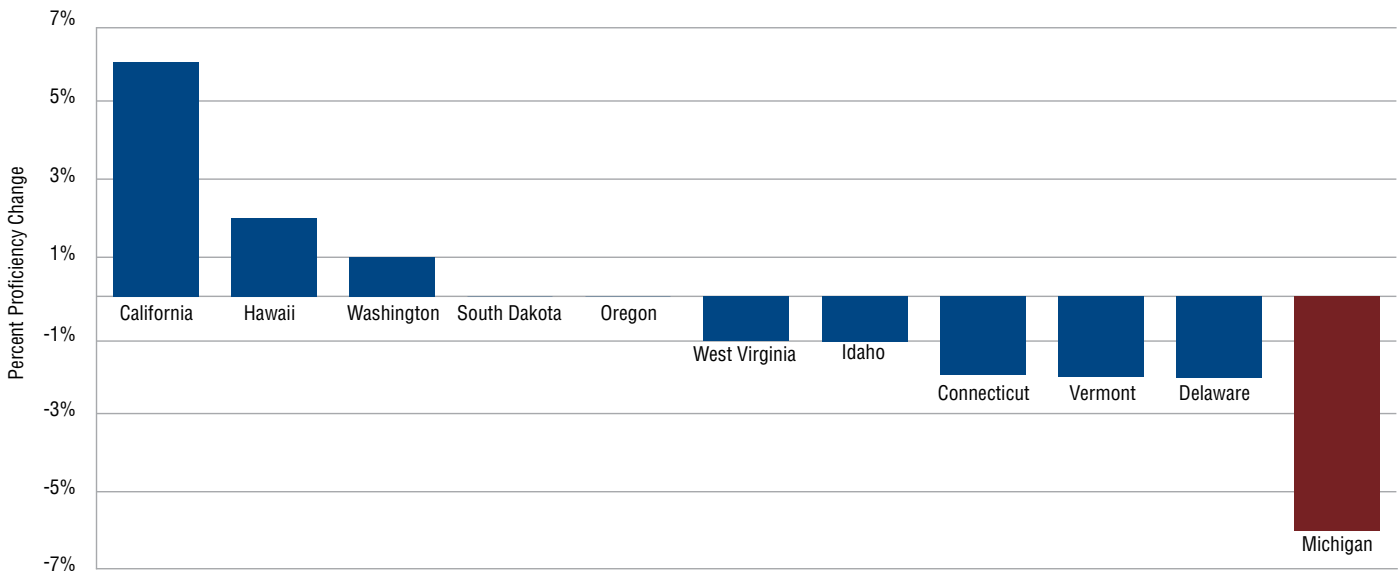
Michigan’s adoption of the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) in 2015 was among the most important steps taken by the Michigan Department of Education to improve teaching and learning in the state in generations. Michigan leaders understood the

importance of moving toward an aligned assessment that would provide honest information to Michiganders about how their public schools are performing against high performance standards. As a member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), content for the M-STEP was developed with the help of thousands of educators nationwide, including many from Michigan.

In addition, the M-STEP makes it possible for us to compare Michigan’s educational achievement with the other states that use a Smarter Balanced assessment.¹¹ Early SBAC data indicate that gains are being made in other states, but that Michigan is losing ground. While these results are hard to take, getting honest data is key to making progress down the road. As educators and students receive the support they need to meet our higher academic standards, it is imperative that Michigan continues to stay the course with M-STEP to gain a true sense of student learning and school performance in our state compared to other states.

Michigan Shows Negative Improvement for Early Reading on State Assessment

Percent Proficiency Change, SBAC Grade 3 – English Language Arts – All Students (2014-15 to 2016-17)



Source: Individual state score releases for 2014-2015 and 2016-2017

Note: Only states with two years of complete data results are included. Montana, Nevada, and North Dakota were excluded due to testing discrepancies in 2015 results. New Hampshire was excluded due to delays in reporting 2017 assessment results. Michigan’s current statewide assessment system, the M-STEP, was designed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) as required by Public Act 94 in June 2014. Michigan is one of the 13 governing members that uses the SBAC assessment. Caution should be used when interpreting individual SBAC results across states, as each state has their own policies and procedures for assessment administration. Additionally, SBAC is also a relatively new assessment system, meaning longitudinal data will be important to continue analyzing longer-term trends.

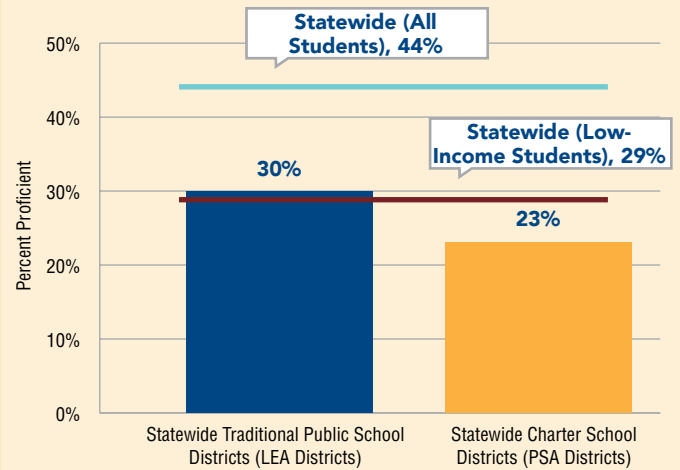
UNDERSTANDING MICHIGAN CHARTER SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

For years, Michigan leaders have embraced expanding charter schools and school choice among the primary strategies for closing gaps in achievement and opportunity. The latest M-STEP data show that Michigan charter schools also are struggling with student achievement.

- For third-grade students in Michigan in 2016-17, 23 percent of low-income charter school students are proficient in English Language Arts compared to 30 percent of low-income students in traditional public schools statewide.
- In Detroit, both traditional and charter school sectors are struggling with early reading levels. In 2016-17, just 20 percent of low-income charter school students in Detroit were proficient, compared to 9 percent in traditional public schools in third-grade English language arts.

MICHIGAN TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS OUTPACE CHARTERS STATEWIDE IN EARLY LITERACY FOR LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

Percent Proficient, M-STEP Grade 3 – English Language Arts – Low-Income Students (2016-17)



Source: M-STEP Results 2017, EEM Spring 2017



GRAND RAPIDS CHILD DISCOVERY CENTER, GRAND RAPIDS, MI
PHOTO: ERIK HOLLADAY

MICHIGAN'S EDUCATIONAL DECLINES IN EARLY LITERACY ARE SHARED STATEWIDE

Michigan's educational declines are fairly consistent across the state, especially for the state's most vulnerable groups of students. For example, when comparing metropolitan Grand Rapids to metropolitan Detroit¹² — the state's two most populous regions — early reading levels are devastatingly low for African American and Latino students.

Consider:

- In the 2016-17 academic year, proficiency rates for African American students on the third-grade English language arts (ELA) M-STEP assessment was just 20 percent statewide. In metro Detroit, the rate was 20 percent proficient and in metro Grand Rapids, it was 24 percent proficient.
- A similar trend is true of Latino students in these two metro areas. About 32 percent of Latino students statewide were proficient on the third-grade ELA M-STEP assessment in 2016-17. In Grand Rapids and metro Detroit, 33 percent and 29 percent of their Latino students reached proficiency in 2016-17, respectively.

Some efforts are seeing notable progress, however. One effort in west Michigan is gaining a lot of traction, particularly for its learning gains among high-poverty students for third-grade reading.

Created in collaboration with the Steelcase Foundation and modeled after successful efforts in leading states like Tennessee, in 2014 The Education Trust-Midwest opened the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) in west Michigan to bring the highest-leverage research-based strategies from leading education states to support Michigan's high-poverty schools. The CETL is built upon the understanding that teacher- and school-leader capacity-building is critical for improving student learning.

The CETL goal: to pilot such practices in Michigan to learn whether these strategies can help lift student outcomes as they have elsewhere around the country.

Tennessee's statewide teaching-effectiveness and principal-leadership efforts serve as primary models for the CETL work being done in close partnership with district and school leaders in Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS) and Wyoming Public Schools.

More specifically, CETL staff work hand-in-hand with teachers and principals to better support instructional practice, collaboration and professional development. The long-term objective of CETL is to create a sustainable model of school improvement. And although CETL's goals are long-term, these efforts are already showing significant progress. For example, three of the five elementary schools the CETL team has worked with, in collaboration with district, school and non-profit partners, are among the top improving schools in the state in third-grade reading today.

Most important, all of this work has been done in partnership with district leaders at Grand Rapids Public Schools and Wyoming Public Schools — and it builds upon the foundation of the important progress that they have been working toward for years. GRPS, for example, has been developing and leading research-based teacher and principal capacity-building efforts for years now.

While the hard work of many partners in west Michigan is lifting third-grade reading levels in the CETL-Steelcase schools in Kent County, the implications of these collective efforts go much further. Lessons learned from these innovative, new efforts can provide important insight on innovative school improvement models for Michigan leaders and educators, particularly for the state's most impoverished schools and districts.



PARKVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WYOMING, MI

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS: WEST MICHIGAN LEADS INNOVATIVE EFFORTS TO SUPPORT TEACHING AND LEARNING

Just a few years ago, Katie Jobson was like most principals working in America's high-poverty schools: Overloaded and under-resourced, trying to manage the needs of dozens of students, educators and initiatives with too few dollars and staff to do so.

Fast forward to today: Jobson is still feverishly busy, but she also has a new leadership team by her side to implement systemic school improvements like never before. And most important, her students are winning in the process.

Parkview Elementary in Wyoming Public Schools is now among the highest-improving, high-poverty public schools in Michigan for subjects such as third-grade reading and math — no small feat in a state declining compared to much of the country.

Set in a scrappy neighborhood where immigrants have flocked in recent years, about 52 percent of Parkview's children are Latino; many are English as a Second Language students. Indeed, 87 percent of its students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

So what's changed? Wyoming is part of a multi-sector, multi-organization movement in west Michigan to build principals' and teachers' capacity and effectiveness to dramatically bolster student achievement. Teacher-leadership is one key part of this overall talent strategy.

"The power of teacher-leadership has become clear to me," says Jobson. "Teacher-leadership has allowed us to get traction."

Parkview Elementary is one of a network of schools that are part of an effort to pilot and test new innovative talent strategies in west Michigan's high-poverty schools. Seven schools located in three districts — Grand Rapids Public Schools, Wyoming Public Schools and Kelloggsville Public Schools — are part of the multiyear effort.



KATIE JOBSON

In partnership with the Steelcase Foundation, The Education Trust-Midwest opened the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in west Michigan to bring the highest-leverage research-based strategies from leading education states to support Michigan's high-poverty schools.

'The power of teacher-leadership has become clear to me. Teacher-leadership has allowed us to get traction.'

—Katie Jobson

The goal: to pilot such practices in Michigan to learn whether these strategies can help lift student outcomes as they have elsewhere around the country. Tennessee's statewide teaching-effectiveness and principal-leadership efforts serve as the primary model for the CETL work being done in partnership with district and school leaders.

And while the schools involved have a long journey to go before being considered high-performing, the effort is showing clear gains. Consider:

- In 2016-2017, Wyoming Intermediate was ranked in the top 20th percentile for fifth-grade low-income student performance in English language arts among high-poverty schools.
- At Stocking Elementary in Grand Rapids Public Schools, 95 percent of students are low-income and 39 percent Latino. Yet poverty is not destiny. Stocking, a STEM-focused school, is making major gains in improvement in third-, fourth- and fifth-grade math and science. For example, Stocking's Latino students are performing above statewide proficiency levels for fifth-grade math compared to not only Latino students statewide, but all students — regardless of race — statewide.
- Also in Grand Rapids Public Schools, Sibley Elementary ranks among the highest-improving elementary schools statewide in third-grade math and reading. In 2016-17, reading proficiency rates at Sibley Elementary for low-income third graders outpaced Kent Intermediate School District, other Grand Rapids Public Schools and statewide proficiency levels for low-income students.

To be sure, the teachers, principals and district leaders in Grand Rapids and Wyoming are the real leaders in the efforts demonstrating major gains in learning in the CETL network of schools. Among them, Grand Rapids Public Schools is doing deep work to support teachers and principals across the district.

