



The Urgency of Now:

Michigan's Educational Recovery

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In 2015, The Education Trust-Midwest launched the Michigan Achieves! campaign to make Michigan a top ten education state by 2030. Since then, a growing number of partners around the state have come together to advance the best practices and strategies from leading education states 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.com.

INTRODUCTION

The Urgency of Now: Michigan's Educational Recovery

As our state and nation continue to grapple with the ongoing, devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it could be easy to suggest forgoing the long vision to improve Michigan public education in favor of addressing urgent crises.

But that would be a travesty for our state's children. Instead, as an organization that has championed an equitable education for *all* Michigan students for the last decade, we urge our state leaders to immediately accelerate efforts to reimagine public education and implement critical measures that support the continuation and recovery of student learning, especially to ensure that the most underserved students do not face incalculable harm.

Findings from a new poll of Michigan parents underscore the urgent need to invest in education and prioritize underserved students, particularly students of color, low-income students, English learners and students with disabilities. This is especially critical now following the mass school closures and pivot to remote instruction amid the pandemic.

The poll, conducted by New York-based Global Strategy Group, found that nearly half of Michigan parents say that the quality of teaching and instruction their children receive is worse amid the crisis, which threatens to compound Michigan's longstanding lackluster progress in raising student achievement. Just over a third of all parents rate remote learning as successful or extremely successful.

Alarming, the polling suggests that the opportunity gap that already exists in our state for underserved students may grow even wider, especially as parents of color are

more likely to indicate their child is participating in full-time remote learning.

Additionally, the vast majority of all parents, but particularly Black parents and parents of color, expressed concern about their child falling behind academically, with 91 percent of Black parents and parents of color and 83 percent of White parents reporting concerns.

The full results are on page 6.

Furthermore, parents say they are not getting the information they need to know whether their children are falling behind academically: nearly half (47%) of all parents polled indicated they have received little or no information from their child's school about whether their child is suffering from learning loss or has fallen behind grade-level expectations as a result of schools being closed due to the pandemic last spring. Parents overwhelmingly agree that state leaders should have a plan to address learning loss and make sure students catch up to their current grade level.

These concerns of Michigan parents build on troubling findings about interrupted learning here in Michigan and nationwide.

Already, a national analysis suggests that the abrupt school closures last spring and uneven access to virtual instruction may have resulted in as many as 3 million students not returning to school.¹

In Michigan alone, early enrollment data showed a statewide enrollment decline of more than 50,000 students, many of whom may not be in school at all.²

This interrupted learning is expected to worsen longstanding opportunity and achievement gaps for the most underserved students, including Black, Latino and low-income students. And lack of access to resources and supports means the most vulnerable students, including students with disabilities and English Learners, have been hit particularly hard.³

Research already suggests that the school closures may result in Black students falling behind by 10.3 months, Hispanic students by 9.2 months, and low-income students by more than a year. The analysis suggests that existing achievement gaps could grow by 15 to 20 percent.⁴

Furthermore, our own data shows that online virtual instruction is a **significant challenge** for hundreds of thousands of Michigan children due to a lack of digital access in their household.⁵ Troublingly, our state's vulnerable students are most likely to lack digital access, putting them at a significant disadvantage as many districts across the state pivoted to part- or full-time virtual learning during the pandemic.

And new data analyses on college enrollment suggests a precipitous drop in immediate college enrollment rates amid the COVID-19 crisis, with the greatest decline among graduates of high poverty, low income and urban high schools.⁶

No, now is not the time to forego a vision for a better education system for our state's students. Instead, we urge state leaders to embrace a vision of hope and adopt research-driven, proven strategies of leading education states.

While we applaud state leaders for their safety initiatives to lower COVID-19 rates and for their efforts to reopen the economy, we now implore them to work with great urgency to address the needs of our students and schools.

This is the moment in which they must face and address this educational crisis transparently and honestly – and make students their priority.

In the following pages, as part of our 2021 State of Michigan Education Report, *The Urgency of Now: Michigan's Educational Recovery*, we call upon state leaders to quickly develop and implement solution-based approaches to both support the long-term recovery of student learning, as well as address the longstanding inequities and underperformance that have plagued our education system for decades.

Building upon last year's recommendations, which called on leaders to create a Marshall Plan for public education amid this unprecedented moment, we urge leaders to focus on six key areas – fair investment; honest information, transparency and public reporting; extended learning time; quality virtual instruction and access; inclusivity and socioemotional supports and transitions to postsecondary opportunities. We also outline the need for prioritizing early literacy efforts and developing a comprehensive plan around educator talent that places equity at the forefront.

Through this report, we also highlight parents across Michigan who echo our concerns – while sharing our vision and hope for a brighter public education system and opportunities for *all* students. Their voices are just a snapshot of those we heard from while partnering with EarlyWorks, a Detroit-based, women-led strategy and communications consulting firm, to convene and conduct virtual focus groups and one-on-one interviews to gain diverse perspectives across the state.

Among parents interviewed, there was a consensus that Michigan's education system has not been effective in meeting the needs of all children – and that the inequitable distribution of school funding leads to differences in resources and teaching quality, made even worse by the pandemic.

Parents across the state expressed a desire to see better distribution of resources across schools — even when they felt their own schools were well-resourced.

As one parent said, “[A]ll students should be able to be exposed to the same opportunities to help them learn...

not just some students, not just in the communities that have the most wealth or the communities that contribute the most to the state.”

We fastidiously agree, especially because we know that Michigan is one of the most inequitable states for school funding, leading to profound opportunity and achievement gaps for the state’s most underserved students. This report builds upon the **deep research** we conducted last year on the troubling impact of Michigan’s longstanding and unfair school funding system, as well our calls alongside civil rights, business and philanthropic leaders to prioritize investment in public education and continue to shield public education from budget cuts.⁷

Following our recommendations, we also present the 2021 Michigan Achieves! Indicators, which begin on page 45 and provide updated information on Michigan’s

progress and performance based on important data-driven measures. These demonstrate Michigan’s progress toward key goals for becoming a top ten state in education.

While there’s much work to do to address the immediate and longstanding education challenges in our state, we join the many parents who told us they have hope for their children — and hope for Michigan’s schools and the promise of a brighter tomorrow.

Together with them — and the many partners, collaborators, and thousands of other parents and educators who work tirelessly to ensure all children have the opportunity to achieve at high levels – we remain committed to a vision of an excellent education system and to building a movement toward equity. And we urge our state leaders to hear our collective voices and answer the call now.



Photo by Allison Shelley for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action.

POLL FINDINGS

Poll of Michigan Parents Demonstrates Shortcomings and Inequities in Remote Learning Amid Pandemic

While the impact on student achievement due to the mass school closures and pivot to remote instruction amid the pandemic is yet unknown, findings from a new poll suggest Michigan parents have significant concerns about their children's virtual learning experience, with nearly half saying that the quality of teaching and instruction their children receive is worse.

The poll also sheds light on troubling disparities that are expected to worsen longstanding inequities in educational offerings for underserved students, especially as Black parents and parents of color are more likely to indicate that their child is participating in full-time remote learning.

The vast majority of parents reported concerns about their children's academic outcomes; however, parents of color are more likely to express concern about their child falling behind than White parents, a troubling finding that suggests the opportunity gap that already exists in our state may widen.

Overarchingly, parents believe the state should implement quality standards for remote learning and expect schools to communicate early and often about learning loss and how their child can catch up for the next grade.

Recommendations to State Leaders

With less than half (45%) of Michigan public school parents stating that their child receives three or more hours per day of live online instruction from a teacher during remote learning, **a majority of parents agree that state leaders should...**

- ...have a plan to address learning loss and make sure students catch up to their current grade level (85%).
- ...set quality standards for virtual learning in the state to ensure students learning remotely are receiving quality online instruction (84%).
- ...should provide safe, free and voluntary in-person summer school for students that need to catch up (83%).

Many staff and partners contributed to the research and development of this report, including: Executive Director Amber Arellano, Chief of Staff Mary Grech, Director of Communications Jennifer Mrozowski, Director of Policy and Research Tabitha Bentley, Data and Policy Analyst Riley Stone, Senior Data Consultant Jacqueline Gardner and Director of External Relations Brian Gutman. We are also grateful for the input and collaboration of our colleagues across the country including The Education Trust President and CEO John B. King, Jr. and Vice President for P-12, Policy and Practice at The Education Trust Ary Amerikaner and Associate Director for P-12 Analytics at The Education Trust Ivy Morgan.



KEY FINDINGS:

Learning Loss

- **The vast majority of all parents, but particularly Black parents and parents of color, expressed concern about their child falling behind academically.**
 - 91% of Black parents and parents of color indicate concern about their child falling behind academically because of the pandemic, compared to 83% of White parents.
- **47% of all parents indicate they have received little or no information from their child's school about whether their child is suffering from learning loss or has fallen behind grade-level expectations as a result of schools being closed due to the pandemic last spring.**
- **Black parents and parents of color are more likely to have students learning remotely full-time compared to White parents.**
 - 81% of Black parents and 74% of parents of color indicate their child is participating in full-time remote learning, while 63% of White parents say their child is learning remotely full-time.
- **A few key components of remote learning, however, have had some benefit for students, according to Michigan parents.**
 - 40% say their ability to support their child's education is better.
 - 40% say their child's ability to learn at their own pace is better.

Extended Learning Time

- **A majority of parents agree that state leaders should provide safe, free and voluntary in-person summer school for students that need to catch up (83%).**

Virtual Instruction

- **Just over a third of parents (37%) rate remote learning as successful or extremely successful (ratings of 8-10 on a scale of 0-10).**
- **Parents identify several aspects of their child's education that are distinctively worse under remote learning compared to traditional in-person classes before the pandemic and school closures.**
 - 54% say their child's one-on-one time with teachers is worse.
 - 52% say their child's overall educational experience is worse.
 - 46% say their child's engagement and interest in schoolwork is worse.
 - 45% say the quality of teaching and instruction they receive is worse.

Digital Access

- **While an overwhelmingly majority of parents indicate that providing resources to increase digital access would be helpful in navigating the coronavirus pandemic, significantly fewer parents say their student's school is actually doing so.**
 - 96% of parents indicate that lending mobile technology devices would be helpful, but only 62% of parents indicate their student's school is actually doing so.
 - 88% of parents indicate that providing free internet access would be helpful, but only 21% of parents indicate their student's school is actually doing so.
- **A majority of parents from low-income households are concerned about affording internet or losing internet access this school year compared to parents in higher income brackets.**
 - 62% of parents in the \$0-\$49,000 income bracket, 37% in the \$50,000-\$99,000 income bracket

and 37% in the \$100,000+ income bracket are concerned about affording internet or losing internet access this school year.

- **An alternative method to providing digital access to students could be to offer a safe place to do schoolwork and participate in virtual learning.**
 - ❖ While 86% of parents indicate that this would be helpful, only 18% of Black parents indicate their student’s school is actually doing so – compared to the 28% of White parents who indicate their student’s school is doing so.

Early Childhood Education

- **No matter race nor income level, an overwhelming majority of Michigan parents support investing more public funds to expand access to quality, affordable childcare/preschool for Michigan families with young children (ages 0-4).**
 - ❖ 90% of White parents, 98% of Black parents and 94% of parents of color indicate support.
 - ❖ 95% of parents in the \$0-\$49,000 income bracket, 90% in the \$50,000-\$99,000 income bracket and 87% in the \$100,000+ income bracket indicate support.

About this poll: The Education Trust–Midwest partnered with Global Strategy Group to conduct an online (desktop and mobile) survey among 400 parents of children in Michigan public schools from December 10-16, 2020. The survey had a confidence interval of +/-4.9%. All interviews were conducted via web-based panel. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of parents are properly represented.



Photo by Allison Shelley for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

By Mary Grech, Tabitha Bentley and Riley Stone



Together with the many partners, collaborators, and thousands of parents and educators who work tirelessly to ensure all children have the opportunity to achieve at high levels — we remain committed to a vision of an excellent education system and to building a movement toward equity. And we urge our state leaders to hear our collective voices and answer the call now.

— Amber Arellano, *Executive Director*, The Education Trust–Midwest



Michigan needs strong state leadership, now more than ever. As the pandemic continues across our state and nation, students face continued disruptions to their learning. This is of grave concern — according to a report by McKinsey & Company, school closures may result in Black students falling behind by 10.3 months, Hispanic students by 9.2 months, and low-income students by more than a year.⁸ The analysis suggested that existing achievement gaps could grow by 15 to 20 percent.⁹

Whether children lack internet access, school districts lack devices to distribute or families lack the support they need to help their children continue to learn, the emerging trends from COVID-19 demand urgent attention from policymakers, district and civic leaders, educators and parents. Without effective intervention and innovative new approaches, this unfinished learning has the potential

to exacerbate other troubling inequities and leave children of color, English learners, rural and urban learners and many other children devastatingly behind in learning.¹⁰

Even before the current crisis, more than half of Michigan third graders were not reading at grade level, and nearly two-thirds of seventh graders were below grade level in math on Michigan’s state assessment.¹¹ On the national assessment, Michigan ranks 36th in improvement for fourth-grade reading among all students from 2003 to 2019.¹²

Our 2020 State of Michigan Education Report called for a Marshall Plan to address the impacts of COVID-19 and outlined six key recommendation areas. In this year’s report, we reiterate that call for leadership, planning and investment with renewed urgency.

We are not the only ones calling for change. In this year’s report, we highlight the voices of parents who are also concerned about Michigan public education and calling for a “new normal” that puts an end to the systemic barriers holding back too many of our state’s young people from reaching their full potential.

When we first outlined these recommendations last year in our annual State of Michigan Education report, it still seemed possible that many schools would return to in-person instruction in the fall. It is now clear that the impacts of the pandemic will be far greater than anticipated. Without strong leadership and intervention, the effects on student learning could persist long after the spread of the disease has halted. We must double-down on efforts to strengthen our state’s education system while the pandemic continues and ensure we are prepared to meet the increased and varying needs of students in the years to follow.

We are at the beginning of a new era of public education — one that can, and should, be focused on

equity and ensuring that all students are prepared for success in college and career, no matter their income, race or zip code **and** no matter the impact of the pandemic on their learning.