"GRPS is continuing to gain state and national attention for our Transformation Plan success in large part due to dynamic partnerships, like that with the Steelcase Foundation and Ed Trust-Midwest, that provide a laser-like focus on teacher-school leadership development," according to GRPS Superintendent Teresa Weatherall Neal, M.Ed.

'GRPS is continuing to gain state and national attention for our Transformation Plan success in large part due to dynamic partnerships, like that with the Steelcase Foundation and Ed Trust-Midwest, that provide a laser-like focus on teacher-school leadership development.'

—Teresa Neal

The work is also a testimony to the power of partnerships. In three of the CETL network schools, for example, the CETL team works closely with Kent School Services Network (KSSN) which provides wrap-around services and support to families and students. That partnership has been incredibly complementary. For example, at Parkview KSSN works intensively to raise student attendance, which provides more time for educators to focus on improving instruction.



TERESA NEAL

COURTESY OF GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“Working alongside teachers, principals and other partners in a strategic and supportive way is a big focus of what we do, and how we do it,” says Chad Tolson, director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

For Jobson, the work has led to a fundamental change. In Parkview — like many schools — the old school improvement model called for the principal to carry most or all of the responsibility of continuous improvement efforts. But that outdated model often leaves principals overwhelmed and unable to support all of their teachers, much less implement multiple initiatives in a coherent, comprehensive way.

‘Strong schools have shared leadership. The only way to accomplish that is to have leadership within.’

—Chad Tolson

PARKVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WYOMING, MI



In CETL network schools, principals and teacher-leaders work with the CETL team to build school-wide systems and a distributed leadership model to effectively — and sustainably — support continuous improvement efforts. Teacher-leaders become the coaches of other teachers — and key leaders for improving instruction. When done right, the work provides schools greater capacity and the coherent systems needed to implement initiatives such as third-grade reading or new college-and career-ready standards in all classrooms.

Indeed, at Parkview, the CETL work has built a foundation on which to implement all improvement efforts. For

example, a Kent Intermediate School District early literacy coach is being woven into the new systems being developed with CETL by Jobson and her new teacher-leadership team.

“I had to shift my vision,” Jobson said. “I thought my teachers had enough on their plates, and couldn’t take on leadership roles. But I’ve learned they want to be involved; they want to be part of the leadership team.”

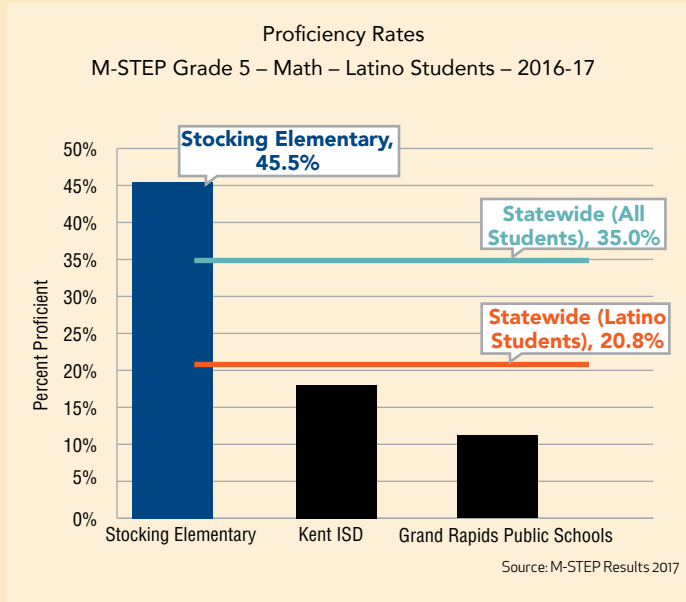
Tolson’s own experience has cemented his belief in the need for investing in educator talent. He worked as a middle-school teacher before moving into administration, where he served as a principal at both the elementary and secondary levels in Godwin Heights Public Schools.



CHAD TOLSON

“Strong schools have shared leadership,” says Tolson. “The only way to accomplish that is to have leadership within, and that includes your teachers.”

STOCKING ELEMENTARY OUTPACING DISTRICT, ISD AND STATEWIDE PROFICIENCY RATES IN MATH

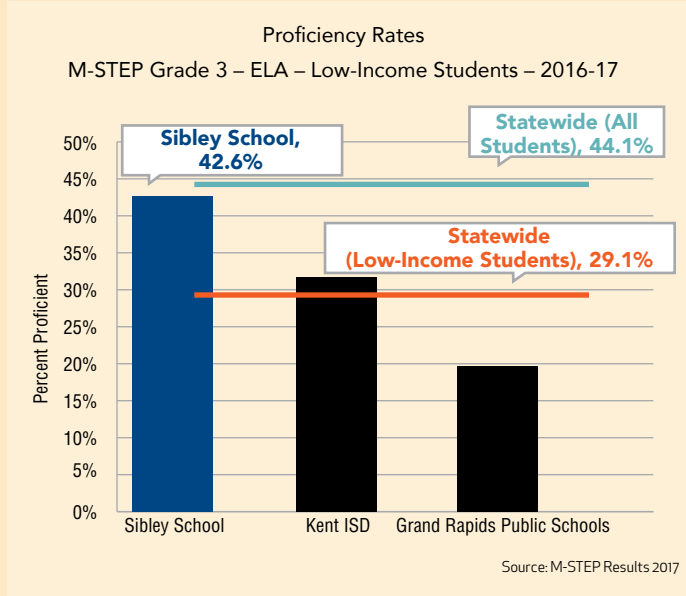


“The first thing we do is get to know the context: each school is different, each class is different, each teacher is different,” says Cheryl Corpus, CETL’s associate director. “The second step is to work to create a collaborative cohort of teachers in each building committed to making their schools better.”



“The biggest piece I’ve noticed is these teachers’ commitment to high achievement for their students, and to advancing their profession. The best teachers really believe in the power of high expectations.”

SIBLEY ELEMENTARY OUTPACING DISTRICT, ISD AND STATEWIDE PROFICIENCY RATES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



For Wyoming Intermediate’s fifth-grade veteran teacher Paul Debri, the impact is clear.

“They’re helping me understand my skills, my talents and my potential to help make me a better teacher,” says Debri, a 20-year teaching veteran. “I realize I have something more to give not just to other teachers, but also my kids.”



PARKVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WYOMING, MI

III.

LEARNING FROM LEADING EDUCATION STATES



PARKVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WYOMING, MI

KEY COMMONALITIES FROM LEADING STATES

Improving early literacy outcomes for Michigan students will take a sustained, aligned and comprehensive approach that leverages multiple strategies for improvement.

But changing our education trajectory goes far beyond simple adoption of specific policy strategies on their own. While essential, what we've learned from leading states is that to truly change our educational trajectory, a clear commitment must be put on quality implementation, learning from what is working and what is not, then using that feedback to get smarter about improving the system. At the end of the day, quality implementation is everything: just as it is difficult to produce rapid changes without dollars to support change, simply throwing dollars at an issue without a mindful strategy for success doesn't work either.

Leading states demonstrate a commitment to quality implementation, undergirded by a set of key conditions. These include:

- **COMMITTED AND RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP:**
 - Committed leaders who believed the system would not or could not improve *without* external capacity building and intervention — and who not only hold others in the system accountable for creating sustained, positive results for students, but also holding themselves accountable.
- **SOUND & STRATEGIC POLICY-MAKING SYSTEMS**
 - Understanding when to be “tight” and “loose” in terms of state policy and regulations — using “carrots” (incentives) and “sticks” (accountability). That is, these states understand how to shape policy and budget decisions strategically, including when to be more prescriptive, and when to leave it to districts and schools to decide.

- **DATA-CENTRIC FOCUS**

- Leveraging the power of college- and career-ready standards and aligned data and assessment systems to inform policy and practice at the classroom and state levels.

- **EDUCATOR CAPACITY-BUILDING SYSTEMS:**

- Using new models — typically with external support — to train educators to improve instruction, based on research-based best practices. Revamping professional development delivery systems to be more efficient and accountable.

- **CROSS-SECTOR ALLIANCES**

- Building alliances and champions across different sectors, because they are fundamental to long-term success. In addition to generating broad-based support for improvement, cross-sector alliances bring together the expertise, skills, political capital and leadership necessary for innovating and sustaining change.

Strategic Capacity-Building and Systemic Support Leveraged by Leading States

Systemic and Targeted Reforms



MASSACHUSETTS – Systemic Reforms

- Adoption of higher standards and aligned data.
- Support for educators:
 - Mentorship for new educators
 - Statewide training for principals
 - Educator evaluation and support
- Targeted investments for the state's most vulnerable students.
- Accountability for districts, with statewide supports for struggling schools and districts.



TENNESSEE – Systemic Reforms

- Adoption of higher standards and aligned data.
- Support for educators:
 - Comprehensive, data-driven educator support and evaluation systems for continuous and deep professional development
 - Nation's largest teacher training around standards through expert external vendor
- Accountability for ISDs (CORE districts), so that they actually meet the needs of local schools.



FLORIDA – Systemic + Targeted Reforms

- Adoption of more rigorous, scientifically-based research instructional standards.
- State reading office (Just Read, Florida!) coordinates the state's efforts and holds districts accountable.
- Statewide professional development in reading.
- Targeted dollars to districts for reading instruction (\$130 million annually).



ALABAMA – Targeted Reforms

- Statewide reading coach strategy, started with a pilot of sixteen schools, expanded to 1,000 coaches at its peak.
- Targeted use of data to monitor students' progress.
- Coaches receive training and instructional support from regional coordinators around the state.
- Accountability from governor and state reading office, along with regional coordinators.

LEADING STATE STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING EARLY LITERACY

Over the last several years, ETM has studied and consulted with dozens of experts in leading education states to learn the best practices and highest-leverage strategies for creating sustained improvement. We focus not only on which states have produced the most dramatic gains, but also whether their most vulnerable students — low-income students and students of color — have witnessed strong gains as well.

In this section, we highlight key levers that have been deployed in leading education states. Together, these strategies — focused through quality implementation and undergirded by key conditions — have produced major learning gains for their students.

1. Sustained and Committed Leadership: Ensuring Strategic Investments Create Long-term Change

In leading education states, state leadership has a real commitment and urgency to improve. Leadership must be research-based and guided by evidence on what is best for their students. A genuine commitment to results also matters most in any initiative. Leading education states show that if there is not buy-in for a plan at the highest levels, the signal to schools and districts is that the initiative is unimportant. And when these reforms are not a priority — again, as often signaled with a lack of guidance or supports to local districts or schools — it also leaves these districts or schools to figure out successful implementation on their own.

One of the strongest examples of committed and sustained leadership comes from Florida. Today, Florida ranks 10th in the nation in fourth-grade reading on the national assessment. These trends also hold true for low-income students and students of color. In fourth-grade reading, the state is ranked first for low-income students and Latino students and eighth for African American student scores.

Back in the early 2000s, data revealed that Florida's children were falling behind in reading. This prompted

then-Governor Jeb Bush to adopt the issue of literacy as a top state priority, creating ownership and responsibility at the highest levels. Governor Bush began by creating a new office — Just Read, Florida! — to focus solely on leading the new initiative and ensure accountability for results.

And while Just Read, Florida! led the state's efforts, the office worked with the Florida Center for Reading Research and the University of Central Florida to provide guidance around the statewide rollout — including developing research-based instructional resources and support for thousands of educators across the state. Today, the FCRR has earned a national reputation as a hub for high-quality research in literacy instruction.¹³

Despite being a strong “local control” state, Florida's leaders did not leave the task of raising student achievement exclusively to teachers, schools and local districts. In addition to creating a comprehensive plan, the Just Read, Florida! office collected data from its schools, enabling the state to calibrate strategies and hold districts accountable for improved outcomes. And Governor Bush received regular briefings on the state's literacy efforts and took ownership over the long-term success of his initiative.

Another example of committed leadership comes from Florida's neighbor — Alabama — which started its reforms in the late 1990s. While Alabama certainly is not a leading education state for achievement, it is among the top states for early reading improvement, according to the national assessment. In fourth-grade reading, for example, their students improved by 10 scale score points between 2003 and 2015. In the same time period, African American students gained a remarkable 15 points. This puts Alabama in the top five states for reading improvement since 2003 both for all students and for African American students.