While we know that many challenges face Michigan students amid COVID-19, especially our state’s most underserved students, we also know that they are resilient, capable and ready to learn. Effective implementation of research-based strategies, such as high-dosage tutoring and voluntary multi-week summer school programs, can lead to significant learning gains. Additionally, research shows that the quality of teaching and learning experienced by a student over the course of just one school year can have positive impacts lasting into adulthood.¹³

Now is the time to look forward and come together. With the right leadership, planning and investment, we can ensure that all Michigan students are supported to reach their full potential.



Photo by Allison Shelley for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action.

Fair Investment

As outlined in our report, *Michigan's School Funding: Crisis and Opportunity*, Michigan needs to invest much more in all of its students statewide, while investing significantly more in low-income students, English learner students and students with disabilities.¹⁴ Historically, the State of Michigan has drastically underfunded much-needed support for the additional learning needs of these underserved student groups. Now, after months of distance learning and anticipated learning loss, the need to invest in Michigan's vulnerable students is even greater.

While money is not the only factor that matters for improving student outcomes, state and local funding allocations can have major impacts on the learning conditions in each district, including the availability of student support and extracurricular activities, the amount of instructional time, the quality of instructional materials, the level of professional support and compensation teachers receive, and much more. And that's under normal circumstances.

In the current moment, equitable funding and investments could mean a student having access to a laptop and online learning, a high-quality summer school experience and a highly-effective educator when in-person learning resumes — or not.

Investing in Michigan's Students, Especially Underserved Students: Research shows that money matters, especially for students from low-income backgrounds. Increases in spending have been shown to improve educational attainment, lead to higher wages and reduce poverty in adulthood, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds.¹⁵ Michigan's economic future rests on the investments it makes now in students.

Now is the time to make investments in research-based education recovery strategies, like those included in this report, and to look forward to long-term solutions that will bring a more equitable approach to Michigan's school funding system, such as a formula that weights students'

and communities' needs, as the nation's leading education state, Massachusetts, has done.¹⁶

Without doing so, the impact of immediate state and federal investments will fade away in a few years, and rural, working-class and urban school districts will yet again find themselves chronically under-resourced with students left to pay those costs with their futures and earnings.



Photo by Allison Shelley for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action.

PARENT VOICE

Alison Matelski lives in Gaylord, a rural community in northern Michigan. As an elementary school teacher married to a high school teacher and parent to one foster and three adopted children, Alison sees education from many lenses.

Born in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Alison has lived in rural communities her entire life. Growing up, she loved school and remembers it as a safe space. "I felt accepted by and connected to other people. People listened to me and took an interest in my life. It was a place that encouraged my curiosity and wonder." Education served her as a path to a better life, less "financially limiting" than the one she experienced during childhood. Today, the promise is similar, but she also believes education allows young people to have a global impact. As a teacher, Alison wants to inspire her students "to explore what they're passionate about and find a way to leave the world a better place."

Since the onset of COVID-19, the inequities among the children she teaches have grown even more apparent, and living in a small, rural community is an exacerbating factor. Miles of woods and limited infrastructure mean some students lack at-home internet access—a significant issue given many of the schools in her area are not offering in-person instruction. "The amount of direct instruction time children are receiving is not equitable," Alison said.

COVID has also magnified many students' poor living conditions. Kids facing abuse and neglect or lacking food and heat are already facing barriers when learning, and Alison is particularly sensitive to these children's plight, having worked to address



the shortfalls in her own kids' education due to growing up in poverty. Alison describes school for some students as "the one place children are not getting abused and where they know that have access to food."

Students with disabilities are another population acutely impacted by COVID. Alison's teenage son, Rylan, has epilepsy, and the interventions he has as a student have considerably declined since the schools closed.

Looking forward, Alison hopes parents and teachers begin to show each other more empathy due to the pandemic. Ideally, teachers become more understanding of families' hardships, and families appreciate the difficulties of teaching. Children—their adaptability and resilience—remain her inspiration. "Showing kids how they can find the positive in any situation and use it as a learning opportunity to make the world better, one little tiny thing at a time, gives me hope for the future."



Roadmap to A More Equitable School Funding System in Michigan

It has been more than a quarter century since Proposition A began transforming Michigan's school funding system, significantly closing gaps between districts' general per-pupil funding. Michigan students can no longer wait for change to arrive.

We must begin working together now to establish a new normal that includes equitable school funding that weights students' and communities' needs, as the nation's leading education state, Massachusetts, has done.¹⁷

We urge Michigan state leaders to both address the immediate needs and inequities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and begin working towards the systemic changes required to meet the needs of Michigan's underserved students.

Immediate Investments:

- Earmark any new revenue from additional federal stimulus funds for public education, increased tax receipts, efficiencies or reprioritization of resources for at-risk funding, English learners and students with disabilities.
- Fund the cost of high-quality extended learning during the summer of 2021, to provide students with the opportunity to recover lost instructional time before the beginning of the 2021-22 school year. [Research](#) shows students who participate in high-quality, voluntary multi-week summer learning programs experience significant academic gains in reading and math that can lessen the effects of learning loss.¹⁸ Investment and planning is needed now so that these opportunities are made available for Michigan's most vulnerable students.
- Address the [digital divide](#) that persists across our state, by ensuring that every Michigan student has access to a dedicated device, high-speed internet and native-language support.¹⁹ Despite the best efforts of local districts, philanthropy and private sector partnerships, thousands of students across Michigan remain without access to devices, internet and native-language support to access remote instruction and supplementary learning halfway through the 2020-21 school year.
- Fund the cost of postsecondary remediation for current high school seniors and juniors who have experienced devastating learning interruptions without adequate time or resources to recover. The expense of missing important coursework during the pandemic should not fall on the shoulders of graduating students. [Data](#) from before the pandemic shows the remediation rate for Michigan's poorest districts was already over two and a half times higher than the rate for the wealthiest districts.²⁰ Meeting the needs of these students will be critical for Michigan to reach its Sixty by 30 attainment goal.
- Expand efforts to improve attraction and retention of highly effective educators in high-poverty school districts, including by investing in closing the teacher salary gap. Teachers in Michigan schools with the highest percentage of low-income students earn \$10,056 less, on average, than teachers in the wealthiest schools.²¹
- Eliminate the "auto-cut," a mechanism that automatically balances budget shortfalls on the backs of students from low-income families without a vote of the state legislature.²²

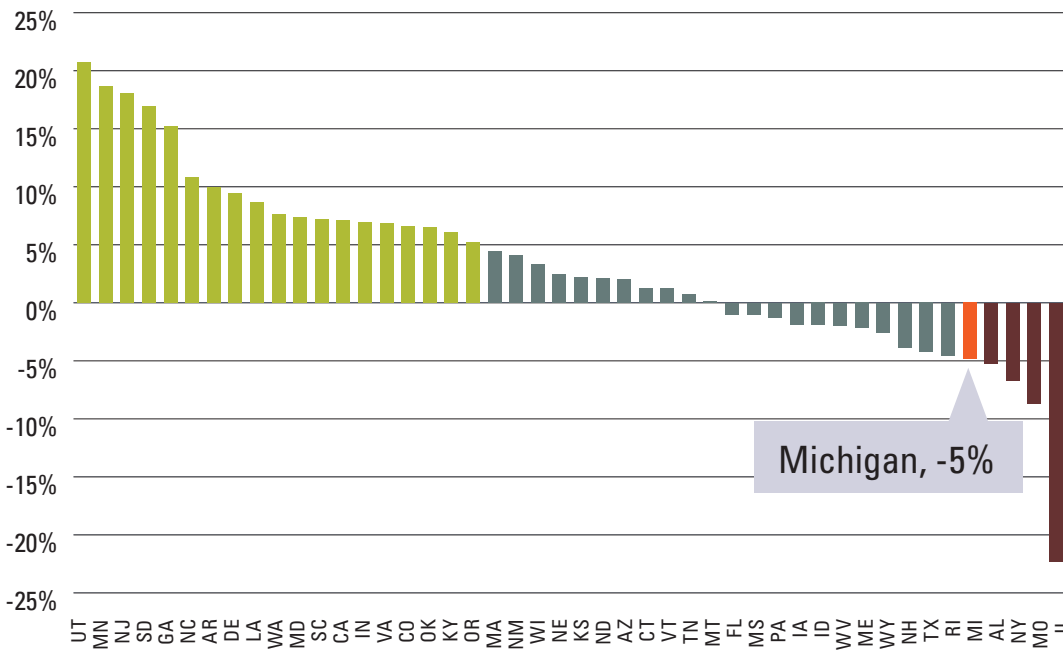


Longer Term Commitments:

- Within ten years, provide weighted student funding at **research-based** levels: at least 100 percent more funding for students from low-income families and English learners.²³ This follows the model path of Massachusetts, which is working to reach these funding levels within seven years.²⁴
- Fully funding the cost of special education, ensuring that students have the services they need to realize their constitutionally-guaranteed right to a free and appropriate public education, without impacting the funding of general education.²⁵
- Ensure accountability for dollars targeted towards underserved students by requiring school-level reporting of at-risk, English learner and students with disabilities funding and committing to at least 75 percent of targeted funds being spent at the school where qualifying students attend, beginning in fall 2022.

Michigan Among Worst in Nation for Equitable Funding

Michigan is One of Only Sixteen States Providing Less Funding to Highest Poverty Districts than to Lowest Poverty Districts



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 green, 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 maroon, 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. Though included in the original publication, data from Ohio are now excluded from this chart because of subsequently discovered anomalies in the way Ohio reported its fiscal data to the federal government.

Addressing Budget Cuts: We **commend** Governor Whitmer and legislative leaders' successful efforts to protect and prioritize funding for education in the FY21 budget, passed in September 2020, despite the prospect of drastic budget cuts.²⁶ Because of their leadership, not only did districts maintain general per-pupil funding levels, but they also received \$65 in additional funding for each student.²⁷

We encourage state leaders to continue to prioritize funding for education with the goal of not only avoiding budget cuts in the coming years, but wherever possible, investing more in education to support learning recovery and efforts to close longstanding opportunity gaps.

In the event that cuts are unavoidable, it will be especially important that the funds intended to support the learning needs of vulnerable student groups, including the at-risk

categorical and funding for English learners and students with disabilities, are protected from cuts, and wherever possible, increased. In an economic downturn, the number of students living in poverty is likely to increase, and the needs of underserved student groups will grow as other social services are likely to be reduced.

As Michigan is already among the **least equitably funded** states in the nation,²⁸ state leaders should avoid exacerbating existing inequities and gaps by using a more equitable approach to budget cuts, if that becomes necessary, by using a formula that is sensitive to student need, as outlined in our brief *The Time is Now: COVID-19 and Fair Funding*.²⁹ Compared to what research shows is needed to support low-income and English learner students, Michigan's current system dramatically **underfunds vulnerable students**.³⁰



I think in order to improve [education], we have to be fair with the resources and teachers' pay and the incentives that are distributed throughout the state. ... I also think that all students should be able to be exposed to the same opportunities to help them learn...

— Parent Perspective



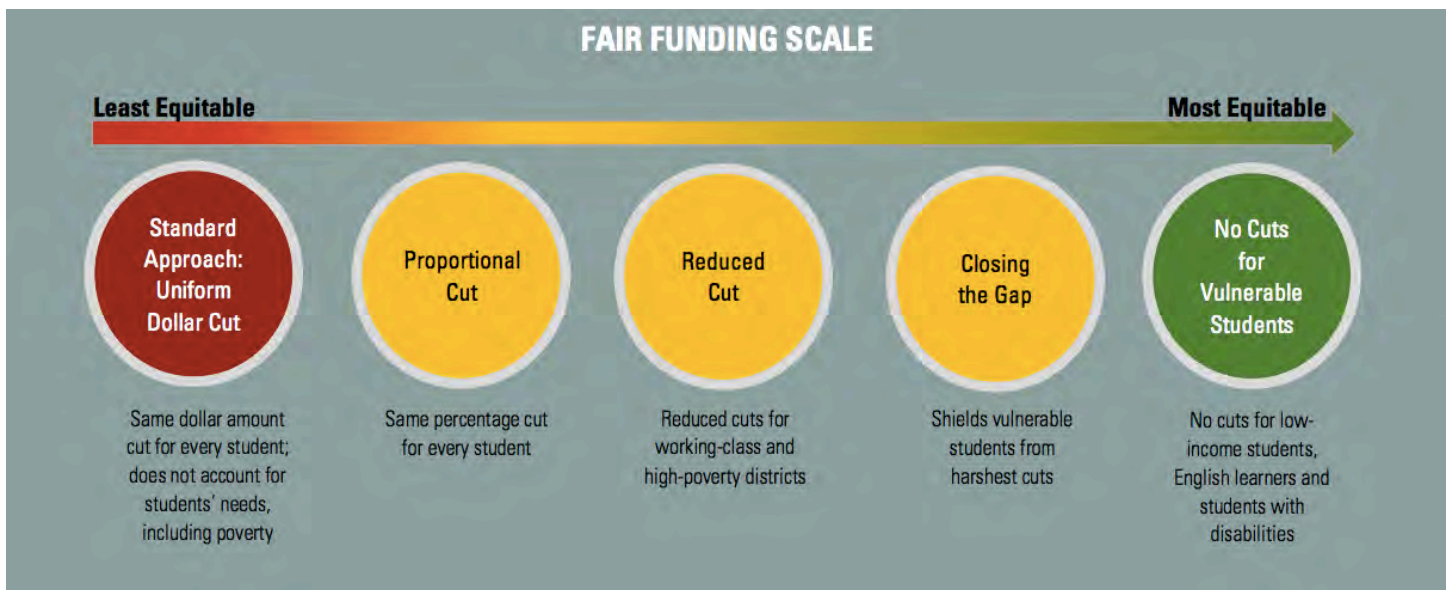


Ohio: An Example of What’s Possible

Although Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine chose to reduce funding for K-12 education by \$300 million in response to the economic impact of COVID-19, his administration took an approach that prioritized equity, with the more affluent districts taking larger cuts per student than districts with less local wealth.³¹

Using a formula for cuts that was sensitive to student need and district resources, Cleveland’s school district — where a majority of students are from low-income families — saw a cut of \$109 per pupil compared to Solon — a wealthier suburb — which faced a \$302 per pupil cut.

Fair Funding Scale: A More Equitable Approach to Budget Cuts Is Needed



Notes: Michigan leaders should use a more equitable approach to budget cuts by using a formula that is sensitive to student need. More details about each approach on this chart can be found in our policy brief, [The Time is Now: COVID-19 and Fair Funding](#).