Similar to Florida, in Alabama’s case, data had revealed that the state had a looming literacy crisis on its hands. When Alabama’s legislature was hesitant to sign onto the state’s ambitious new reading effort to address the issue — the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) — corporate philanthropic leaders stepped up and provided initial grant dollars beginning in the late 1990s. After seeing positive results — particularly among vulnerable groups of students — the legislature and governor followed up with significant allocations. In fact, then-Governor Bob Riley would later campaign on the importance of sustaining the ARI as a top priority for Alabama’s citizenry and future vitality. In 2004, Riley said:

“There are many priorities competing for our limited tax dollars, but none of them are as important as making sure all of Alabama’s children receive the best education we can possibly give them. No skill shapes a child’s future success in school or in life more than the ability to read. Fortunately, we know how to fix this problem. By fully funding the Alabama Reading Initiative in every classroom, we will make sure every child in Alabama learns to read.”¹⁴

And while the funding and appropriations were essential, it was what they did with the dollars that really mattered.

Alabama’s educational leadership understood that if the state was going to reverse course, it needed a cohesive statewide plan for improvement, starting with meaningful support for the state’s educators. That was critical because of the rapid advances in research over the last 15 years that revealed much better practices on how to teach children to read. Alabama launched a first-of-its-kind, visionary initiative to provide real-time and ongoing professional development to educators in all of the state’s elementary schools. And like Florida, the state continually monitored the program’s performance over time, to make sure that their efforts were truly paying off.

In both states, leadership not only created buy-in, but also followed through on its commitment to ensure schools and districts received the resources and support they needed to raise academic achievement. It was the commitment and follow-through by state leadership that made these initiatives successful.



PARKVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WYOMING, MI

While both Alabama and Florida provide examples of strong state leadership, far too often, Michigan has either not committed to best practice and effective implementation, or has not sustained a strong commitment to improvement over an extended period of time.

For more information on Michigan’s progress on implementing key statewide strategies for improving student achievement, please see graphic on page 9.

On one hand, Michigan’s Governor and Legislature deserve much credit for their recent efforts, including a roughly \$50-million investment in early literacy over two years, with an additional \$30 million in the current fiscal year. While financial commitments are essential early indications, both in the data and in voices from the field, show quality implementation is a serious challenge. There is not much sign of a long-term comprehensive vision for improvement. Even more troubling, it does not appear that the state has collected data to understand the effectiveness of existing efforts. As we see in leading states, it takes much more than dollars to make an initiative successful.

Recommendations for Michigan:

- State leaders should fundamentally rethink the role of the MDE, moving it from a compliance agency to an agency of change, providing thoughtful and research-based guidance on best-practices to districts, with

‘There are many priorities competing for our limited tax dollars, but none of them are as important as making sure all of Alabama’s children receive the best education we can possibly give them.’

— Bob Riley,

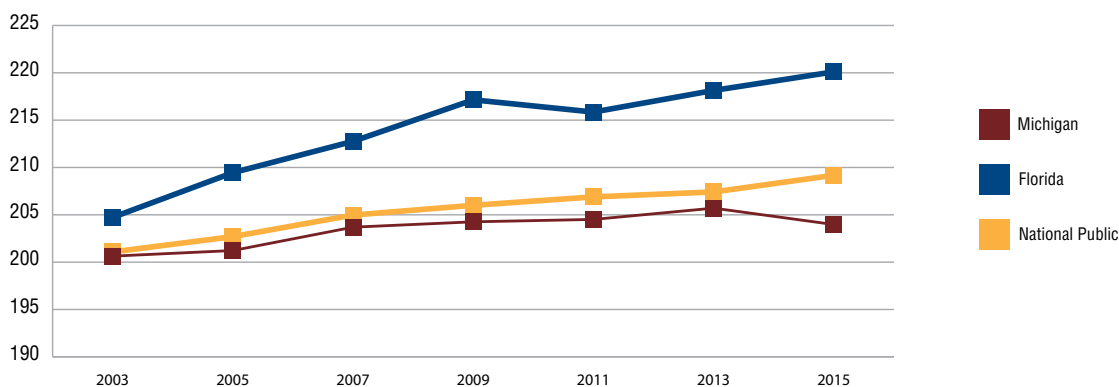
Former governor of Alabama

a newfound focus on revamping delivery models for educator professional development.¹⁵ Such a fundamental change will require bold and sustained leadership at all levels.

- The MDE should be much more transparent on the funds allocated from state and federal sources. This must include both how dollars are being dispersed to local districts or intermediate school districts and the impact of these findings. Appropriate data collection and evaluation of the state’s early literacy investment is also essential.
- The MDE should leverage financial incentives

Dramatic and Sustained Gains for Florida High-Poverty Students in Early Reading Since 2003

Average Scale Score, NAEP Grade 4 - Reading - Low-Income Students (2003-15)



Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Basic Scale Score = 208; Proficient Scale Score = 238), 2003-15

through competitive grants for local districts and other providers of literacy pilot innovative strategies. At the same time, districts that are unable to show positive gains should be held accountable — including through financial stipulations on state and federal funding for early literacy programs.

2. Quality Early Childhood: Creating Alignment Between the Early Childhood and K-12 Sectors

The years prior to kindergarten are vital to a child's development. To ensure quality results, leading states have stressed strong alignment between the preschool sector and K-12, commonly referred to as P-3 alignment. Creating these linkages ensures a seamless continuum of learning for children.¹⁶ Lack of alignment may cause the positive gains children make in early childhood to be lost. Indeed, new research from the National Bureau of Economic Research shows that when poor children are given access to both well-resourced early childhood and K-12 systems, they are much more likely to see long-term academic benefits.¹⁷ When done right, long-term benefits of early literacy strategies can be seen for adults as well, including higher incomes, better health and fewer incidents with crime, among others.¹⁸

One state that has worked toward creating greater alignment across the P-3 spectrum is Massachusetts. Starting in 2005, the state created the Department of Early Childhood Education and Care to regulate educational policies for children from birth to school age. The state also established a governance structure that provides more coordination across early childhood, elementary and secondary education and higher education.

More recently, the Commonwealth has delivered competitive grants to local communities to promote early childhood to grade three alignment. Communities used these grants to create educator professional learning communities and information exchange networks to better support elementary school transitions. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is currently

working to develop professional development modules to help school-leaders and teachers coordinate academic standards across early childhood and early elementary.¹⁹

In the area of early childhood, Michigan has made some major strides in recent years. In 2013, Governor Rick Snyder expanded investment in the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) — a statewide preschool initiative for low-income four-year-olds. This was a monumental investment for the state and something worth celebrating.²⁰ In 2015-2016, Michigan ranked 15th nationwide for access to preschool for four-year-olds.²¹ Current spending is roughly \$245 million per year, amounting to roughly 64,000 GSRP slots.^{22 23}

Despite major advances in access to early childhood education, there are still areas for improvement. Unlike Massachusetts, where a coordinated effort around alignment is taking place, such efforts in Michigan are limited. Instead, the K-12 system and early childhood largely remain as separate entities and insufficient information is available about the effectiveness and alignment of Michigan's early childhood programs to the K-12 districts receiving their students. These systems should not only work together, but reinforce one another.²⁴

For example, Michigan lacks a single statewide kindergarten-readiness assessment. These assessments are used to measure a child's preparedness as they enter kindergarten. In contrast, the impact of the Florida's voluntary prekindergarten program is annually assessed using a common screener administered in the first 30 days of kindergarten to all students.²⁵ This not only provides vital information to kindergarten teachers on their incoming students, but also measures quality in the early childhood sector. Without this important information about early childhood program quality, Michigan is unable to assess the impact of current preschool providers.

Recommendations for Michigan:

- Prioritize quality alignment between the early childhood sectors and K-12, including academic standards, curricula, data, educator training and instruction.²⁶ For example, establishing a common data system encourages communication between early childhood programs and K-12 districts about a child's learning and development and would provide educators with the information they need to support students academically during their transition to elementary school.²⁷
- Promote partnerships between the early childhood and K-12 sector, including strategies to engage families, business leaders, philanthropic leaders and community members.²⁸
- Develop a common high-quality kindergarten readiness assessment that evaluates if students are being adequately prepared for kindergarten and identifies students in need of additional academic supports early on. Consistent and comparable data from a common kindergarten readiness assessment would also provide vital information on the impact of early childhood programs and their effectiveness.
- Evaluate state-funded early childhood programs for their impact on student development and alignment with K-12 learning standards and share this information with parents and families choosing where to enroll their students.

3. Strategic Capacity-Building and Systemic Support: Improving Effective Instruction by Educators

If there is one strategy leading states have demonstrated to matter the most, it is effective teaching. It is no coincidence that every leading education state puts quality teaching at the heart of their reforms. That's because research shows that it matters: the number one in-school factor for student

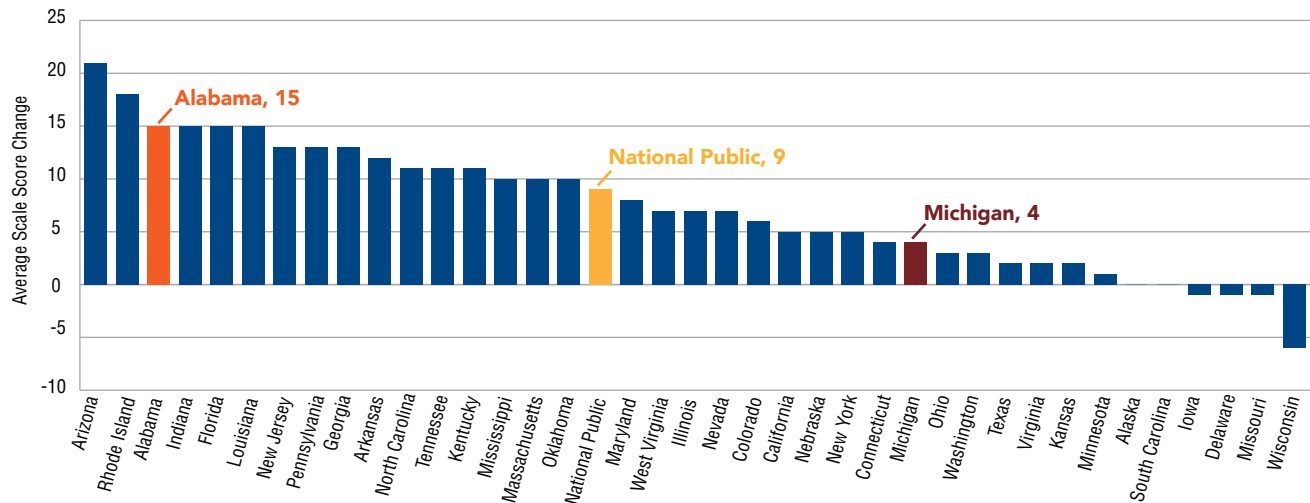
learning is quality teaching. Research also shows that our country's most vulnerable students often don't have the same access to quality educators as their peers.

This is exactly why the Alabama Reading Initiative is focused on professional development for its educators first and foremost. After demonstrating success with a small set of schools over a few years, the initiative later expanded across the state. The initiative began by recruiting the state's top educators and equipping them with the latest research-based instructional materials and training — coordinated by the state's top reading experts. Coaches were selected for their expertise in reading instruction, with special attention to educators with a demonstrated record of success in improving students' reading outcomes. Classroom-based coaches provide shoulder-to-shoulder feedback to educators, model lessons, demonstrate the effective use of data and provide other sorts of guidance. ARI's efforts demonstrate that improving literacy isn't just a matter of finding a quick fix but supporting strategic and long-term capacity-building for educators. As ARI regional reading coordinator Timothy Cobb explained in 2015, "We are not a program in a box. We provide job-embedded professional learning."²⁹

Along with quality training and coaching, leading states also have taken advantage of data provided by their educator evaluation and support systems. As educators have long known and research has long supported, quality data-driven feedback and support are essential to improving teaching and learning in classrooms. Leading states have shown how a quality framework for educator evaluation can be critical for educator professional growth. But educator evaluation goes beyond just accountability for educators. Honest and courageous conversations on instructional practice are the stimulus for instructional improvement and they signal to educators, principals and school leaders the importance of improving their practice.