Leveraging Federal Emergency Stimulus Dollars:

Federal leaders can play an important role in addressing the financial challenges that states, school districts and many higher education institutions are facing — both in terms of budget shortfalls and the need for more dollars to support learning recovery, especially for underserved student groups.

However, the responsibility for ensuring that these dollars are spent equitably and effectively often falls to state leaders.

We were encouraged by the decisions of Gov. Whitmer and the Michigan Department of Education to distribute the federal funds from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act³² based on formulas

sensitive to student need and with requirements to spend at least some of the funds on systemic improvements, such as connectivity and device access, student mental health, teacher training and curriculum, and strategies to address learning loss.³³ We urge state leaders to continue these practices with the funding from the recent federal stimulus package passed late last year.³⁴

We were also encouraged by the decision of Governor Whitmer and legislative leaders to prioritize education in their use of federal relief funds, including to protect Michigan students from anticipated budget cuts in FY21.

Michigan leaders should continue to prioritize vulnerable students and invest any additional federal funding received during the crisis, including funds from the December 2020 federal stimulus package,³⁵ equitably and primarily in systemic improvements that address both the immediate crisis and longstanding challenges — the kinds of investments which will yield long-term improvements.

State leaders and advocates across sectors should join efforts to call for an additional federal stimulus package in early 2021 with significant investments in education and provisions to ensure states leverage the dollars equitably and towards research-based strategies. While the CARES Act and December 2020 federal stimulus package provide a helpful start towards supporting students and district financial stability, much more is needed.

Ensuring Fiscal Transparency and Reporting: State leaders can, and should, play an important role in ensuring transparency around district finances and decision-making. Whether it's general per-pupil dollars, funds targeted for vulnerable students or emergency funding from federal or state sources, state leaders should ensure measurement, oversight and accountability for spending.

In a moment when so much is uncertain, Michigan students, families and stakeholders should not have to worry about whether federal, state or local education dollars are being used fairly and effectively.

To ensure accountability for state dollars targeted to underserved students, state leaders should require

school-level reporting of at-risk, English learner and students with disabilities funding and commit to at least 75 percent of targeted funds being spent at the school where qualifying students attend, beginning in fall 2022.

To increase transparency around the use of federal stimulus funds, every district's application for CARES act funding and any future federal stimulus dollars should be published on the MDE website. Future applications should require districts to include specific measurable outcomes and details about how they will use new investments to meet grade-level expectations to help districts and the state inform future efforts.



Photo by Allison Shelley for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action.

PARENT VOICE

Traverse City resident Traci Lambert has fond memories of attending school in rural northern Michigan. She recalls small classrooms, interactions with classmates and feeling treated the same as other children, and Mr. Teats, her favorite teacher, who taught her favorite subject, biology. Her account is in contrast from what Traci describes as the “traumatic” experience Katie, her 15-year-old daughter with Down Syndrome, is having as a student.

Traci doesn’t recall interacting with students with disabilities during her education experience, and her parents— though supportive—did not have to advocate for her equitable treatment in the classroom. “My parents never talked with me about school. If not for Katie, I would probably not pay attention to education. Now that I have Katie, and I watch how she struggles with learning, I see how much harder it is for some kids.”

Traci’s academic experience prepared her to make difficult choices about Katie’s education. She said her daughter’s school experience emphasized “life skills” classes, such as how to ride a bus, schedule an appointment and make a grocery list. “These life skills became her education, instead of academics. Katie is capable of more.” Traci was concerned Katie’s learning plan would not help achieve her ultimate dream of teaching. “It’s the school’s responsibility to give my daughter the K-12 education needed to become a teacher—not decide whether or not she can be one,” Traci said.

Repeatedly, Katie was pushed into self-contained classrooms with other students with disabilities even though she had demonstrated she performed better socially and academically when integrated with students from diverse learning backgrounds,



Photo by Gary Howe

Traci said. She recognized the options being offered by administrators were not fair to her child, yet her appeals to develop a program that better prepared Katie to live an independent, sustainable and fulfilling life were unheard. In 2018, Traci chose to remove her daughter from the traditional school setting.

Traci believes the pandemic has, in some ways, leveled the playing field for students, albeit in a concerning way. “COVID is causing all kids to fall behind and miss out on social interactions. Other parents are having to deal with their children trying to learn in isolation. They’re experiencing what my daughter has experienced.”

Traci hopes that the new practices stemming from the pandemic present an opportunity to drive change for teachers and students. She wants to see specific legislation that sets education standards and professional development for teachers to serve students with disabilities better. Traci is optimistic that the voices of those impacted by education policies will become louder in the age of COVID and that students with disabilities will have access to higher quality education.

Honest Information, Transparency and Public Reporting

Providing education stakeholders, including students, families, educators and policymakers, with honest information, transparency and public reporting should always be a top priority in Michigan. These systems are foundational to strong and effective improvement efforts, especially because of the information they can provide about troubling gaps in resources and effectiveness that often disproportionately impact vulnerable students and could remain hidden without clear and consistent information.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, these systems are just as — if not more — important for ensuring all students, especially vulnerable students, are supported to succeed. For example, students and families deserve transparency around their school and district’s plans for continuing and recovering learning in coming months and years; educators need meaningful information about each student’s learning in order to provide tailored supports; policymakers need to know the impact of emergency investments and where there is the most need for additional investment and support; and the general public deserves to know how — and how well — the public dollars for education are being spent. Additionally, strong data, transparency and public reporting systems are important to quickly building

knowledge about how to best address further disruptions to learning in the future, whether due to the current pandemic or other unforeseen events.

Finding Missing Students: An estimated 3 million students across the nation have not engaged in either virtual nor in-person learning since school closures began last March.³⁶ It is incumbent upon district leaders to find the students in our state who are currently unaccounted for and re-engage them and on state leaders to provide the tools and resources for doing so.³⁷ Strong data systems will be critical to addressing this pressing and concerning issue.

It’s the responsibility of state leaders to ensure that districts have the guidance, data systems, staffing and resources to find and re-engage missing students, as well as bolstering efforts to engage and support the wellbeing of students who may be accounted for but are not consistently engaged and attending school, whether in-person or remote. Governor Whitmer and Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice must do more than bring attention to this issue. Instead, a coordinated statewide effort is needed and a plan should be made publicly available and implemented as quickly as possible.



Phoenix Union High School District, Arizona: An Example of What’s Possible

Leaders in Phoenix Union High School District in Arizona developed a plan to call every student, every day in order to check in on their well-being, both socioemotionally and in terms of other supports, including if they were experiencing food insecurity or needed technology access or support.³⁸ Notes from these calls are entered into a common data base so schools can identify which students need which additional supports.³⁹

Ensuring Honest Information about Student Learning:

We applaud Gov. Whitmer and Michigan’s legislative leadership for including a commitment to quality education data and transparency their **bipartisan package** in August 2020.⁴⁰

Specifically, the package guaranteed every district access to a state-funded, high-quality suite of benchmark assessments that are aligned to state standards. These tools help families and districts monitor student learning in real time and provide prompt feedback to teachers. They are also particularly important for measuring learning during this unprecedented time of learning loss, particularly for Michigan’s underserved students, and informing future policy decisions about resources, supports and efforts to close Michigan’s wide gaps in opportunity and achievement.

We recommend state leaders build upon this progress and work towards implementing a common, unified benchmark assessment system.

Additionally, we recommend that the Michigan Department of Education prepare now to support districts in administering the state’s summative assessments this spring. As outlined in a recent letter by national civil rights and education leaders, “Annual statewide assessments results provide the most reliable, valid, and objective source of information that tell parents, families and communities how well the education system is serving their children. These results also play a critical role in shining a light on vast disparities in educational opportunity, helping to secure resources and support for students who are often underserved in our schools. Having these data is especially important now as states work to address the learning loss caused by the pandemic which research shows is disproportionately impacting students of color, English learners, Native students, and students with disabilities.”⁴¹

The Michigan Department of Education can play an important role in ensuring clear and early communication with districts, schools, educators and families about the



Annual statewide assessments results provide the most reliable, valid, and objective source of information that tell parents, families and communities how well the education system is serving their children. These results also play a critical role in shining a light on vast disparities in educational opportunity, helping to secure resources and support for students who are often underserved in our schools.

— Letter to President-Elect Biden on ESSA 5-Year Anniversary by National Urban League and Partners



purpose of assessments, how data from assessments will be used, what the administration of assessments will look like and what the role of educators and families will be in that administration, particularly if they are conducted remotely.



Photo by Allison Shelley for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action.

Ensuring Consistent and Timely Public Reporting:

During these unprecedented times, it is critical that clear information about the response to and impact of COVID-19 for Michigan students is made available in a timely, accessible manner for all stakeholders — including students, families, educators and policymakers.

While more work needs to be done to shine light on how schools are serving students during this school year, we were encouraged that the governor and legislators incorporated key data and reporting requirements into the FY 21 budget, including around mode of instruction, the number of hours of synchronous instruction, and the availability of additional supports for vulnerable students. The first public reporting on these data requirements was released in November 2020 on the Center for Educational Performance and Information’s (CEPI) Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan Dashboard.⁴²

We continue to urge state leaders to shift current data collection and reporting practices to make data on attendance and engagement, extended learning opportunities, and socio-emotional supports for students accessible and disaggregated by subgroup, including by race and socioeconomic status. This will require districts to collect and submit student-level data to CEPI, rather than district-level data, and make a statewide aggregate file available for download on the CEPI website each month.

Public reporting should be built into all response strategies to ensure transparency about shifts to education services and delivery systems, the impacts on student learning, the use of public investments and availability of additional resources. For more details, please see the recommendations listed earlier in this section about assessing and understanding student learning needs, page 17 for recommendations to ensure fiscal transparency and reporting, and our calls for public reporting throughout the remaining sections of the report including around extended learning time, quality virtual instruction and access, socioemotional supports and transitions to postsecondary opportunities.



Connecticut: An Example of What's Possible

The Connecticut State Department of Education provides an example of what is possible when state leaders work intentionally to collect additional data during this unprecedented year, when disaggregated data and timely reporting matter more than ever.

Specifically, the department committed to taking and tracking daily attendance data, as well as collecting data about each learning model being used in the state (in person, hybrid and distance). They also committed to monthly public reporting on daily attendance rates and chronic absenteeism by subgroup on a new data dashboard specifically

focused on student participation.⁴³

In order to ensure districts were prepared to collect and report this data, the department had clear guidelines in place in early fall.⁴⁴

Districts also received guidance in the early fall about supporting student participation across modes of instruction, including recommendations on how to track and monitor attendance in virtual settings, ensure strong systems of support for students and families engaged in virtual learning, and use trauma-informed approaches to supporting chronically absent students.⁴⁵ The department is also partnering with Connecticut's State Education Resource Center (SERC) to build communities of practice and support district access to the latest research, national experts and promising practices.⁴⁶



Photo by Allison Shelley for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action.

Extended and Expanded Learning Time

State and district leaders must plan and act now to invest in bolstering and accelerating teaching and learning, including by dramatically expanding effective instructional time to all students. This should include optional summer school offered by all districts for all students for at least two to three summers, as it will likely take multiple summers to both catch up and accelerate learning.

Extended-day learning options during the school day or year that are aligned with Michigan's college- and career-ready standards will also be essential to providing students with both the academics and wraparound social services they need in the fall and coming years. These options should be integrated into the school day, such as through high-dosage tutoring, as well as through traditional after-school programs. Planning for such efforts also needs to begin now.

Expanding Summer School Access: Research shows high-quality summer school provides clear benefits for continuing learning and reducing the impact of learning loss during extended breaks, such as “summer slide” — the learning loss that happens in the summer months when children have a long break from school and lack

enrichment experiences, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds.⁴⁷ High-quality, voluntary and multi-week summer school is known to lead to notable academic gains in reading and math that can lessen the effects of learning loss for participating students.⁴⁸

While all Michigan educators made heroic efforts to meet the expectation of continuing learning through the end of the 2019-20 school year and adapt to new modes of instruction in the current school year, distance learning initiatives have varied widely in quality across the state and many Michigan students may experience learning loss due to the continued disruptions to learning.⁴⁹

To address these gaps, districts and schools should be planning and acting now to create ways to provide students with summer learning experiences, either in-person or through distance learning in accordance with public health guidance. These efforts could take the form of summer school programming or beginning school earlier to provide students, and especially underserved students, with opportunities for enrichment and additional learning — not only to catch up on any lost instructional time, but also to get more prepared for the academic year to come, whatever form it may take.⁵⁰



If you look at the different school districts, you'll see that some districts are given more resources and their students have better advantages. They have more opportunities than the urban districts...

— Parent Perspective



Expanded learning in the summer can also provide important opportunities for educators, as well. Building meaningful professional development and teacher leadership opportunities into summer learning can have a lasting, positive impact for educators and their students throughout the school year.

Asking more of educators who step up to take on additional teaching responsibilities, such as summer school or extended learning time during the school day or year, as recommended in the following section, should also come with additional investment. Teachers who take on more leadership and other responsibilities should be paid accordingly. Indeed, in leading education states such as Tennessee, summer reading camps that embed standards-aligned professional development led by the state's most effective educators have been a cornerstone for improvement.⁵¹

Extending Learning Time During the School Day or Year:

Research shows increases in instructional time leads to increases in student learning.⁵² When school is back in session in brick-and-mortar schools, school and district leaders should strongly consider — and publicly report on — plans to add hours on to the school day or year, especially for the most at-risk students. This strategy can

boost student achievement — particularly for students who are most at risk of failing — because it provides opportunities for students to accelerate their learning in subjects in which they are struggling.

Indeed, district and school leaders should be thinking about how to provide students who are most impacted by the crisis with additional learning time through a variety of methods such as:

- **Meaningfully extending the school day or year;**
- **Scheduling twice as much time — known as “double-blocking” — for a subject that students are struggling in;**
- **Offering high-quality afterschool programming and enrichment activities;**
- **Using more targeted interventions, including intervention blocks, within-class groups or one-on-one tutoring. High-intensity tutoring is also proven to help students catch up, according to several studies.⁵³**

District and school leaders should post plans to expand learning time publicly and report on how they will provide direct outreach to families about these additional supports to ensure all families are aware and able to participate.



Photo by Allison Shelley for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action

PARENT VOICE

Detroit native and Clinton Township resident Tomicka Robison graduated from Cass Technical High School, one of Detroit's premier educational institutions, and is among the few people in her family to earn a bachelor's degree.

Her daughter, Ava, shares her mother's love for learning. Tomicka describes her as a "scholar who soaks up knowledge." Soon to be 7-years-old, Ava is entering the second grade and reads at a third-grade level. "She's a clever, industrious child—her teachers describe her as a 'mother' to the other children," Tomicka said.

Tomicka attributes her daughter's academic success to quality early childhood education experiences. Leery of childcare facilities, Tomicka stayed home for the first two-and-a-half years of Ava's life, "I was able to teach her letters, numbers, shapes and colors."

Upon re-entering the workforce, Tomicka enrolled her then 3-year-old daughter in preschool, which helped her cultivate social skills. Though expensive, Tomicka said this experience was essential to Ava's early achievement, including being recommended for grade advancement as a kindergartner.

Ava transferred to a charter school as a second grader and was in the midst of adjusting to a more rigid schedule, larger school and new classmates and teachers when COVID-19 struck. Ava found herself thrust into a remote learning environment that did not support her social development and frustrated her and her mother.



Photo by Chuk Nowak

Tomicka also sees COVID-19's impact on the broader community. A digital consultant with a national social justice nonprofit, she is an active participant in her children's school district and serves as a volunteer parent advocate with a Detroit-based education-focused nonprofit.

The pandemic uncovered the deep inequities within the system, especially as they relate to technology and internet access, she said. "COVID-19 and the quarantine exacerbated the injustices faced by marginalized communities, especially those of color," Tomicka said, adding that students like her daughter who live in well-funded districts received devices and free access to education apps that help with scheduling, accessing Zoom meetings and continuing to meet academic objectives.

Tomicka's hope for the future of education is inspired by her children and those who are part of her village. "They are our future judges, engineers and carpenters. When I see their little brains growing, I know they can be whatever they want within a just system."



Early Literacy Must Remain a Top Priority

Research clearly demonstrates the impact that high-quality learning experiences in the early years can have on students' success in the long term. When children read well by third grade, they are dramatically more likely to succeed – they're more likely to graduate from high school⁵⁴ and therefore more likely to participate in the job market, earn higher wages and remain outside the criminal justice system.⁵⁵ This is especially true for students from families with lower income levels.⁵⁶

Yet, thus far, Michigan has struggled to implement effective, evidence-based practices for improving early literacy, including a lack of feedback and support for educators in research-based early literacy instruction. As we discuss in the Education Trust-Midwest's 2018 State of Michigan Education Report, *Top Ten for Education: Not By Chance*, in many ways Michigan has left literacy improvement and how dollars are spent up to chance instead of providing meaningful guidance, leveraging innovative delivery systems and strengthening alignment between the early childhood and K-12 education systems.⁵⁷

Especially given the learning disruptions from COVID-19, investments to improve early literacy must be more effective to see the results students deserve and state leaders have promised.

Evidence-based strategies, such as access to high-quality early childhood experiences⁵⁸, high-dosage tutoring⁵⁹, summer programs⁶⁰, high-quality curricula⁶¹ and professional development for educators in the science of reading⁶² will be critical for ensuring early learners receive the instruction and supports they need to be strong readers by grade three.

It will also be critical to enact legislation that ensures elementary schools screen young students for characteristics of dyslexia, makes parents partners through information about supporting young readers and provides tools and supports for all young students to learn to read. Additional investment in educator professional development to better meet the needs of students with dyslexia should be adopted by lawmakers.⁶³



I don't know if it's the funding or the expectations of the teachers... it's just that each school can be so different — sometimes even the classrooms are different... You really have to pay attention to make sure your child gets what they need.

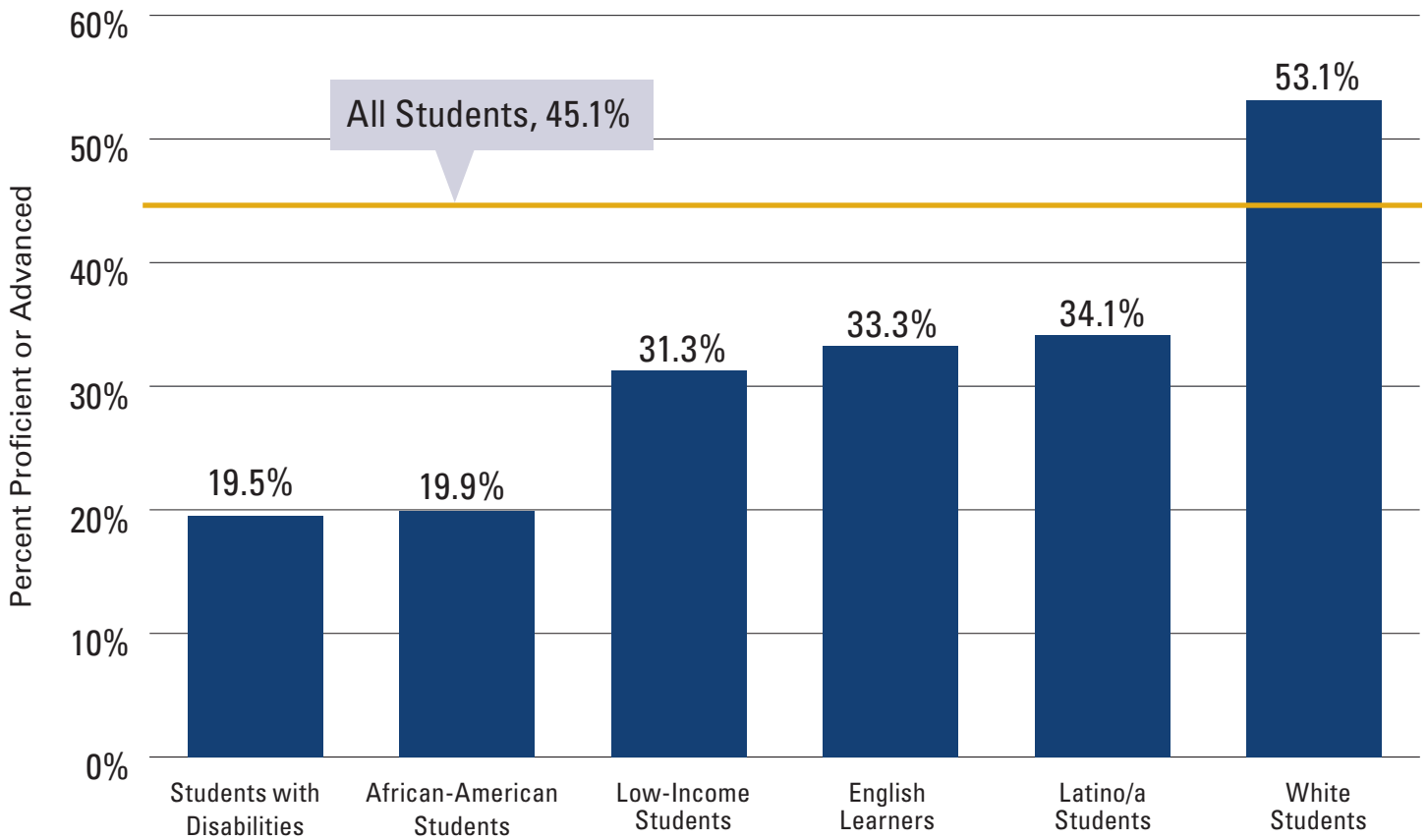
— Parent Perspective



Low Proficiency Rates Persist Despite Michigan's Early Literacy Investment

Statewide M-STEP Proficiency Rates

English Language Arts - Grade 3 - by Subgroup (2019)



SOURCE: MDE, M-STEP Results 2019



Quality Virtual Instruction and Access

Due to public health guidance, distance learning has been at least a part, if not the entirety, of many Michigan students' schooling amid the pandemic. In fact, only 1% of school districts planned to offer only fully in-person instruction in December 2020 — down from 3% of Michigan school districts in November.⁶⁴

This does not bode well — many students, especially underserved students, still do not have access to the necessary technology for online learning and even for those who do, research makes it clear that full-time virtual learning is not a substitute for traditional classroom instruction.⁶⁵

A report by a collaboration of several national charter organizations — including the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools — demonstrated that even schools that are designed to use a distance learning model, such as virtual charters, have lackluster results for students, especially compared to traditional public schools.⁶⁶ The authors concluded that, "...it is increasingly... clear that full-time virtual charter schools are not a good fit for many children," noting challenges around student engagement and the importance of parental supports.⁶⁷ Similarly, as schools transitioned to distance learning in spring 2020, Kevin Huffman, former education commissioner of Tennessee and partner at the City Fund, a national education nonprofit, wrote, "[y]ears of research shows that online schooling is ineffective — and that students suffer significant learning losses when they have a long break from school. Now they're getting both, in a hastily arranged mess."⁶⁸

In addition to barriers around device and internet access that still face many students across the state, vulnerable students may face additional barriers to having the time and support they need to effectively participate in virtual learning. These may include limited experience using online learning tools or platforms, lack of support and supervision from parents or caretakers, and having to spend time on other responsibilities, such as caring for

siblings, which takes time and focus away from online learning activities. Students with additional needs may also not receive the resources and supports they require. For example, students with disabilities may require additional support services to engage in online learning and address other needs, and English learners may need access to online learning resources in their home language.

Virtual instruction is an important emergency method for continuing learning during the COVID-19 crisis and remains a necessity this school year.

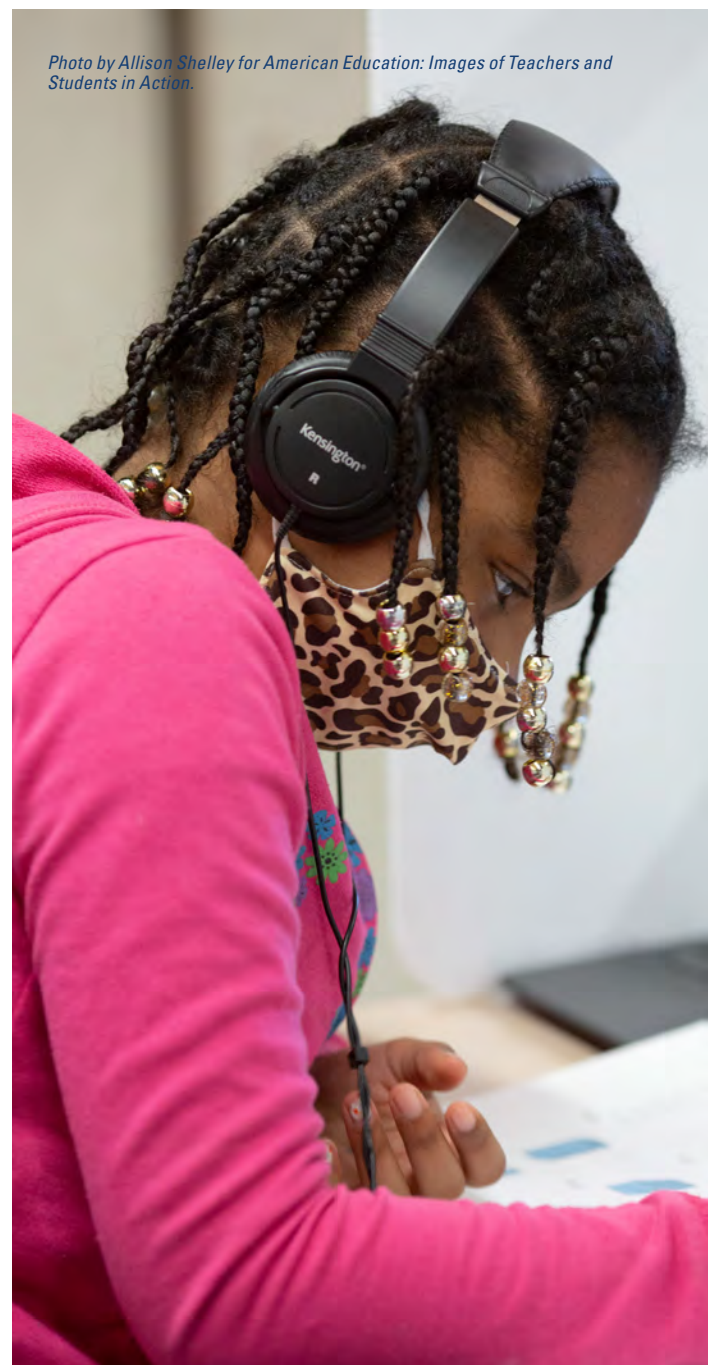


Photo by Allison Shelley for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action.



It's not just the quality of education that's different, but also community safety, resources, access to jobs... The schools try to make up for this, providing food, helping with winter coats, but it's not enough.

— Parent Perspective



However, given the lackluster results with virtual schooling, it is critical that Michigan leaders also invest in other strategies for continuing and recovering learning that are backed by research and proven to help students, especially vulnerable students, catch up academically and close gaps in learning. Please see section page 23 for information on extended learning time, including several research-based strategies for boosting student learning recovery.

Closing the Digital Divide: Before the pandemic, the millions of American children without digital access already faced challenges in accessing online resources to complete homework assignments, build digital literacy skills and continue or accelerate their learning at home.⁶⁹

With many school districts incorporating some degree of online learning into their curriculum for the 2020-2021 school year, identifying and closing the digital divide is imperative, as is ensuring that when virtual instruction is required, it is high-quality and rigorous. It is unknown when health officials will indicate it is safe for students and educators to resume in-person instruction, so districts must remain flexible and be able to provide students with the resources necessary to be successful in the long-term.

State leaders certainly can — and should — play a leading role in ensuring equitable access to technology,

including high-quality, consistent virtual instruction aligned with college- and career-ready standards during and following the crisis.

This begins by investing in supports needed to lessen the digital divide, including providing internet subsidies, Wi-Fi hot spots, devices to students and educators and ongoing support to use those devices. We are encouraged by the decisions of Gov. Whitmer and the Michigan Department of Education to target some federal stimulus dollars toward closing the digital divide in high-needs districts.⁷⁰ In addition to ensuring any future federal stimulus dollars are distributed equitably to school districts, the MDE should provide guidance and technical support to districts working on this issue and support districts in taking audits of students' technology needs, as planned by both the Kalamazoo Public Schools and Rochester Community Schools districts.⁷¹

State leaders should also support efforts to improve infrastructure and expand broadband access across the state⁷², encourage public-private partnerships like ConnectedFutures in Detroit in other high-poverty communities⁷³, and leverage the state's purchasing power to increase the supply of devices in the state.