Alabama Among the Top States for African American Reading Improvement since 2003

Average Scale Score Change, NAEP Grade 4 - Reading - African American Students - (2003-15)



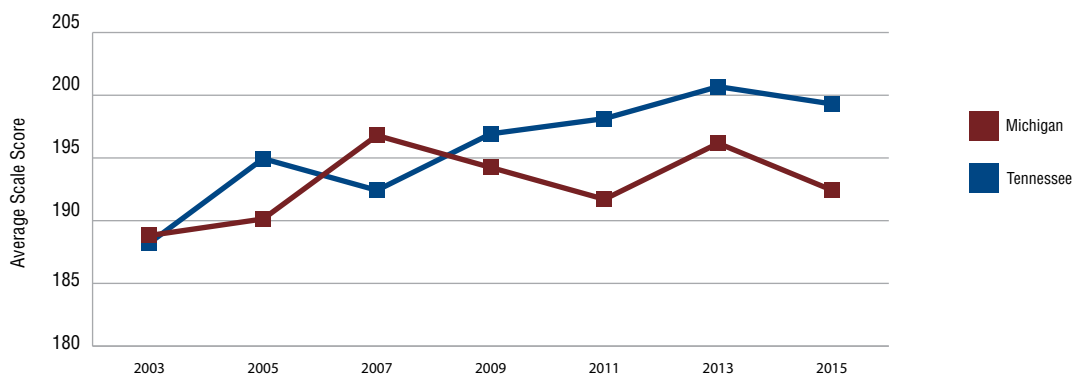
Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Basic Scale Score = 208; Proficient Scale Score = 238), 2003-15

Tennessee’s experience demonstrated that investment in comprehensive educator support was critical to improving teachers’ work in the classroom. Through the nation’s first student-growth data systems, Tennessee educators became accustomed to analyzing their results and using the information to target professional development. For example, by 2017, three out of every four Tennessee educators surveyed believed that the state’s educator evaluation system helped support student learning gains.³⁰

Tennessee not only leveraged its educator evaluation and support system to improve its teaching force, it also used it as a tool to identify the state’s most effective teachers to serve in teacher leadership capacities. Using a “train-the-trainer” model, the state was able to provide training around college- and career-ready standards implementation for roughly 70,000 educators over a few short years. Like Alabama, it did so by first identifying the state’s top educators to serve in these leadership roles, which was done in part through the state’s educator evaluation system and its data.

Tennessee African American Students Outpace Michigan African American Students Over Last Decade

Average Scale Score, NAEP Grade 4 - Reading - African American Students (2003-15)



Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Basic Scale Score = 208; Proficient Scale Score = 238), 2003-15

In contrast, Michigan’s approach in recent years demonstrates that we lack a committed, coordinated, research-based strategy for improvement or accountability. When the Michigan State Board of Education adopted college- and career-ready academic standards in 2010, for example, the state left training and implementation efforts completely up to schools and districts. In a 2014 survey of more than 200 Michigan principals, only a quarter said their teachers received job-embedded training or coaching on the college- and career-ready standards.³¹

In 2015, the Michigan Legislature adopted a new framework for educator evaluations, feedback and support.³² It called for a list of research-based evaluation tools to be readily accessible to districts, and mandated training on the use of these tools. Unfortunately, early signs suggest that much more is needed to maximize the potential impact of this policy change. In far too many districts, principals lack the training and support to provide strong evaluations and professional development remains disconnected from the needs of the classroom teacher.

And unlike Tennessee, which leveraged its educator evaluation system to identify top educators to lead training and professional development, Michigan has not followed this path. For instance, while the state has allocated funding for reading coaches in the state, there is currently no rigorous state-provided selection criteria for these coaches, such as selecting coaches who have a demonstrated track record of improving student achievement. By not leveraging the state’s educator evaluation system to improve teaching and learning through multiple pathways, the state is again missing out on a powerful lever for change.

Recommendations for Michigan:

- Michigan should fully implement a quality statewide educator evaluation, feedback and support system based on leading state models, including a vision and definition for effective teaching; and greater capacity-building for districts to deliver effective annual evaluations and data-driven feedback.

- Through quality implementation of the educator evaluation and support system, the state should identify a cadre of the state’s top educators to serve in new performance-based teacher leadership roles, including the reading coach positions already funded by the state. To ensure Michigan’s top educators are eligible to serve in these new “master teacher” roles, we recommend the following:³³
 - o Eligibility should be limited only to those educators that have received “highly effective” ratings for three or more consecutive years — demonstrating that they are truly masters of their craft, ideally through evaluations that integrate state-provided growth data.
 - o Research shows that credentials alone are a weak predictor for student performance, and should not be used as a primary criterion for identification.
 - o Qualitative evaluations of eligible master teacher candidates on their ability to coach other adults is critical. Mentorship and guidance are the primary responsibility of master teachers, and these skills should not be overlooked.



- Understanding that the state’s most vulnerable students need quality instruction, yet are less likely to have effective teachers than their wealthier peers, the state should develop a robust plan to ensure equitable access to quality teaching and principals. This must be an intentional and explicit strategy that engages district leaders and principals on strategic staffing decisions.³⁴

4. High Academic Standards and Honest Data: Setting High Expectations

The nation’s leading education states began their education transformation with higher performance standards for teaching and learning for good reason. When states set low bars for teaching and learning, they often get low results. One common criticism is that raising the bar can actually be detrimental to students — particularly those from impoverished communities that are already behind. The evidence says quite the contrary: research shows that access to rigorous coursework and high-quality instruction in high school is one of the best predictors of post-secondary success.³⁵ Not only that, a consistent and rigorous bar ensures that students of *all* backgrounds are given access to high-quality academic content. And while standards provide the minimum expectations students need to meet, a common measuring stick — an aligned assessment — confirms that this goal is actually being met.

Today, if Massachusetts were its own country, it would be among the top performing in the world. To get there, Massachusetts enacted a number of comprehensive reforms, including a commitment to rigorous standards and assessment. Along with stronger standards and expectations, Massachusetts also gave its educators the guidance they needed to meet new and more rigorous expectations.

Tennessee has followed a similar strategy, not only raising its standards for teaching and learning, but also supporting its educators to get there. As mentioned, the state trained over 70,000 educators in college- and

Without a strong curriculum to help address gaps in vocabulary and background knowledge, students are at risk of continuing to fall behind academically.

career-ready academic standards just a few years ago — the largest such training in the nation.³⁶ As a part of the state’s more recent early-literacy efforts, Tennessee has also created an optional grade-two state reading assessment, covering areas like comprehension, writing and foundational literacy at the end of second grade.³⁷

The good news in Michigan is that the state has already adopted and begun implementation of its first college- and career-ready performance standards. Likewise, the state adopted the M-STEP assessment that is not only aligned to the more rigorous standards, but for the first time produces truly honest data on where our students are performing. More than 140 organizations and school districts across the state collaborated to support the implementation of the high academic standards and aligned assessment system. M-STEP provides comparability to other states’ performance, which Michigan has not had until now. Comparability is hugely important for building confidence in the state’s reporting about education performance. This also promotes transparency, legitimacy and integrity on the academic performance of Michigan’s students.

Unfortunately, despite this positive momentum, new threats may derail these efforts.

Just as the state’s educators have become accustomed to the M-STEP, the Michigan Department of Education has announced significant changes to the end-of-year assessment. Making such significant changes to the test would jeopardize the most honest and transparent assessment of Michigan’s educational progress in generations.

Recommendations for Michigan:

- To ensure quality implementation of the state’s academic standards, Michigan should better support its educators by:
 - o Working with proven external providers to deliver professional development opportunities in concert with a statewide strategic plan for early literacy.
 - o Requiring a separate training for the state’s principals and school leaders. It is the job of the school leader and principal to set the academic vision for each of their schools, and must have the resources and tools to do so. Often, principals receive fewer professional development opportunities, even though their role is crucial for long-term school or district success.
- Stop any efforts to modify or drop the M-STEP, and instead continue to administer this fully aligned, independently reviewed, high-quality assessment that can provide data comparable to many other states.

5. High-Quality, Content-Rich and Aligned Curriculum and Instructional Resources: Creating a Pathway for Students to Meet Rigorous Expectations

Unlike academic standards — which set out the expectation for what students ought to know at the end of each grade level in each subject— an aligned curricula defines how a student will actually get there. Aligned curricula are the instructional guides that educators use to support their instruction.³⁸ Aligned

curriculums not only include actual teaching materials like textbooks or classroom assignments, but the pedagogy for effective instruction. Unlike academic standards — which are largely determined at the state level — local districts and schools have the flexibility to choose their curriculum and instructional materials. Ensuring curriculum is aligned to the state’s college- and career-ready standards is also essential, especially given the new and much more rigorous level of comprehension that is required. For example, Michigan’s college- and career-ready standards ask third-grade students to understand characters and how their motivations or traits contribute to the story’s plot and major events – which requires deep comprehension and critical thinking skills.³⁹

Rigorous and standards-aligned curriculum is especially important for Michigan’s most vulnerable students, who often enter school far behind their peers. According to research, investing in the right curriculum can have enormous impacts on student learning.⁴⁰ One area where this is most pronounced is with vocabulary and background-knowledge development, commonly known as core knowledge. According to research, poor children hear about 30 million fewer words than their wealthier peers before entering kindergarten.⁴¹ And while decoding skills are the necessary first step in learning to read, core knowledge ensures that students are actually able to comprehend the text they are reading.⁴² Without a strong curriculum to help address gaps in vocabulary and background knowledge, these students are at risk of continuing to fall behind academically.

Massachusetts has been a leader in high standards and curriculum for years. Massachusetts’ reforms began in the early 1990s, including adoption of more rigorous academic standards. To support implementation, the state created aligned curriculum frameworks, which served as a guide for navigating the new standards. And in order to align to the state’s college- and career-ready standards, the state more recently worked with hundreds of educators, curriculum and content experts and university researchers to develop more than 100 different model curriculum units for grades P-12.

While Massachusetts has gained acclaim for its strong public education system for decades, Louisiana has more recently begun to receive national attention for its commitment to quality curriculum. Like Alabama, Louisiana isn't considered a model state for achievement, but it has witnessed tremendous growth over the last dozen years. For example, between 2003 and 2015, Louisiana was among the top improving states for fourth-grade reading, including for its African American students.

After adopting college- and career-ready standards, Louisiana launched an in-depth review of curriculum and instructional materials available nationwide. More specifically, the state department of education handpicked Louisiana's top educators to serve on an advisory panel to review materials. The panel categorized curriculum into three tiers of alignment and quality, with tier one representing the best options.⁴³ The process was extremely rigorous, meaning only a small handful of materials actually ended up in tier one. And while local districts had the flexibility to choose whatever curriculum they liked, the state provided financial incentives to encourage adoption of only tier-one materials — which ended up being used by the vast majority of Louisiana districts. In addition, the state department of education created a list of proven external providers who could provide training on tier-one curriculum resources. Again, the

department incentivized districts to work only with high-quality professional development providers. What is most significant about the Louisiana Department of Education's role is that it marked an important shift as an agency from compliance-focused to one more focused on genuine support and guidance to its local districts.⁴⁴ And because this process was teacher-driven, local districts had buy-in during the entire process.