PARENT VOICE

Stacey Young has fond memories as a student of endurance tests in PE, concert productions and math bees. Yet, she describes schools as “doing the bare minimum” for her and her classmates. She recounts a friend who admitted that she could not read despite having a diploma. “She was moved along according to whatever education policy was popular at the time; for what purpose?” Stacey asked.

Today, as a mother of five living in Detroit, Stacey’s relationship with schools remains stressful. Stacey has not found that her children receive the individualized instruction they need and deserve. As an example, Stacey notes that two of her children have reading challenges, yet the school has not implemented instructional methods that support her children to improve in reading and learn content in other subjects. “The school knows the number of kids who have difficulty reading, but they just do what they want, especially if you’re from a particular social class”, she said.

Stacey works as a family advocate to help people with low income levels diffuse situations with institutions, including schools.

“COVID has made things worse, but it’s also shined a light on what families need,” according to Stacey. During the pandemic, families learned they were



eligible for assistance with food, technology and internet services. “The issues these families were facing existed pre-COVID-19, but not until the virus was anyone compelled to address them. Schools need to be realistic about families’ needs and willing to use their resources to help.”

Ultimately, Stacey decided to withdraw her children from school, in favor of homeschooling. She believes that given the challenges of COVID-19 and past experience, homeschooling will best meet the educational needs of her children.

Stacey still finds hope and sees opportunity in creating a supportive network of people with other skills to contribute to a child’s learning experience.



Post pandemic, we need to focus on ensuring that all learners have access to technology.

— Parent Perspective





Michigan's Digital Divide

In Michigan, over 170,000 children under 18 do not have access to a device or an internet subscription in their household, according to recent census data.⁷⁴

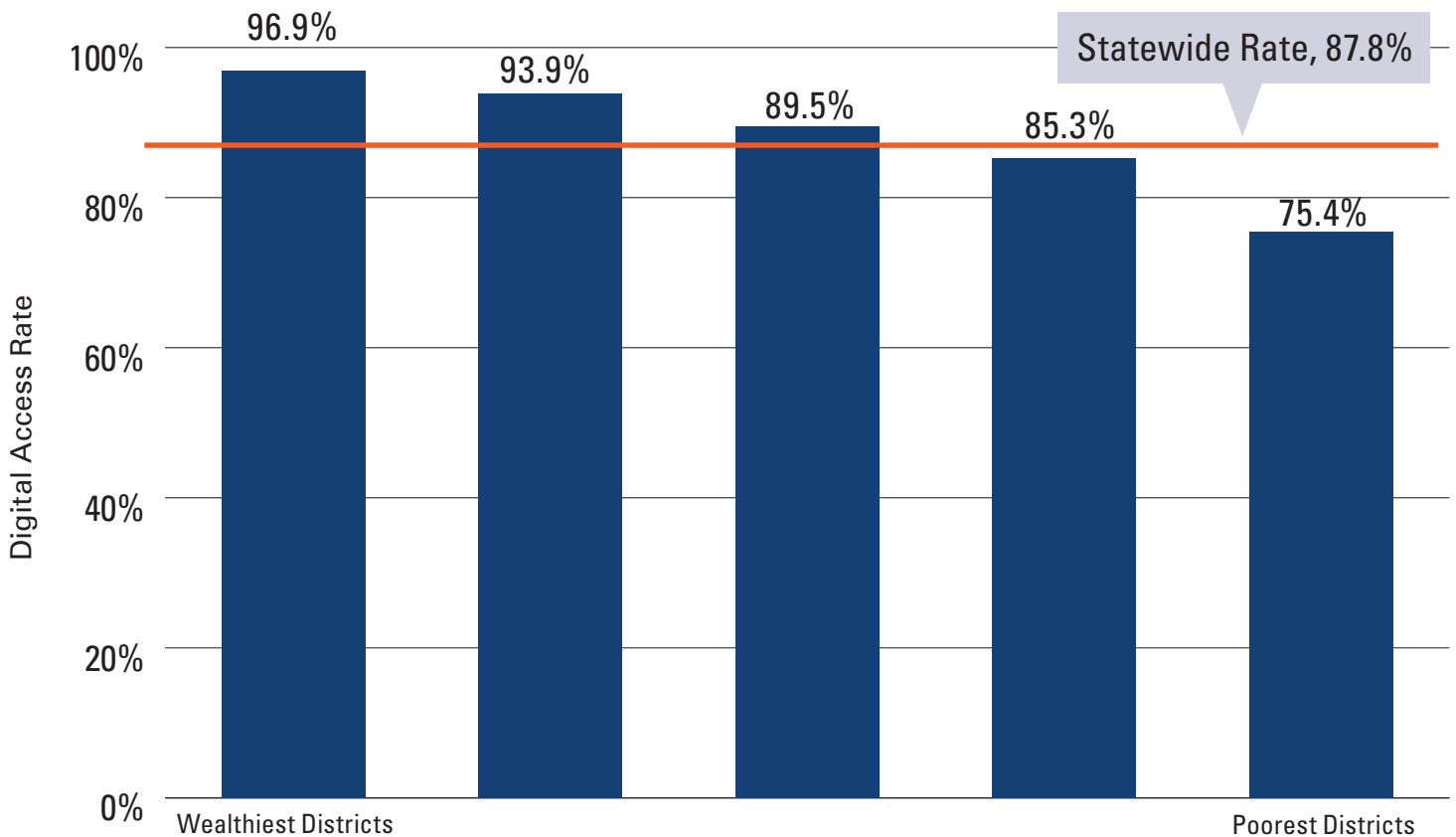
Recent **analyses** also shows that the digital divide is a barrier for students in both urban and rural districts.⁷⁵ Compared to other geographies, fewer households in urban and rural districts have access to devices and internet.

In Michigan's poorest districts, digital access is 20 percent lower than in the wealthiest districts.

Additionally, students of color are more likely to be without digital access, a troubling finding that may exacerbate long-standing opportunity and achievement gaps. In districts with the highest rates of students of color, nearly 1 in 4 children lack digital access. This access rate is ten percentage points lower than the statewide rate.

Please see ETM's interactive data map, ***Michigan's Digital Divide***, for a map of digital access by school district.⁷⁶

Students in Michigan's Lowest Income Districts Less Likely to Have Device and Internet in Home Digital Access According to District Socioeconomic Status Demographics



SOURCE: MDE, Student Count 2018-19; MDE, Educational Entity Master 2020; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey – 5 Year Estimates – TABLE28005, 2018

Requiring District Plans: While many districts released plans that included some information about how they were addressing gaps in digital access and additional distance learning supports for students with disabilities and English learners, most plans did not include meaningful information about the instruction and supports that would be provided to students during this unprecedented time. Some did not provide any information at all — as of December 2020, 27 Michigan districts still had not submitted COVID-19 Learning Plan details to CEPI, despite being required to do so monthly by law.

We were encouraged by the requirement in the FY21 budget for districts to describe how they are ensuring equitable access to instruction for students with disabilities. Since the beginning of the pandemic, our organization called for districts to publish how they will support the unique instructional needs of these often underserved groups of students.⁷⁷

However, more information and reporting are still needed to know if adequate supports are being provided for both students with disabilities and other vulnerable student groups, such as English learners. Districts should be required to publish specific plans about how they will use investments to ensure all students have access to high-quality instruction, including what kinds of additional supports are being provided to underserved student populations, and address key equity challenges posed by distance learning, such as those in the guide published by The Education Trust and Digital Promise.⁷⁸

Supporting Educators: Planning, investment and guidance is needed to provide teachers and school leaders with professional learning and support around high-quality virtual instruction, especially in schools serving high numbers of vulnerable students.⁷⁹

We are encouraged that data will be collected on the professional development provided to teachers about virtual instruction and that districts will be required to report this data on their websites by no later than January 15, 2021.⁸⁰

While this data will shed light on the amount and type of professional development provided, the quality of the training is of the utmost importance. Districts should ensure educators have access and preparation to utilize high-quality digital instructional materials and learning platforms that can be used to support all students, including historically underserved groups and students with unique needs, such as students with disabilities, English learner students and students experiencing homelessness.⁸¹

To identify areas where educators most need professional development and support, districts could map teachers' readiness for virtual instruction by surveying them about their needs.⁸² Instructional coaching could be provided online and focus specifically on digital pedagogy to support educators as they navigate a new way of teaching.⁸³

Supporting Families and Caregivers: Districts should ensure students and their families have clear information about how to log on to virtual learning platforms and what is expected of students each day or week. Districts should also provide parents and caregivers with additional support and troubleshooting if necessary, to build the technological skills and digital literacy required to access virtual instruction.



Photo by Allison Shelley for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action.



Educator Talent is More Important Than Ever

Given the anticipated learning loss and unique challenges students are facing during the pandemic, ensuring they have access to a highly effective educator now and for the remainder of their schooling will be critical. Research demonstrates that the number one in-school factor for student learning is quality teaching.⁸⁴

Yet, Michigan has floundered overall when it comes to supporting educators, in turn leaving students across the state without access to the effective classroom instruction they need for success.

It's time for a comprehensive, statewide plan around educator talent that puts equity at the forefront, including closing the teacher salary gap between wealthy and poor districts and ensuring all students have access to highly effective educators by improving professional development, feedback and support systems. Efforts are also needed to ensure access to a culturally and racially **diverse teacher workforce**.⁸⁵

We are encouraged by the initiative included in the FY21 budget to provide retention stipends for new teachers, with the highest stipends made available for new teachers in high-poverty districts.⁸⁶ We urge state legislators to build off of this progress and expand efforts to improve attraction and retention of highly effective educators in high-poverty school districts, including by investing in closing the teacher salary gap. Teachers in Michigan schools with the highest percentage of low-income students earn \$10,056 less, on average, than teachers in the wealthiest schools.⁸⁷

Michigan's lack of supports for educators has led to concerning trends around attracting, retaining and developing effective educators. Data show that these trends are more likely to impact Michigan's most underserved students:

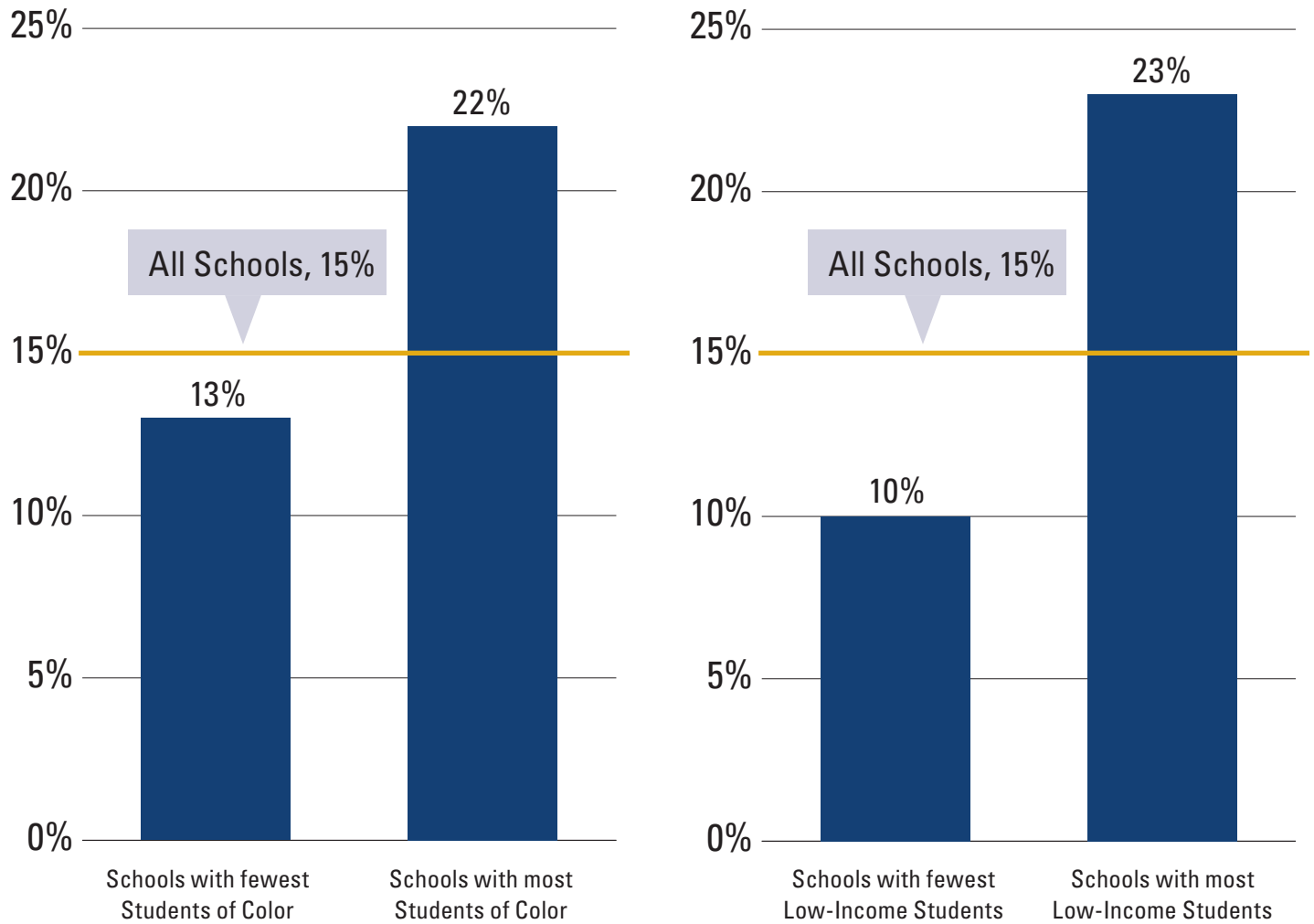
- Students of color and low-income students are more likely to have inexperienced teachers.⁸⁸
- High rates of teacher turnover, which research shows has a negative effect on student achievement in math and English language arts,⁸⁹ disproportionately impact vulnerable students in our state.⁹⁰
- Nationwide and in Michigan, there are teacher shortages in particular geographic areas, most typically in schools that serve the most disadvantaged students, as well as in hard-to-staff subject areas, such as mathematics and special education.⁹¹



Photo by Allison Shelley for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action.

Students of Color and Low-Income Students More Likely to Have Inexperienced Teachers

Percent of Inexperienced Teachers (2017-18)



SOURCE: "Educator Workforce Annual Report," (Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education, 2018-2019). https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/AnnualReport_V1_8.10.19_663270_7.pdf

NOTE: An inexperienced teacher is defined as an educator who is within the first three years of teaching.



Photo by Allison Shelley for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action.

Inclusivity and Socioemotional Supports

Every day, students also rely on schools for providing a wide range of wraparound services related to the health and well-being of students. Ensuring continued access to socioemotional services, college- and career-counseling, and other wraparound services during distance learning will be critically important for students and their families.

Supporting Socioemotional and Academic Development (SEAD): During this time of heightened anxiety for students, families and educators, it is critical for educators to engage students in meaningful ways that build and maintain relationships, in addition to supporting their academic development. Efforts to stay connected with each student's well-being can also take place at the district level, such as the Every Child, Every Day initiative in the Phoenix Union High School District.⁹²

It is especially important for educators, districts and counselors to pay close attention to the students who under normal circumstances are often marginalized, and under current circumstances are most likely to be forgotten — English learners, immigrant youth, students with disabilities, students from low-income backgrounds and students of color. National research estimates approximately 3 million of the nation's most marginalized students have not logged on or attended school since school closures in March 2020.⁹³

Addressing Food Insecurity: It's also critical to ensure students and families do not go hungry when schools are closed and unable to serve meals. We are **encouraged** by the continued efforts of Congress, Gov. Whitmer and state agencies to continue funding and effectively implementing innovative approaches to school meal distribution,

ensuring that low-income families have additional meal assistance through Pandemic EBT.⁹⁴ Michigan quickly became a national model for this program, and the first state to participate, including rapidly providing pandemic food assistance to approximately 900,000 students.⁹⁵

However, Michigan students have not received any Pandemic EBT funds for the 2020-21 school year. We urge the USDA to work quickly to approve states for the 2020-21 school year to help ensure food security for hundreds of thousands of students in Michigan and millions more across the country. The success of P-EBT, particularly in Michigan, makes the case for the making permanent the Summer EBT program in 2021.

Building Inclusivity: Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, State Superintendent Michael Rice and legislative leaders can model and support students, educators and district leaders by encouraging them to set a tone of inclusivity, compassion and support for one another. That includes addressing head-on the racial injustices in our society and racist and xenophobic bullying.

Districts should develop and publish plans for how they will leverage existing funds and federal emergency dollars to ensure educators are prepared to address students' additional socioemotional needs and create a supportive school climate for students facing these challenges. The MDE can support educators by providing tools and encouraging districts to utilize classroom resources that support inclusivity, such as those developed by respected organizations such as Teaching Tolerance.⁹⁶ Amid great uncertainty and increased fear, ensuring educators feel supported in how to thoughtfully and holistically address inclusivity will be particularly important.

STUDENT VOICE

Nadeen Alsoufi was in the seventh grade when she arrived in Dearborn in 2015, migrating with her family from Yemen. Upon enrolling in her new school, she did not speak English well, but her comprehension and reading skills allowed her to progress to the eighth grade.

“The school was more concerned about my ability to understand English rather than speak it,” she said. “They thought that was a skill I’d pick up as I developed friendships.”

She was self-conscious of her accent though, and her limited speaking command of the language caused her to struggle, especially with math. “I already didn’t like the subject, and things became worse because I was afraid to ask questions in class,” she said. Some of Nadeen’s teachers did not make it any easier, at times appearing annoyed when she gained the courage to request help, she said.

Nadeen said she experienced instances of racism during her schooling and found comfort and support in an educator who shared her heritage, a Yemeni math teacher who helped her cope with the discrimination and encouraged her to speak up if she did not understand something. “Whenever I think about this teacher, I’m so happy because she helped me go from failing to getting an A in math.”

Nadeen also mastered standing up for herself and facing down prejudice. In her opinion, fostering



acceptance and tolerance among people of different backgrounds is the most crucial education equity issue. She has talked with other young people who have thought about dropping out or are intimidated into thinking they cannot achieve.

“This is going on a lot in schools, and staff and teachers are simply overlooking it.... Schools are going to have to address racism if education is going to get better,” Nadeen said.

Though she sees racial and cultural bias as a barrier to education, they also give Nadeen hope for the future. “Despite the racism that I witnessed when I was in school, I think we learn about humanity by being exposed to different people.” She sees herself continuing to speak out against racism and helping her peers overcome self-doubt when others challenge their worth.

Transitions to Postsecondary Opportunities

For high school students who are preparing to enter postsecondary education, disruptions to learning due to COVID-19 can be particularly harmful — and expensive. In order to reach the goal of increasing degree attainment in Michigan to sixty percent,⁹⁷ state leaders must act now to ensure all Michigan students, especially low-income students, are both academically prepared for postsecondary education and able to afford it, despite the crisis.

Supporting students' transitions to postsecondary learning is essential to ensuring they are well-positioned to succeed in the 21st century global economy. Almost two-thirds of current jobs require some form of postsecondary training,⁹⁸ and the long-term benefits of this investment are clear.⁹⁹

Supporting College- and Career-Readiness: When students graduate without necessary fundamental skills, they may have to enroll in remedial courses which can mean additional costs for students, more time to complete their degrees and a higher likelihood of dropping out before they complete their degree.¹⁰⁰

Already, before the COVID-19 crisis, about 24 percent of all Michigan high school students were required to

take at least one remedial course upon enrolling in one of Michigan's two- and four-year college or university programs.¹⁰¹ That's almost a quarter of students who must pay for additional instruction in college before moving on to credit-bearing courses. The percentage is even more startling for historically underserved subgroups — 43.9 percent of Michigan's Black students who enrolled in a postsecondary program in Michigan were required to enroll in at least one college remedial course.¹⁰²

The expense of missing important coursework during the pandemic should not threaten Michigan students' opportunities to succeed in college and beyond. We urge state leaders to fully fund the cost of postsecondary remediation at Michigan community colleges for impacted seniors and juniors so that the effects of the crisis won't further widen the gaps in enrollment and attainment.

To address this long-standing issue and prevent even more students from requiring remediation due to COVID-19, high school students will also need a particular focus on college readiness, perhaps delivered through extended day learning and college remedial coursework that's ideally paid for by federal stimulus dollars.



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Jeff Evans, who lives in Grosse Pointe Woods and works as a tutor and youth development professional in Troy, has seen first-hand how the educational system reinforces inequities.

While working at a suburban high school, Jeff worked with students who had previously attended districts with fewer resources. Many were also from low-income communities and had to get up early to catch multiple buses just to get to school.

“Some of them were caring for siblings and didn’t have adequate school supplies. Many were also dealing with food and housing insecurity,” he said.

Jeff’s experiences as a professional contrast with those as a parent. His school-age child is a third-grader in his local district. “The schools in my community are well-funded, and my son doesn’t want for anything as it relates to his education. This isn’t the case in other areas, urban or suburban. Access to technology, for example, is an issue throughout the region.”

Remote learning driven by the pandemic reinforces this need, which Jeff saw through his work. At the Boys & Girls Club he manages, Jeff said he transitioned an afterschool program to a full-day program to meet the needs of working parents and



address some of the technology gaps at the onset of COVID-19.

While the abrupt shift to virtual learning has challenged many districts, Jeff hopes that a byproduct of the pandemic will be an openness to new instruction models for students. “I think about what we can do to make academic subjects more relatable for young people. Now that we’re forced to be more reliant on technology, I hope we can think more broadly about how to engage kids.”

Protecting Access to Financial Aid: Many Michigan students already struggle to afford postsecondary

learning. On average, a low-income Michigan student paying in-state tuition at a four-year public institution, who lives on campus and works over the summer, faces a \$1,659 affordability gap.¹⁰³ This means that despite financial aid and summer wages, a low-income student still falls \$1,659 short, on average, of being able to afford Michigan’s four-year public institutions.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, students and families may face even greater challenges when it comes to paying for college or other forms of postsecondary degrees. State leaders can —and should — take several

immediate actions to preserve student access to financial aid, as called for by 18 organizations, including The Education Trust-Midwest, in the letter to leaders of Michigan’s higher education legislative committees.¹⁰⁴ These actions include increasing efforts to inform students about financial aid options. Additionally, legislative leaders should continue to fund the Michigan Reconnect Program, provide tuition-free pathways to an associate degree or occupational certificate for Michiganders 25 and older without postsecondary credentials,¹⁰⁵ and expand postsecondary pathways and supports.¹⁰⁶

ETM recommends increasing efforts to inform students about completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the common application that students must fill out to access federal and state aid and, in many cases, institutional aid. The Education Trust-Midwest’s ultimate goal is removing barriers to accessing financial aid by ensuring every high school graduate either completes a FAFSA or knowingly opts out of completing the form – a goal that is especially important now as students and families face an economic downturn.

Ensuring Awareness and Access to Transition Supports:

In a typical year, 10-40 percent of college-intending students, and particularly those who are first generation or low-income, face “summer melt,” meaning that despite being accepted to college by the spring of their senior year, they ultimately do not enroll in a postsecondary program come fall.¹⁰⁷ It is likely that the summer melt will be exacerbated this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Schools and districts play a **vital role** in ensuring that students are supported with the appropriate resources to begin their intended postsecondary program. This includes communicating with parents, families and staff to discuss and assist with students’ college plans, financial aid forms, scholarships and academic requirements.¹⁰⁸ Districts should publish how school counselors and other administrators will continue to assist students with finalizing their college plans, securing financial aid and entering the workforce during this unprecedented time. Additionally, K-12, higher education and college access organizations should partner to remind students of key deadlines for enrollment throughout the spring and summer before college.¹⁰⁹

To ensure information and supports are accessible to all students, school districts should offer virtual “office hours” to support seniors with postsecondary transition planning, which should include both online and telephone options.



Photo by Allison Shelley for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action.

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¹⁰⁹ Ibid.



2021 Michigan Achieves! Indicators

4th Grade Reading

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

2030 PROJECTION

32nd

39th

WHAT IT IS

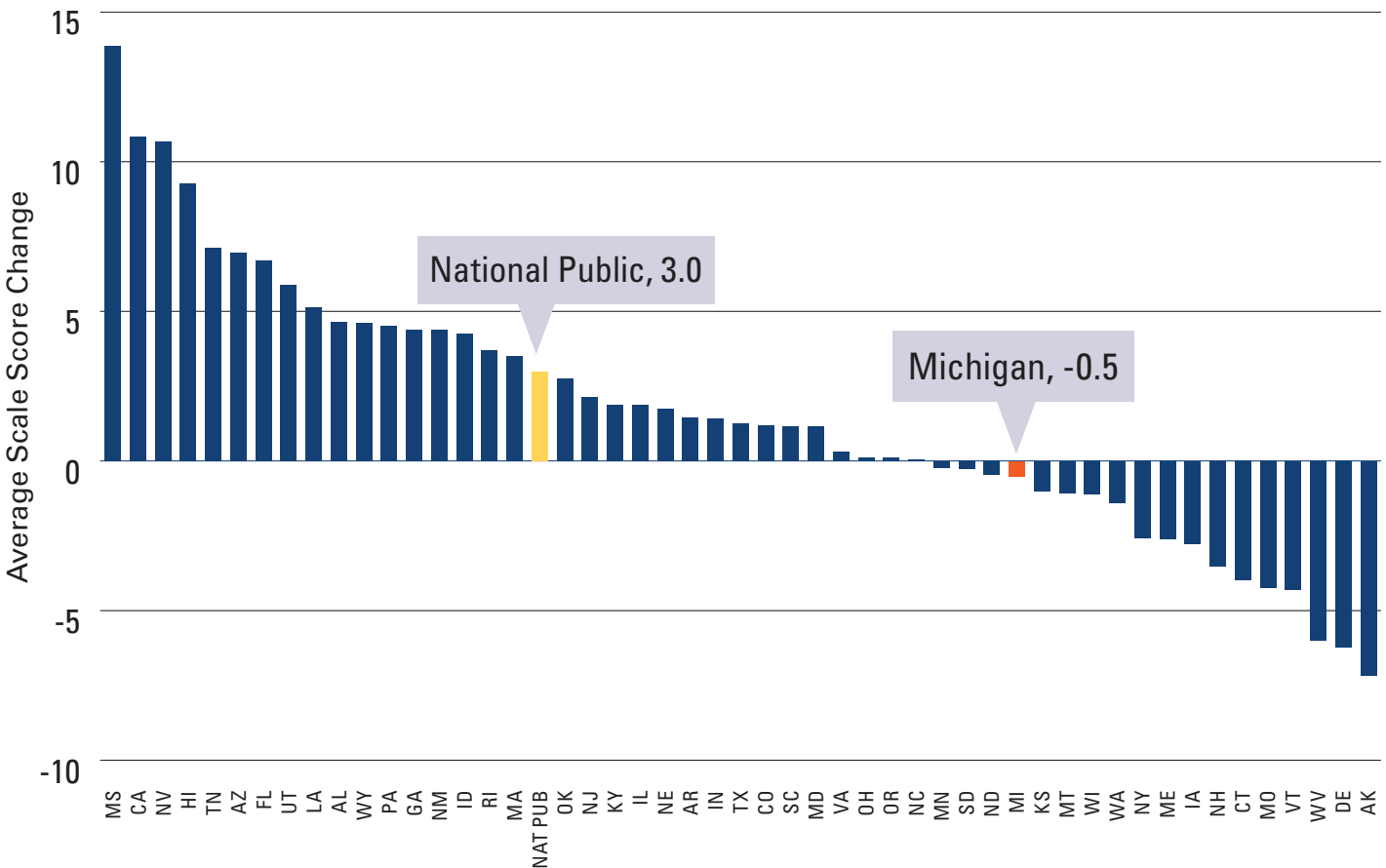
Early learners' reading proficiency is a telling indicator of whether Michigan's students are being prepared for success. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative assessment that provides for long-term comparisons of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. The assessment is given every two years and provides necessary information about 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 is an important foundation for learning in the upper grades. Michigan must drastically improve its early literacy achievement for all students and close the opportunity gaps that keep far too many low-income children and students of color from fulfilling their potential.