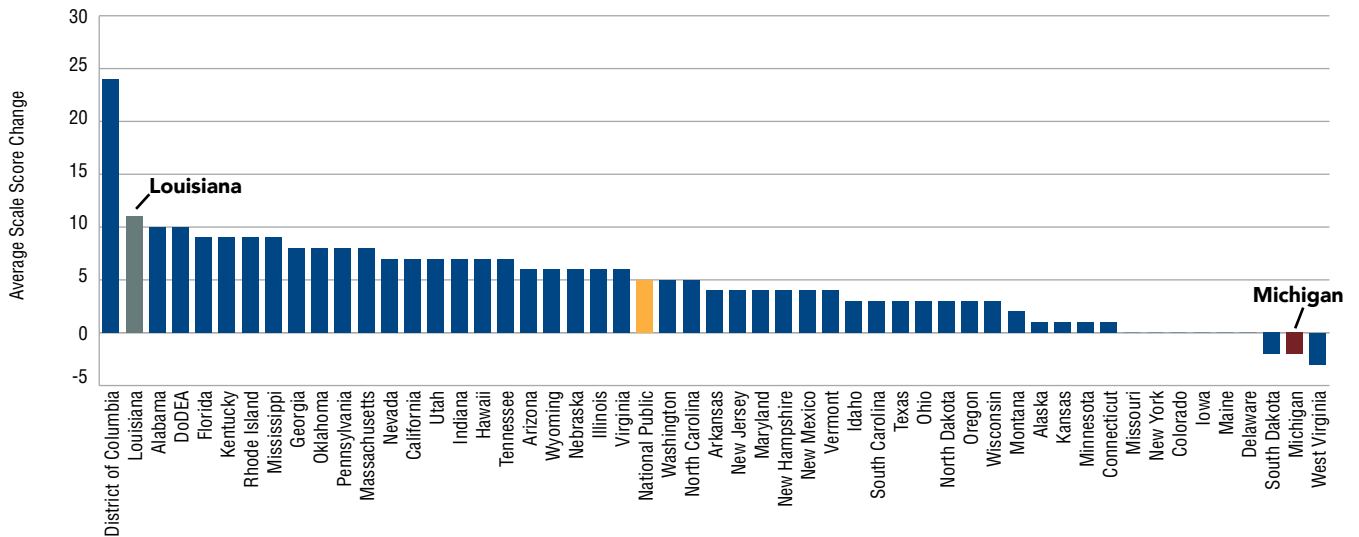
Unfortunately, research shows that most American curriculum resources are neither high-quality nor aligned to academic standards.⁴⁵ Even more worrisome, many schools and districts in Michigan lack the capacity or expertise necessary to make research-informed choices on curriculum or instructional resources. In other cases, educators are forced to mix-and-match different instructional resources, making it difficult to judge quality. Unlike Louisiana or Massachusetts, Michigan has taken a minimal role when it comes to guidance around curriculum — largely leaving it up to local districts to implement these decisions without guidance on alignment or rigor.

Recommendations for Michigan:

- The state should convene a group of national and local experts and educators to provide guidance on high-quality, content-rich and aligned curriculum materials and resources. Resources should be aligned

Louisiana the Top State for Reading Improvement since 2003

Average Scale Score Change, NAEP Grade 4 – Reading – All Students (2003-2015)



Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Basic Scale Score = 208; Proficient Scale Score = 238), 2003-15

While Michigan recently committed funds for additional instructional time, unlike leading education states, there are no explicit guidelines for improvement.

to the state’s college- and career-ready standards, with an intentional focus on addressing P-3 core knowledge building. Efforts should leverage local resources as well, namely those developed by the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators around aligned curriculum.⁴⁶

- We recommend the state provide local districts incentives, including financial, to adopt curriculum materials that the expert panel has clarified for alignment and quality, including subsidized aligned professional development and training. Professional development on curriculum should only occur with expert external vendors.

6. Additional Instructional Time: Strategic and Guided Time to Ensure Results for Students

When states raise their academic expectations for performance, many educators and students need additional time to reach these higher expectations. This is especially important for impoverished students who may need additional instruction to catch up with their peers. Research also shows that dedicated blocks of instruction in reading can be an essential strategy for reaching proficiency.⁴⁷ This is especially true in schools with large proportions of low-income or vulnerable students, who are likely behind their more affluent peers.⁴⁸ But just having more time isn’t a magic recipe

for success: additional time must be focused on high-leverage and aligned strategies — ensuring that extra time is focused in the right places.

Massachusetts began an additional instructional time grant initiative in 2005, with priority given to the state’s lowest-performing schools and districts. In order to receive the expanded learning time grant, schools and districts were required to demonstrate how additional time would be used to provide greater instruction to improve academic achievement, create student enrichment opportunities or allow for greater professional development and collaboration time for educators.⁴⁹ The state department of education also held districts accountable by routinely auditing grant recipients.

Using a similar strategy, both Alabama and Florida were among the first states to employ dedicated 90-minute uninterrupted instructional reading blocks. Additional time isn’t just an open block of time: both states have explicit instructional delivery strategies for reading development. What is notable about both states is that although they were strong on “local control,” this didn’t prevent adoption of best practices at the local level. Indeed, both states provided financial incentives, along with accountability measures for producing strong results.

While Michigan recently committed funds for additional instructional time, unlike leading education states, there are no explicit guidelines for improvement. For example, the state budget has included roughly \$17.5 million per year the last few years for “additional instructional time” for districts to support their struggling readers.⁵⁰ But unlike leading states, there are no guidelines on which strategies districts should adopt, nor any requirements demonstrating that student achievement has improved. In fact, despite the millions of dollars being spent on “additional instructional time” alone, there is little transparency on what strategies districts are even employing, let alone if they’ve proven to be effective. Again, Michigan uses neither incentives nor accountability to ensure strong results.

Recommendations for Michigan:

- The state should develop comprehensive support and guidance to districts in providing additional instructional time for students, with an explicit responsibility around improving student outcomes. Unlike Michigan’s current strategy, the state should encourage districts to adopt best practices while requiring evidence that additional instructional time is making an impact.
- Data should be collected to identify the most effective strategies for improving student achievement, which should then be disseminated to districts and stakeholders statewide to inform Michigan’s collective P-3 literacy efforts.

7. Additional Supports for Overcoming Literacy Barriers: Creating Positive Learning Opportunities for Students with Dyslexia

Often ignored in the strategies to improve literacy is an inherent focus on dyslexic students. Dyslexia is a disability that makes it difficult for people to sound out or decode certain words.⁵¹ To be clear, those with dyslexia are just as capable of reading and understanding text as their peers.⁵² This is proven by the countless doctors, lawyers, engineers, governors and many other Americans who are able to lead successful lives despite having this disability. Rather, it requires much more time and effort for these students to comprehend written materials. And through targeted intervention strategies, these students are able to thrive. Too often dyslexia remains undiagnosed, untreated and unaccommodated. And while dyslexia affects one out of every five people in the United States, diagnosis and treatment are least likely among the most vulnerable students.⁵³ Indeed, it is these students — already behind for other reasons — who are most in need of careful diagnosis and treatment of dyslexia.

Oregon state leaders understood the importance of adequately serving their dyslexic students. In 2015, Oregon began requiring that all first- and second-grade public school students be screened for dyslexia.⁵⁴ The law also requires additional training for educators, so

that they can properly diagnose and treat dyslexic students.

While Oregon took on a comprehensive statewide effort to support teaching and learning for dyslexic students, in Michigan, addressing these needs varies by locale. Without a comprehensive approach, many Michigan students with dyslexia and other disabilities are left to struggle through their academic careers, which may ultimately lead them to drop out of school and face even greater obstacles as adults.

Recommendations for Michigan:

- Guidance and training should be provided to local schools and districts on the screening and diagnosis of dyslexia and other barriers. Educators also must be given guidance on how to support these students, including intervention strategies and effective instruction in reading.

8. Strong School and District Accountability Systems: Holding Leaders Responsible for Results

In education, accountability and data are critically important. Accountability systems communicate whether schools are meeting clear expectations around raising academic achievement — both for students overall, and for each group of students they serve. They celebrate schools that are meeting or exceeding expectations, and prompt action in those that are not. They also direct additional resources and supports to struggling districts and schools to help them improve.

To be clear, accountability alone doesn’t bring about improvement: states must support their educators and students to get there. But without strong accountability systems, districts, schools and educators have no meaningful signal or expectation for targeting improvement and growth. Research from across the nation shows states with strong school accountability systems often see the largest progress for academic achievement, especially for historically underserved groups of children such as African American, Hispanic and low-income students.⁵⁵

In Florida and Alabama, data systems were monitored to ensure the state's early literacy initiative was achieving its intended results. Equally important, accountability was in place at each level of state and regional leadership to ensure progress was made for all students. And with accountability came support to ensure educators and students were enabled to succeed. For example, in Florida, before receiving funding to support early literacy efforts, each district must submit a strategic plan for improving literacy, which includes long-term goals for student improvement. The state also provides guidance to districts when their plans fall short, to ensure every district is on the right path. After being approved, each district plan is posted on the reading office website so that parents, business and civic leaders know exactly which strategies districts are employing to improve literacy outcomes in their communities. The office also monitored results and took action when outcomes did not improve.

Similarly, Massachusetts' success was built on effective accountability systems. Its system not only holds schools accountable, but also districts, recognizing the influence district policies and leadership can have on determining their schools' success. In addition, a support system was put into place through regional centers to ensure districts received the guidance they needed to improve. Each center was staffed by educational experts with expertise in school improvement.

Finally, in Tennessee, the state revamped its regional education centers — their equivalent of Michigan's intermediate school districts — so that they were much more accountable to the needs of local schools and districts. Previously, these centers were known for their lack of effectiveness and accountability.

Unfortunately, in Michigan, the only burden of accountability for progress in third-grade reading has been placed on our students — not on the schools, adults or systems.⁵⁶

With Michigan's early literacy initiative, intermediate school districts are being given the power to design its implementation, without clear accountability for producing results. In addition, no robust data-collection

mechanism or continuous-learning processes are in place, leaving stakeholders in the dark and leaving student success up to chance. And because the Michigan Department of Education's role thus far has largely just been to funnel funding to districts and intermediate school districts, no real accountability exists for the department, either.

Michigan's approach is especially concerning, as the state adopts new accountability standards required by the 2015 federal Every Student Succeeds Act. ESSA offers all states the opportunity to redesign state-level improvement systems to ensure a high-quality education is available for all students. Unfortunately, current plans by the MDE fail to provide clear signals to schools, parents and the public on whether their schools are in need of improvement. In doing so, the MDE risks sweeping the inequities in the state's public education system under the rug. Without urgency from strong accountability, schools and districts are not only expected to be unaware of the need to improve, but also have little pressure to do so.

For a deeper analysis of the Every Student Succeeds Act, please visit www.edtrustmidwest.org/ESSA

Recommendations for Michigan:

- The state should rethink the role of intermediate school districts and of the Michigan Department of Education, ensuring that they are accountable to the schools and districts they are meant to serve. This must mark a shift from compliance toward local support.
- Michigan should commit to a simple, transparent and honest system of accountability and public reporting that clearly identifies the state's top performing and lowest performing districts and schools. This should incorporate schools and districts that fail to serve their low-income students and students of color. And when schools are identified as low-performing either overall or for their most vulnerable groups of students, the state should provide quality support that puts schools and districts on a long-term pathway of success.

IV.

A TOP TEN APPROACH TO EARLY LITERACY



PARKVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WYOMING, MI

Despite the state’s announced goal of becoming a top ten education state, Michigan has not adopted top ten state practices. In high-achieving and fast-improving states, state leaders stick to research-based practices, listen to the data and hold themselves accountable for results. Leading states approach improvement with deliberate, strategic, systemic action, taking funding and accountability into account, and adopting data-driven solutions to ensure effective delivery systems are in place to support educators and drive student achievement for all groups of students and all communities.

In contrast, Michigan leaves implementation up to chance, often burdening districts and schools without enough resources, planning or support. At the state level, this approach has enabled a culture of apathy with few leaders accepting full responsibility and accountability for the state’s deepening educational crisis.

Michigan must make some essential shifts in its approach to its K-12 improvement efforts, starting with state leadership that is dedicated, committed and focused

on implementing effective systems. And it must include fundamentally rethinking not only the “what” of public education, but also the “how”: how the state’s improvement and delivery systems are organized, overseen, supported and held accountable.

Michigan doesn’t need to experiment: leading states have shown the way to sustained success, and the way forward starts with P-3 learning. The moment is now.



PARKVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WYOMING, MI



MICHIGAN ACHIEVES! PROGRESS INDICATORS

To know whether we're on track with our goals of becoming a top ten state, The Education Trust-Midwest began tracking Michigan's performance and progress of our P-16 system in 2016, in both academic measures and measures of learning conditions that research shows are essential for equitable access to opportunities to learn. In the coming pages we share our progress toward becoming a top ten education state by 2030, as part of our Michigan Achieves initiative.

We use the best available state and national data to show where we are and where we're headed by 2030 if we continue down our current path.



Student Outcomes metrics represent the key areas Michigan should track to ensure our students are being prepared for college- and career-ready success.



Opportunity to Learn indicators are progress metrics to gauge how well Michigan is providing equitable access to opportunities for learning, including high-performing teachers, rigorous coursework and instruction, and other key factors that reflect school conditions.





4TH GRADE READING

CURRENT RANK:

41ST

2030 PROJECTED RANK:

48TH

WHAT IT IS:

A telling indicator of whether Michigan’s students are being prepared for success is how well our young students read. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America’s students know and can do in various subject areas. The assessment is given every two years and provides necessary information on student performance and growth for several indicators, including fourth-grade reading.