Michigan One of Eighteen States Declining in Early Literacy

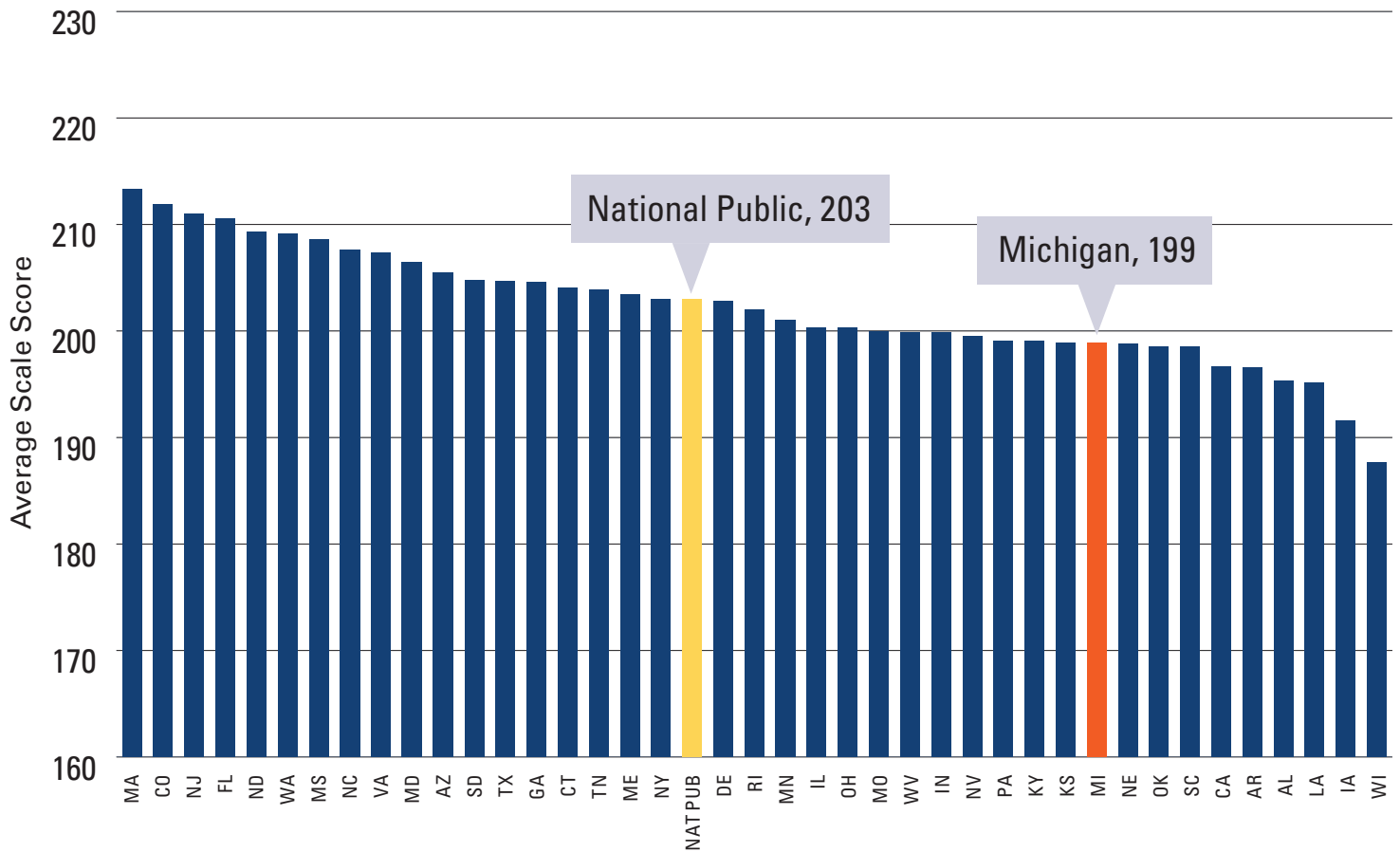
Average Scale Score Change, NAEP Grade 4 – Reading – All Students (2003-19)



SOURCE: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Basic Scale Score = 208; Proficient Scale Score = 238) 2003-2019

4th Grade Reading (cont.)

Michigan in Bottom Ten for African American Students in Early Literacy
Average Scale Score, NAEP Grade 4 – Reading – African American Students (2019)



SOURCE: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Basic Scale Score = 208; Proficient Scale Score = 238) 2019

NOTE: All states with available data are included in this analysis.



WHAT IT IS

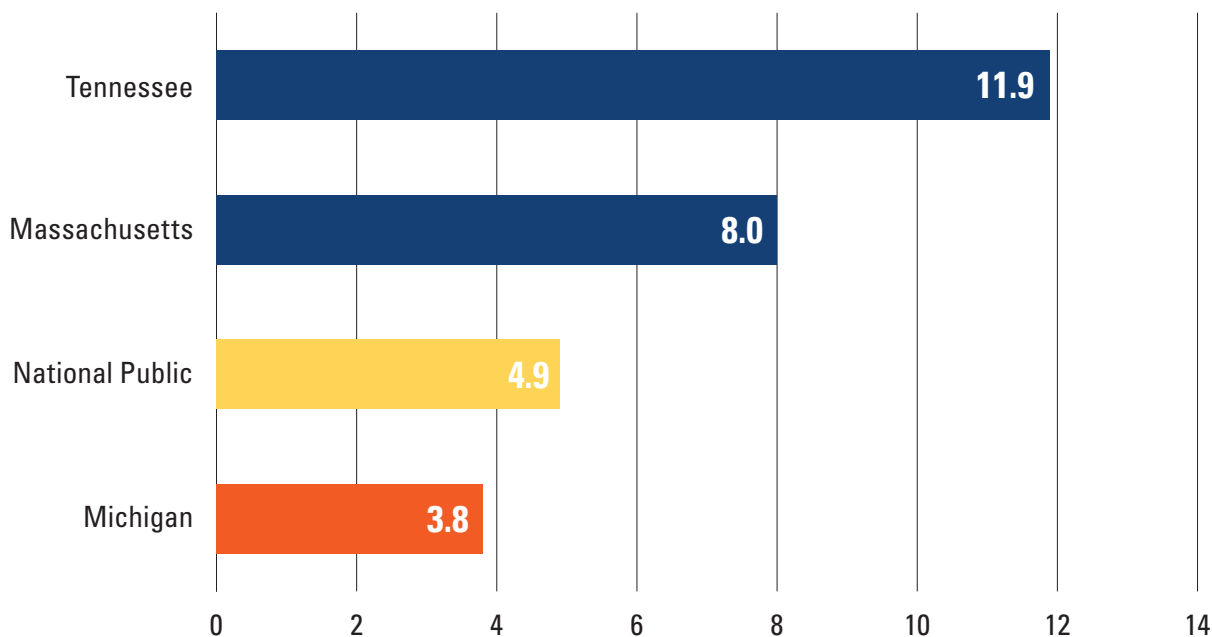
The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative assessment that provides for long-term comparisons of what America’s students know and can do in various subject areas. The assessment is given every two years and provides necessary information about student 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 required to enroll in remedial courses when they begin college. But eighth-grade math skills are not just for students attending college. A study conducted by ACT found that along with reading skills, math skills are essential for careers 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

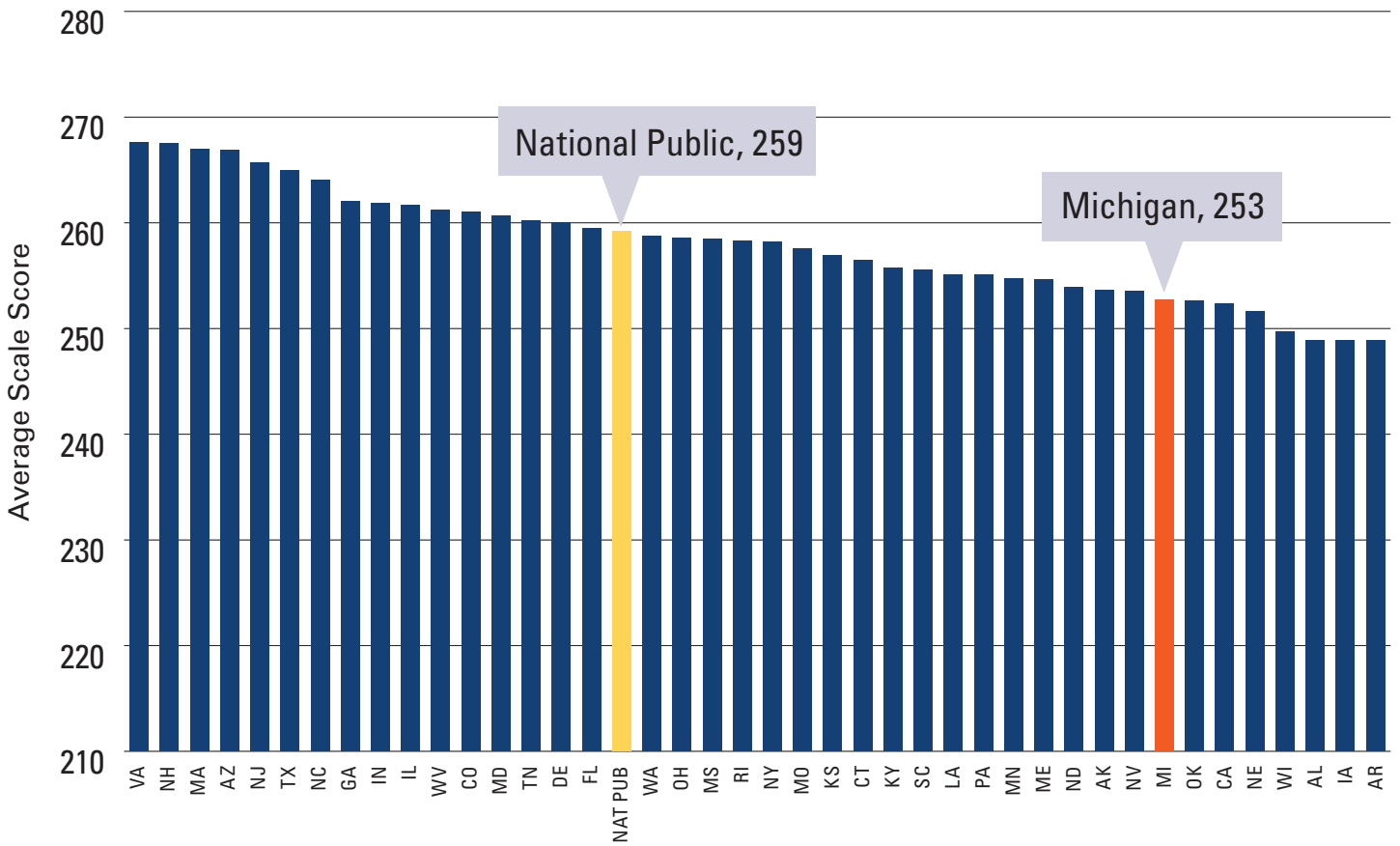
Average Scale Score Change, NAEP Grade 8 – Math – All Students (2003-19)



SOURCE: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Basic Scale Score = 262; Proficient Scale Score = 299) 2003-19

8th Grade Math (cont.)

Michigan Among Bottom Ten States for African American Students in Eighth-Grade Math
Average Scale Score, NAEP Grade 8 – Math – African American Students (2019)



SOURCE: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Basic Scale Score = 262; Proficient Scale Score = 299) 2019

Kindergarten Readiness

Michigan has recently made a smart investment in early childhood programs intended to increase the number of its students who enter kindergarten ready to learn at high levels. From 2012 to 2019, the portion of Michigan four-year-olds enrolled in prekindergarten increased from 19.4 percent to 32.0 percent.ⁱⁱ While access to prekindergarten is improving for Michigan's four-year-olds, it is still unclear whether these prekindergarten programs are high-quality and aligned with the K-12 system.

Data are not currently available because Michigan has not yet implemented a common assessment of kindergarten readiness, nor does the state participate in a national effort to collect these data. Consistent and comparable data from a common assessment of kindergarten readiness would provide vital information on the impact of early-childhood programs and their effectiveness by evaluating their impact on student development and alignment with K-12 learning standards.

We will track any state or national data on Michigan's kindergarten readiness when they become available.

“

From 2012 to 2019, the portion of Michigan four-year-olds enrolled in prekindergarten increased from 19.4 percent to 32.0 percent.

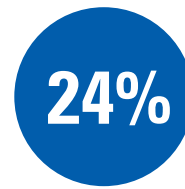
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Photo by Allison Shelley for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action.

College Readiness

CURRENT PERFORMANCE



2030 PROJECTION



Enrolled in at least one remedial course

WHAT IT IS

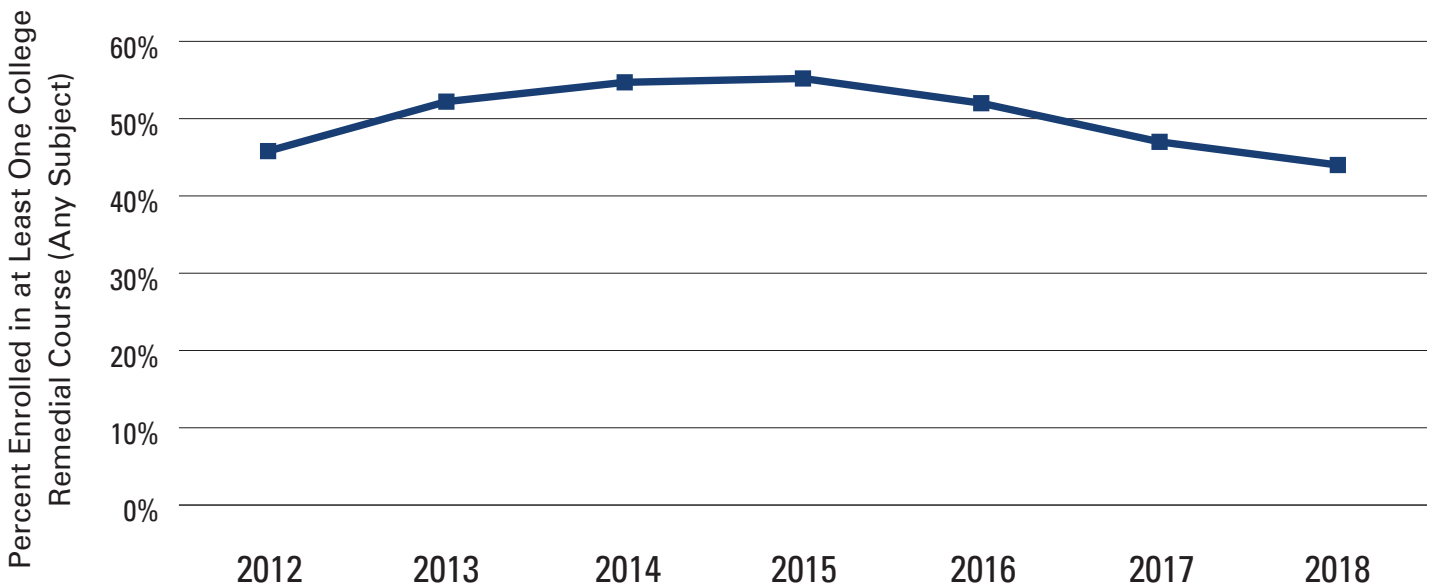
Remedial coursework is necessary for students who lack fundamental skills in a subject area—skills that should have been developed in K-12. These courses also are not credit bearing, meaning they don't count toward a degree.