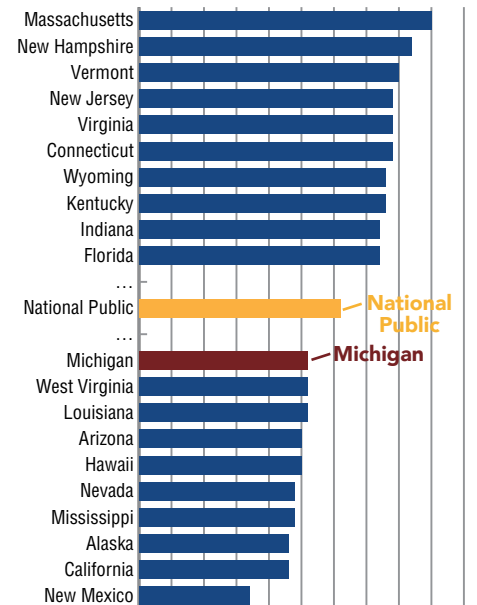
WHY IT MATTERS:

Reading proficiency is tied to all kinds of academic and life outcomes, and improving early reading is much more cost-effective than intervening with older students, when they are many years behind in school, or dropping out. Michigan must drastically improve our early literacy achievement for all students and close the achievement gaps that keep far too many of our low-income children and students of color from fulfilling their significant potential.

Michigan in Bottom Ten States for Early Literacy

Average Scale Score, NAEP Grade 4 - Reading - All Students (2015)

Top Ten and Bottom Ten States

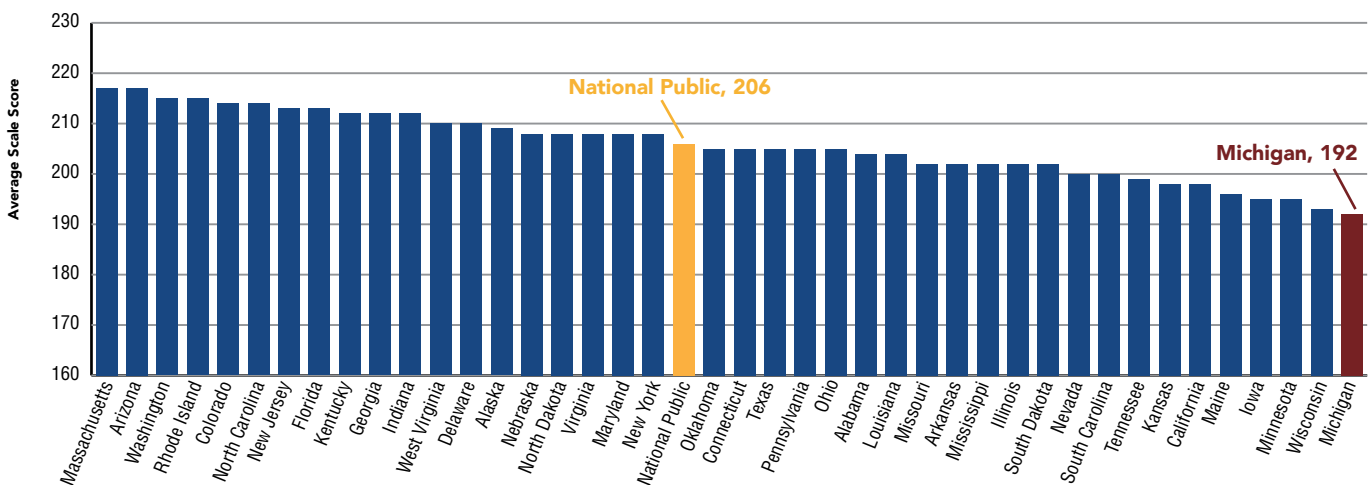


190 195 200 205 210 215 220 225 230 235 240

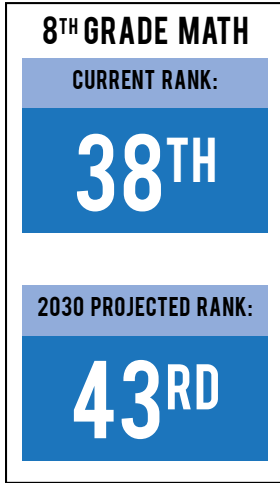
Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Basic Scale Score = 208; Proficient Scale Score = 238), 2015

Michigan Last for African American Students in Early Literacy Compared to Nation

Average Scale Score, NAEP Grade 4 – Reading – African American Students (2015)



Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Basic Scale Score = 208; Proficient Scale Score = 238), 2015



WHAT IT IS:

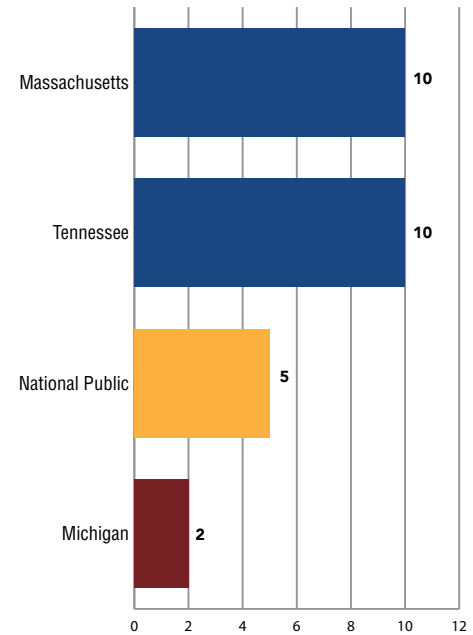
The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America’s students know and can do in various subject areas. The assessment is given every two years and provides necessary information on student performance and growth for several indicators, including eighth-grade math.

WHY IT MATTERS:

In addition to basic reading skills, math skills are essential for all students. Basic algebra is the foundation for high-level math courses. When students have not mastered this foundation, they are forced to enroll in remedial courses when they begin college. But eighth-grade math skills are not just for those students who are college-bound. A study conducted by ACT found that along with reading skills, math skills are essential for vocational jobs including those as a plumber, electrician or an upholsterer.¹

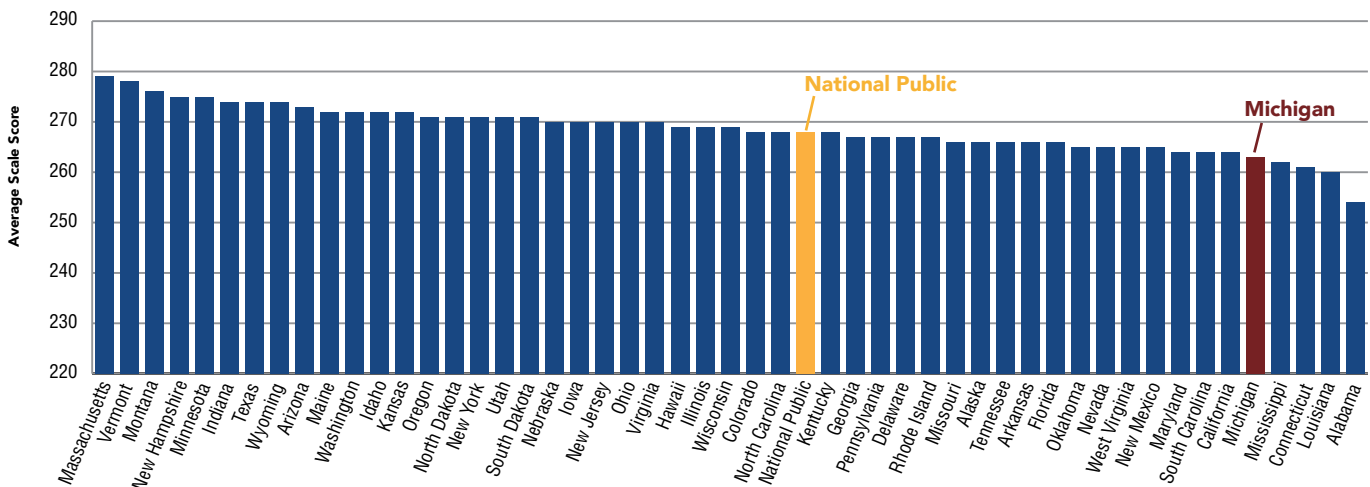
Michigan Eighth-Grade Students Show Little Improvement in Math Compared with Peers in Leading States

Average Scale Score Change, NAEP Grade 8 - Math - All Students (2003-15)



Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Basic Scale Score = 262; Proficient Scale Score = 299), 2003-15

Michigan Among the Bottom Five States in the Nation for Low-Income Students in Eighth-Grade Math
Average Scale Score, NAEP Grade 8 – Math – Low-Income Students (2015)



Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Basic Scale Score = 262; Proficient Scale Score = 299), 2015

¹ ACT, Inc., "Ready for College and Ready for Work: Same or Different" (Iowa City, IA: ACT, Inc., 2006). <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/ReadinessBrief.pdf>

KINDERGARTEN READINESS



Michigan has recently made the smart investment in early childhood programs meant to increase the number of our students who enter kindergarten ready to learn at high levels.

Data are not currently available because Michigan does not have a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment nor do we participate in a national effort to collect these data. We will track any state or national data on Michigan's kindergarten readiness when it becomes available.

COLLEGE READINESS



COLLEGE READINESS

CURRENT RATE:

29%

ENROLLED IN
REMEDIAL COURSES

2030 PROJECTED RATE:

53%

ENROLLED IN
REMEDIAL COURSES

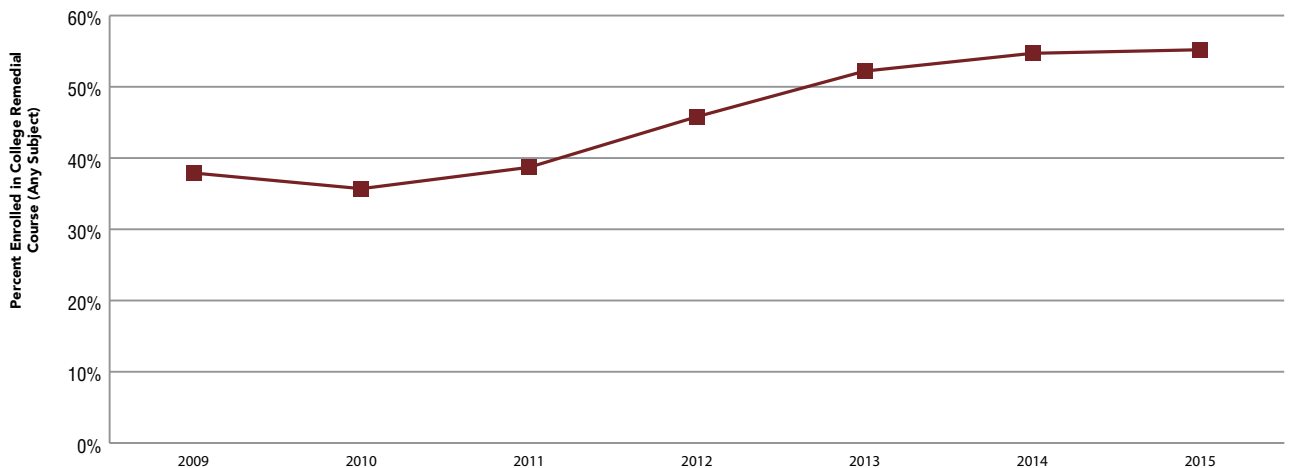
WHAT IT IS:

Remedial coursework is necessary for students who lack fundamental skills in a subject area – skills that should have been developed in K-12. These courses also are not credit bearing, meaning they don't count toward a degree.

WHY IT MATTERS:

About 28.6 percent of all Michigan students were required to take at least one remedial course in college. That's more than a quarter of our students who are forced to pay for additional instruction in college before moving on to credit-bearing courses. The percentage is even more startling for African American students, where more than half are required to enroll in college remedial courses. Having to enroll in remedial courses can mean additional costs for students and more time to complete their degrees.

Remediation Rates Continue to Rise for Michigan African American Students
Michigan African American College Remediation Rates (Community Colleges & Four-Year Universities)



Source: CEPI College Remedial Coursework Enrollment Trend, 2009-15
 Note: Remedial coursework includes math, reading, writing, or science courses. Data is limited to Michigan high school graduates enrolled in college the following fall in a Michigan college or university only. Data for the 2010-11 high school graduation year and before are pilot data.

COLLEGE AND POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT



COLLEGE AND POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT

CURRENT RANK:

14TH

2030 PROJECTED RANK:

18TH

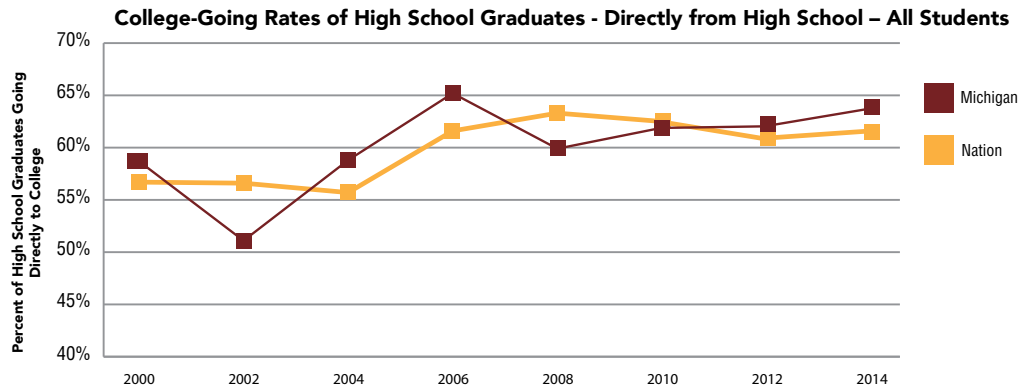
WHAT IT IS:

This measure represents the percentage of high school graduates in each state who attend college anywhere in the U.S. directly from high school.

WHY IT MATTERS:

In order for Michigan's students to fulfill their true potential and be the leaders of tomorrow, more of them must enroll in post-secondary training, whether that be at a trade school, community college, or a four-year university. On this measure, Michigan is near the national average, ranking 14th of 45, with about 64 percent of high school graduates attending some form of postsecondary training in 2014.

Michigan Near National Average with 64% of HS Grads Enrolling in College



Source: NCHES Information Center, 2000-14

COLLEGE ATTAINMENT



WHAT IT IS:

This indicator represents the percent of people 25 years or older in each state and nationally who have completed a bachelor's degree.

WHY IT MATTERS:

In 2015, Michigan ranked 27th of 43 in the percentage of adults 25 or older who have completed a bachelor's degree, at 28 percent. Yet, roughly 17 percent of African American or Hispanic Michiganders have completed a bachelor's degree.

COLLEGE ATTAINMENT

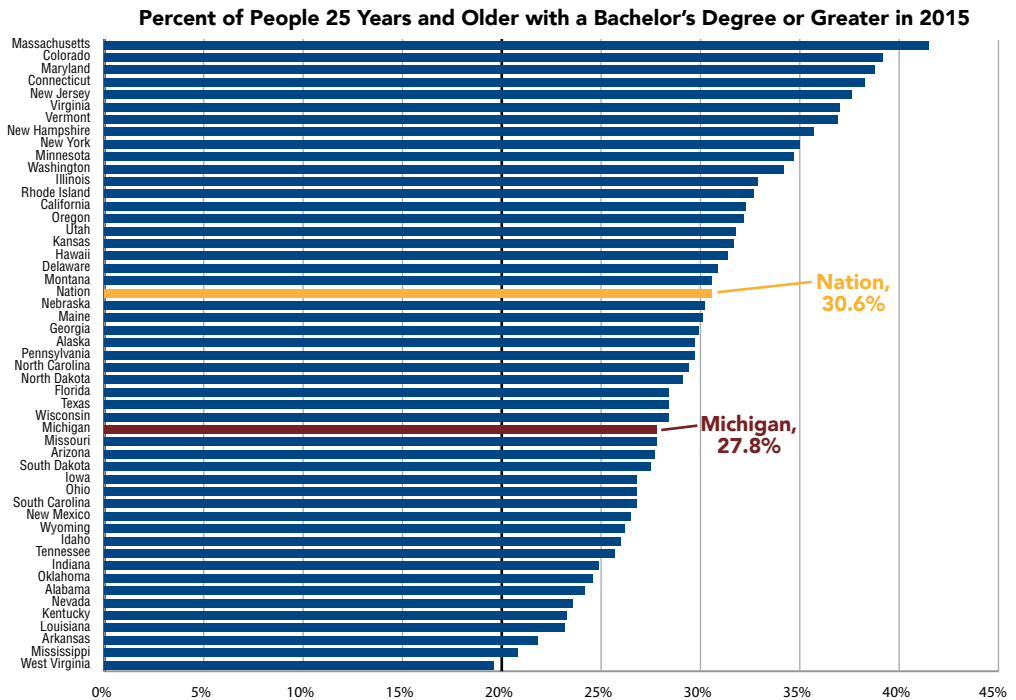
CURRENT RANK:

27TH

2030 PROJECTED RANK:

31ST

Michigan's Economy Depends on More Adults Earning College Degrees



Source: United States Census - American Community Survey - 1 Year Estimates, 2015

i. Michigan's 2030 projected rank is 31st of 48.

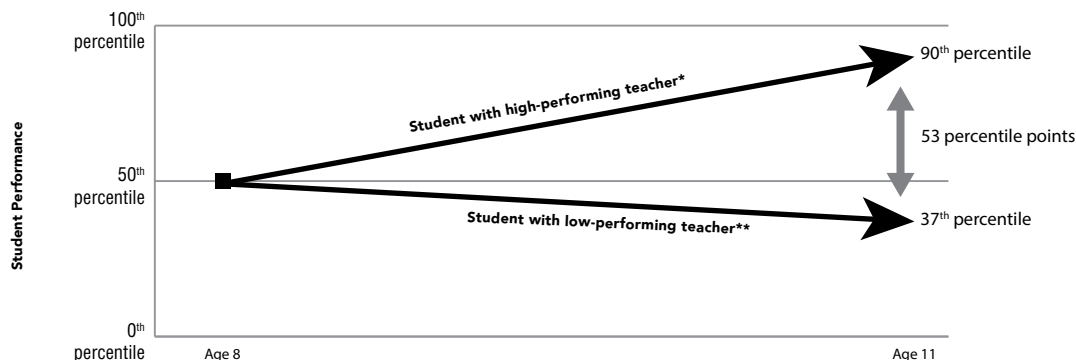


TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

Without a doubt, a child's academic learning is dependent on many factors. But what research is clear on is that the number one in-school predictor of student success is the teaching quality in a child's classroom. In leading states,

sophisticated data systems provide teaching effectiveness data that are used for many purposes, such as professional development and early student interventions. In Michigan, those data are unavailable at this time.

The Effect of Teacher Quality on Student Learning



Source: Sanders and Rivers (1996). Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Student Achievement
Note: *Among the top 20% of teachers; **Among the bottom 20% of teachers
Analysis of test data from Tennessee showed that teacher quality effected student performance more than any other variable; on average, two students with average performance (50th percentile) would diverge by more than 50 percentile points over a three year period depending on the teacher they were assigned.

ACCESS TO RIGOROUS COURSEWORK



ACCESS TO RIGOROUS COURSEWORK

CURRENT RANK:

30TH

2030 PROJECTED RANK:

30TH

WHAT IT IS:

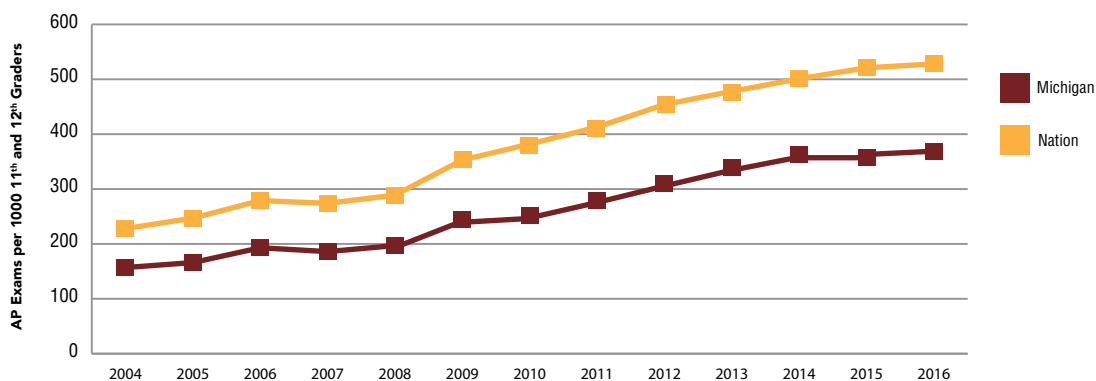
Access to rigorous coursework is measured by the College Board AP Program Participation and Performance data. The data represent the total number of AP exams administered per 1000 11th and 12th grade students.

WHY IT MATTERS:

One of the best ways to ensure more students are college- and career-ready is to increase access to rigorous coursework in high school, such as Advanced Placement courses. Research shows that just taking these classes – even if a student does not earn credit in a college-level course – increases the likelihood that the students will go to college.ⁱ Michigan is currently ranked 30th of 47.

Michigan Has Seen a Steady Increase in Access to Rigorous Coursework, but Still Lags Nation

AP Exam Participation



Source: College Board AP Program Participation and Performance Data, 2004-16

i. Saul Geiser and Veronica Santelices, "The role of advanced placement and honors courses in college admissions," Expanding opportunity in higher education: Leveraging promise (2004): 75-113.



SCHOOL FUNDING EQUITY

SCHOOL FUNDING EQUITY

CURRENT RANK:

43RD

2030 PROJECTED RANK:

NOT YET AVAILABLE

WHAT IT IS:

This measure represents how highest and lowest poverty districts are funded based on state and local revenues and whether or not it is equitably distributed.

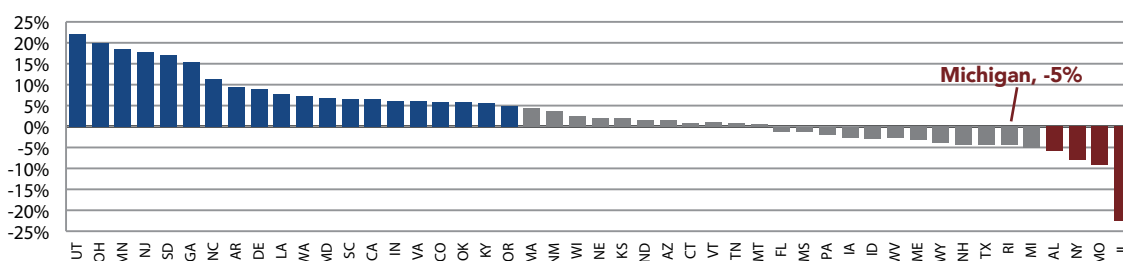
WHY IT MATTERS:

Michigan ranks an abysmal 43rd of 47 states in the nation for funding gaps that negatively impact low-income students. On average, Michigan schools serving the highest rates of students from low-income families receive about 5 percent less in state and local funding than more affluent schools. This lack of equity can lead to further imbalances in our educational system as a whole.

Michigan's Funding Gap Between the Highest and Lowest Poverty Districts is 43rd Out of 47 States

Michigan is one of only sixteen states in the analysis that provides less funding to its highest poverty districts than to its lowest poverty districts

Funding Gaps Between the Highest and Lowest Poverty Districts, By State



Reading this figure: In Utah, the highest poverty districts receive 21 percent more in state and local funds per student than the lowest poverty districts (not adjusted for additional needs of low-income students). In states shaded in blue, the highest poverty districts receive at least 5 percent more in state and local funds per student than the lowest poverty districts; in states shaded in red, they receive at least 5 percent less. Grey shading indicates similar levels of funding for the highest and lowest poverty districts. Note that although all displayed percentages are rounded to the nearest percentage point, states are ordered and classified as providing more or less funding to their highest poverty districts based on unrounded funding gaps.

Source: The Education Trust, Funding Gaps Report, 2018

Note: Hawaii was excluded from the within-state analysis because it is one district. Nevada is excluded because its student population is heavily concentrated in one district and could not be sorted into quartiles. Alaska is excluded because there are substantial regional differences in the cost of education that are not accounted for in the ACS-CWI. Because so many New York students are concentrated in New York City, we sorted that state into two halves, as opposed to four quartiles.

TEACHER SALARY EQUITY



TEACHER SALARY EQUITY

CURRENT GAP:

\$15,177

AVG. SALARY GAP FOR HIGHEST- AND LOWEST-POVERTY DISTRICTS

2030 PROJECTED GAP:

NOT YET AVAILABLE

WHAT IT IS:

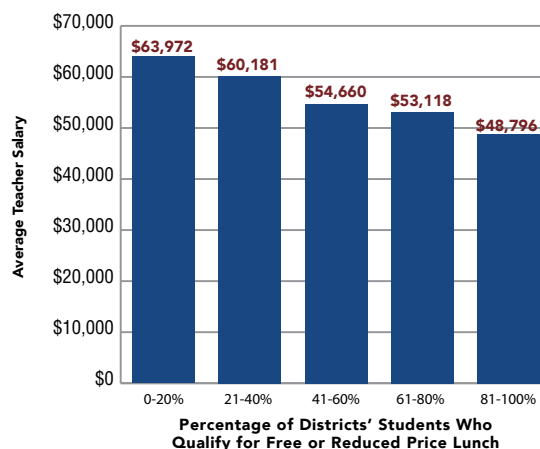
This measure represents the gap in average teacher salaries between Michigan high-income and low-income districts.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Teachers in Michigan's wealthiest districts are paid about \$15,000 more, on average, than teachers in Michigan's poorest districts. That's alarming, considering what we know about the importance of high-quality teachers in closing the achievement gap that persists between low-income and higher-income students. To recruit and retain highly effective teachers in the schools that need them most, Michigan must close the gap in teacher pay.

More than \$15,000 Gap in Average Teacher Salaries Between Michigan High-Income and Low-Income Districts

Average Michigan Teacher Salary based on Percentage of Free and Reduced Price Lunch



Source: MDE Bulletin 1011, 2015-16, CEPI Free and Reduced Priced Lunch, Fall 2015-16 (District)

TEACHER ATTENDANCE



TEACHER ATTENDANCE

CURRENT RANK:

46%
OF TEACHERS ABSENT MORE THAN 10 DAYS

2030 PROJECTED RANK:

NOT YET AVAILABLE

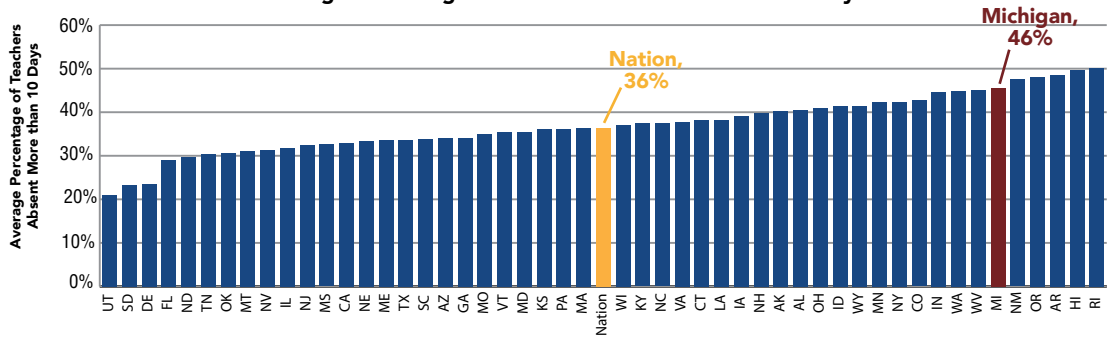
WHAT IT IS:

This measure represents the percentage of teachers absent from their jobs more than 10 days at the state level.

WHY IT MATTERS:

According to a recent report from the Center for American Progress, about 46 percent of teachers in Michigan were absent from their jobs more than 10 days, on average. That's about six percent of the school year, which is equivalent to a typical 9 to 5 year-round employee missing more than three weeks of work on top of vacation time.

About 46% of Teachers in Michigan Were Absent from Their Jobs More than 10 Days
Average Percentage of Teachers Absent More than 10 Days



Source: Center for American Progress, "Teacher Absence as a Leading Indicator of Student Achievement," 2012

STUDENT ATTENDANCE



STUDENT ATTENDANCE

CURRENT RANK:

22%
OF 8TH GRADERS REPORT FREQUENT ABSENCE

2030 PROJECTED RANK:

20%
OF 8TH GRADERS REPORT FREQUENT ABSENCE

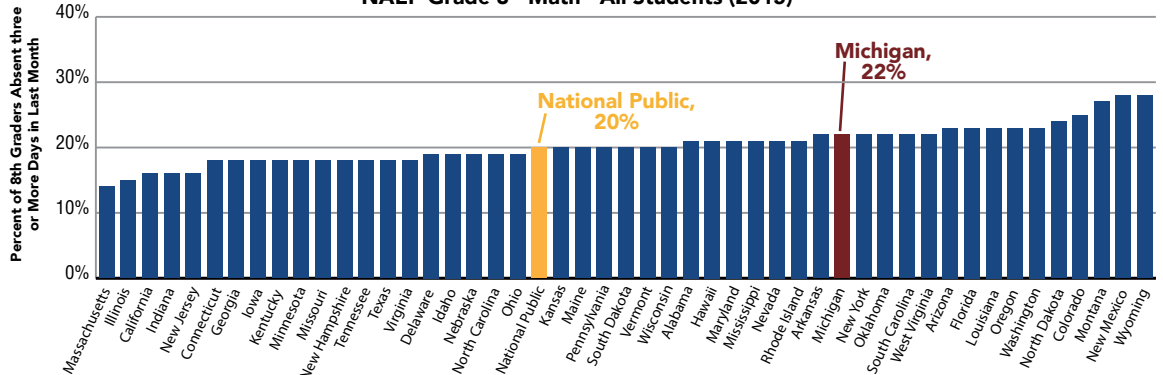
WHAT IT IS:

This measure represents the percentage of eighth-graders absent three or more times in the last month based on the national assessment.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Not only are Michigan's teachers missing too much school, but our students – especially our African American students – are missing far too many days of school, often against their will due to disproportionate rates for out-of-school suspensions. According to the 2015 national assessment, 22 percent of Michigan's eighth-grade students said they had been absent from school three or more days in the last month. Moreover, Detroit leads the nation for absences among urban districts, with 37 percent of students absent three or more days in the last month.

More than 20% of Michigan Eighth-Grade Students were Absent Three or More Times in Last Month in 2015
Percent Absent Three or More Days in Last Month
NAEP Grade 8 - Math - All Students (2015)



Source: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Reported for 8th Grade Math), 2015

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS



OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS

CURRENT RANK:

45TH

2030 PROJECTED RANK:

NOT YET AVAILABLE

WHAT IT IS:

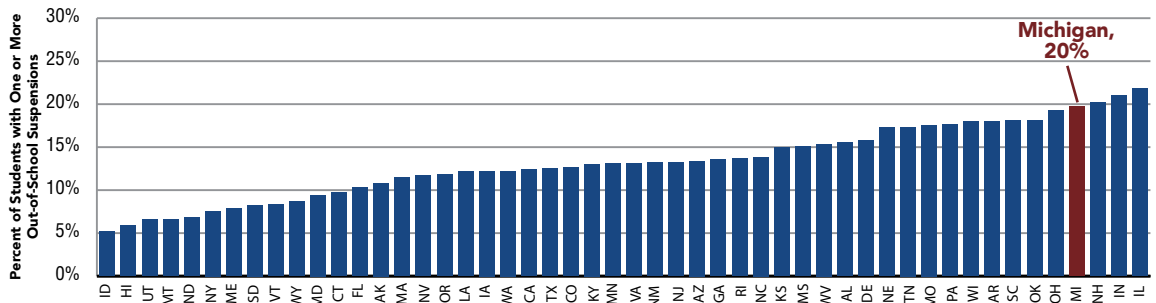
Data from the Civil Rights Data Collection measure discipline rates nationally.

WHY IT MATTERS:

One of the most troubling practices in Michigan – and around the country – is the overuse of suspension and expulsion, particularly for students of color. Overall Michigan ranks 45th. For African American students, Michigan has the fourth highest out-of-school suspension rate in the country. A full 20 percent of the African American students in Michigan schools were suspended in 2013-14.

Michigan Has 4th Highest Out-of-School Suspension Rate Nationally for African American Students at 20%

African American Out-of-School Suspension Rates



Source: Civil Rights Data Collection, 2013-14

Note: Missing data is not included in the out-of-school suspension calculation.

COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY



COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

CURRENT RANK:

42ND

2030 PROJECTED RANK:

NOT YET AVAILABLE

WHAT IT IS:

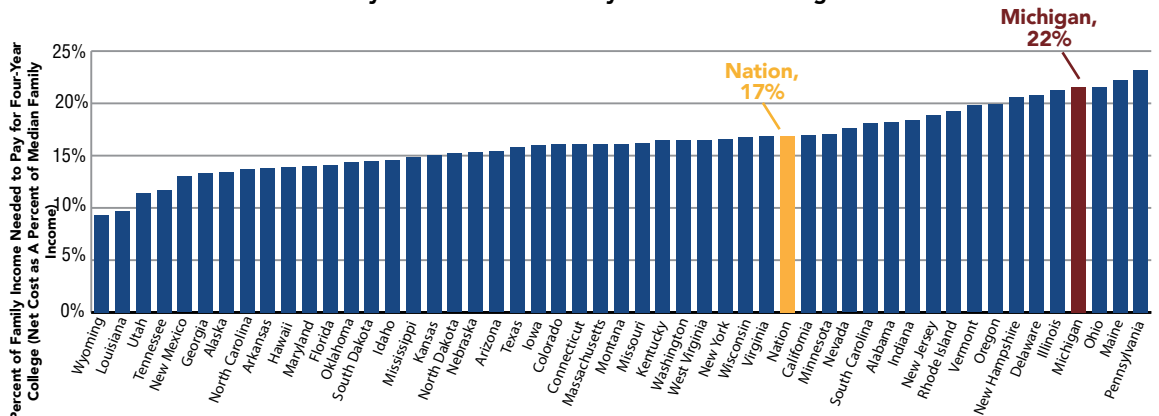
This indicator is measured as the percentage of family income needed to pay for four-year college. Data represent the net cost as a percent of median family income.

WHY IT MATTERS:

It's not enough to get into college. Young Michiganders have to be able to afford to stay in school and graduate. Unfortunately, Michigan ranks near the bottom in college affordability - 42 of 44 - for students overall. And for families in the bottom 20 percent of income in Michigan, the cost of college for one child, after receiving financial aid, is about 77 percent of their annual income.

Michigan Families Pay a Large Percent of Their Incomes for College

Family Income Needed to Pay for Four-Year College



Source: NCHEMS Information Center, 2009

Note: Since we last reported on this metric, new data has not yet become available.

VI. SOURCES

- ¹Michigan Public Act 306 of 2016
- ²Ibid.
- ³Note: Students may receive a “good cause” exemption for several reasons including special education or English language learner student provisions, prior retentions, school enrollment duration and record of prior intervention, or timely teacher or family requests.
- ⁴Michigan House Fiscal Agency (2017). FY2017-18 Education Omnibus Budget. Summary: Conference Report House Bill 4313 (H-1) CR-1. <http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa/SchoolAid.asp>
- ⁵Donald J. Hernandez, “Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation,” (Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011). <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-DoubleJeopardy-2012-Full.pdf>
- ⁶NCES NAEP Data Explorer
- ⁷NCES NAEP Results 2015
- ⁸NCES NAEP Data Explorer
- ⁹Ibid.
- ¹⁰M-STEP State Assessment Results, 2016-2017
- ¹¹Michigan’s current statewide assessment system, the M-STEP, was designed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) as required by a Public Act 94 in June 2014. Michigan is one of the governing members of SBAC. Caution should be used when interpreting SBAC results, as it is a relatively new assessment system; longitudinal data will be important to continue analyzing trends. In addition, each state has control over their state assessment systems, which may create complications for comparisons across states.
- ¹²Metropolitan Grand Rapids is defined as students within Barry ISD, Kent ISD, Montcalm Area ISD and Ottawa Area ISD. Metropolitan Detroit is defined as students within Wayne RESA, Oakland Schools and Macomb ISD.
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VII.

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The Michigan Achieves Leadership Council is a group of thought and business leaders from across the state, committed to making Michigan a top ten education state. Through their diverse experiences and areas of expertise, members of the leadership council help further the mission of The Education Trust-Midwest by providing valuable advice on engagement, outreach and strategy.

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