WHY IT MATTERS

About 24 percent of all Michigan high school students were required to take at least one remedial course upon enrolling in one of Michigan's two- and four-year college or university programs. That's almost a quarter of students who must pay for additional instruction in college before moving on to credit-bearing courses. The percentage is even more startling for historically underserved subgroups—43.9 percent of Michigan's African American students who enrolled in Michigan postsecondary programs 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 Remain High for Michigan's African American Students

Michigan African American College Remediation Rates (Community Colleges & Four-Year Universities, 2012-18)



SOURCE: Michigan Department of Education Remedial Coursework 2012-18

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.

College and Postsecondary Enrollment

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

21th

2030 PROJECTION

Not Yet Available

WHAT IT IS

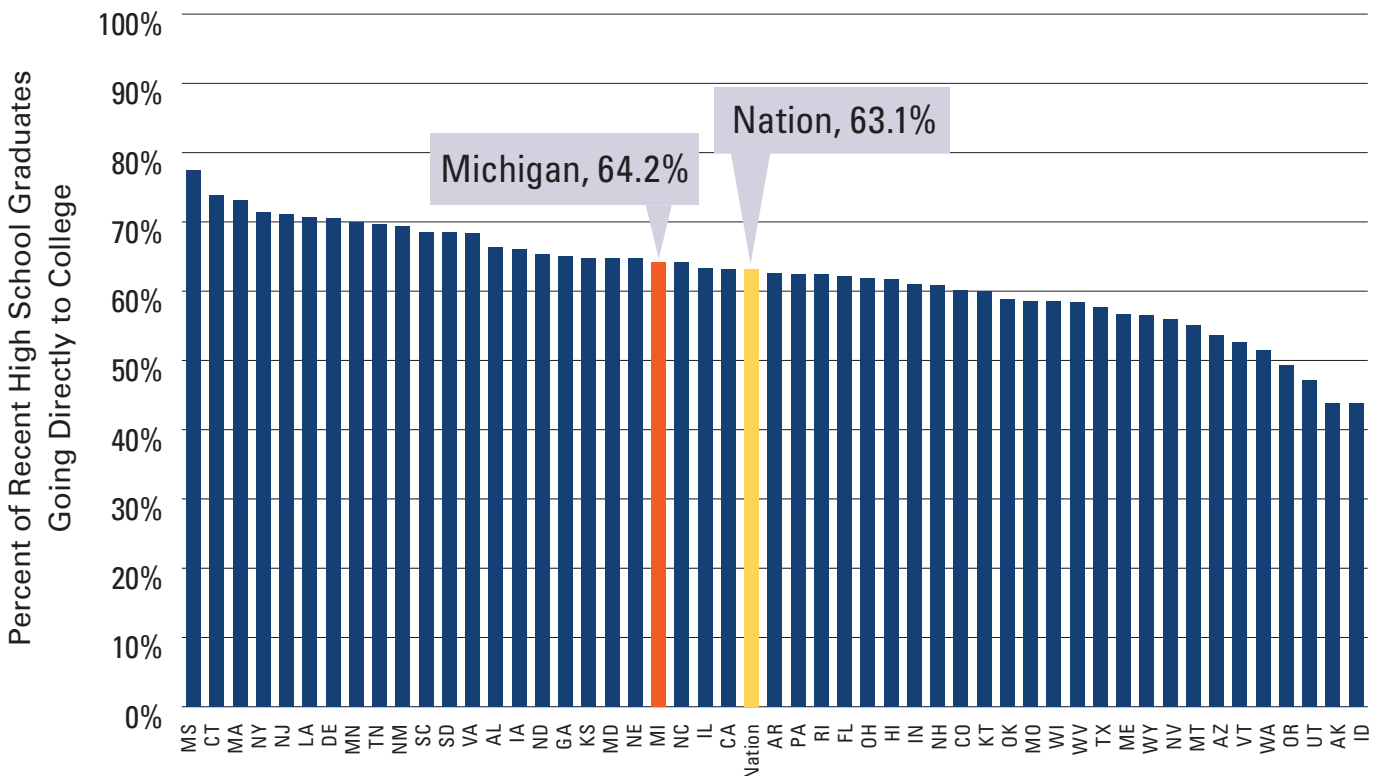
This measure represents the percentage of high school graduates in each state who attend college anywhere in the U.S. directly from high school.

WHY IT MATTERS

In order for Michigan's students to fulfill their true potential and be the leaders of tomorrow, more must enroll in postsecondary training, whether that be at a trade school, community college or a four-year university. On this measure, Michigan is slightly above the national average, ranking 21st, with about 64.2 percent of high school graduates going directly to college in the fall of 2016.ⁱⁱⁱ

The state department of education reports that 65.6 percent of Michigan's 2018 high school graduates enrolled in a postsecondary program within 12 months of graduation.^{iv}

Michigan Slightly Above National Average with 64.2% of High School Graduates Enrolling in College
Higher Education Enrollment Rate for Recent High School Graduates (2016)



SOURCE: NCHEMS Information Center 2016

College Attainment

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

33rd

2030 PROJECTION

31st

WHAT IT IS

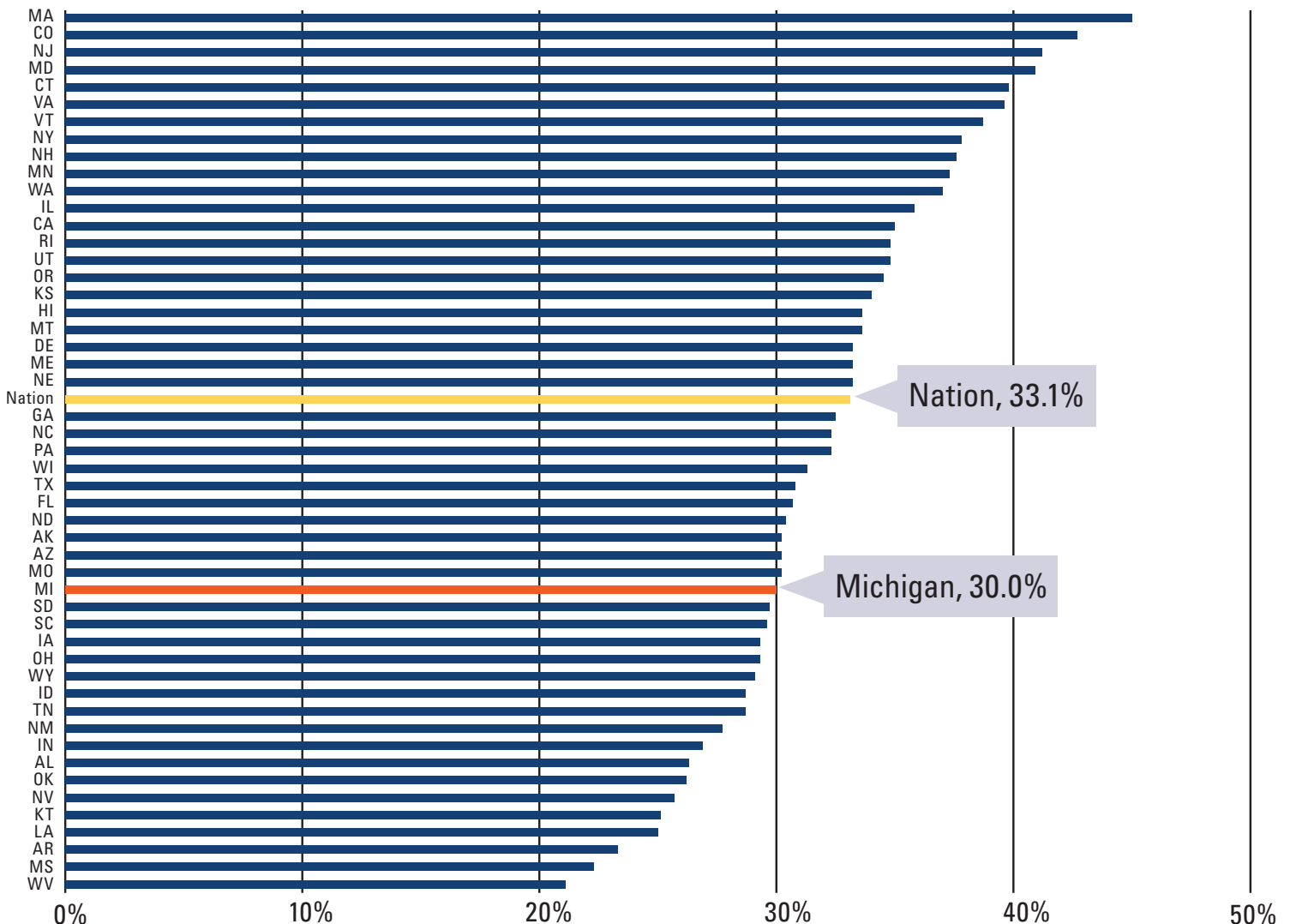
This indicator represents the percentage of people 25 years or older in each state and nationally who have completed a bachelor's degree or greater.

WHY IT MATTERS

Michigan's future economy depends on more adults earning college degrees. In 2019, Michigan ranked 33rd in the percentage of adults 25 or older who have completed a bachelor's degree or greater, at 30 percent. Roughly 18 percent of African-American and 21.6 percent of Hispanic Michiganders have completed a bachelor's degree or greater.

Michigan's Future Economy Depends on More Adults Earning College Degrees

Percent of People 25 Years and Older with a Bachelor's Degree or Greater in 2019

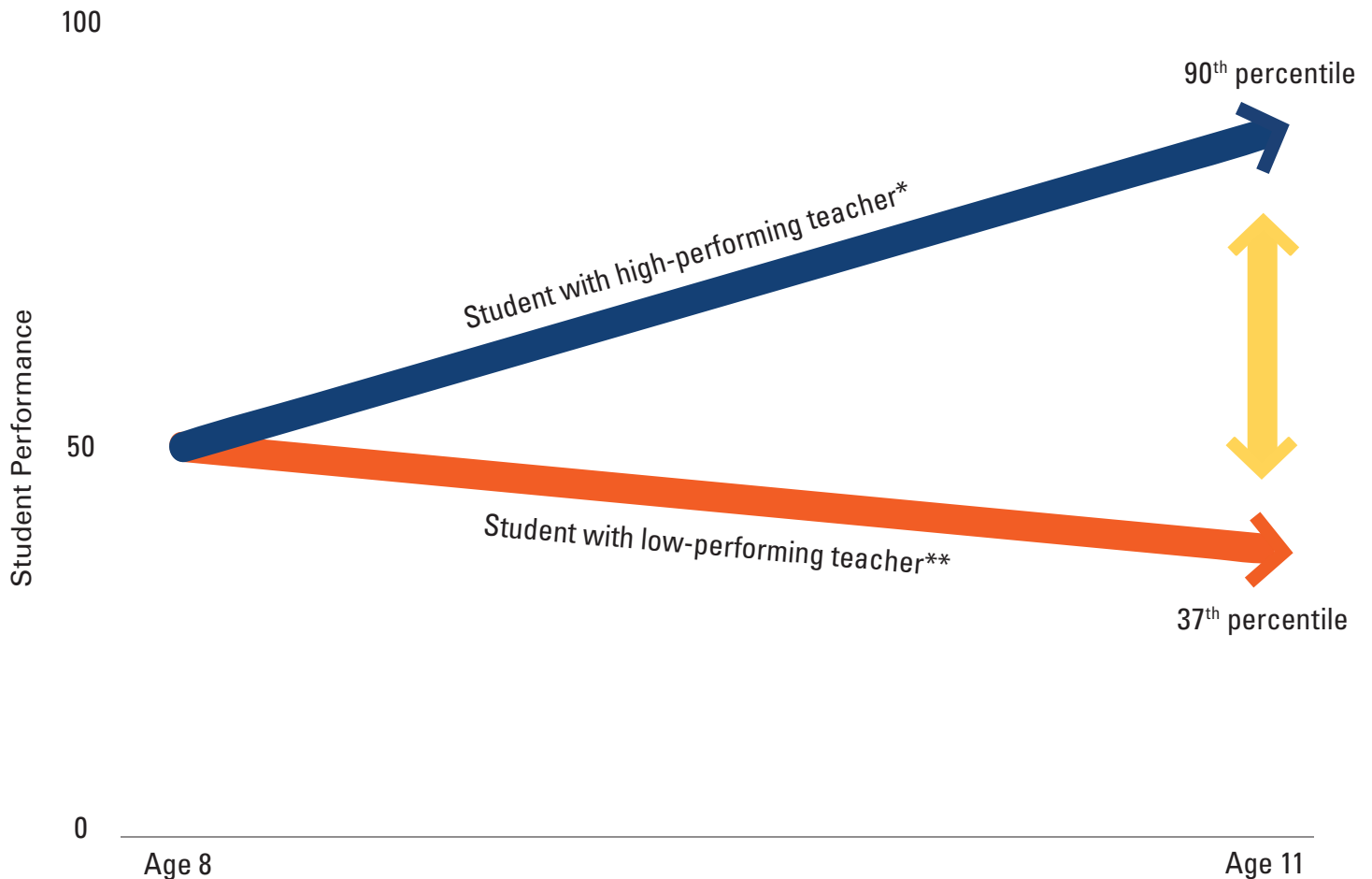


SOURCE: United States Census – American Community Survey – 1 Year Estimates 2019

Teacher Effectiveness

Without a doubt, student learning is dependent on many factors. But, the research is clear—the number one in-school predictor of student success is the teaching quality in a child’s classroom.^v 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

CURRENT PERFORMANCE



2030 PROJECTION



WHAT IT IS

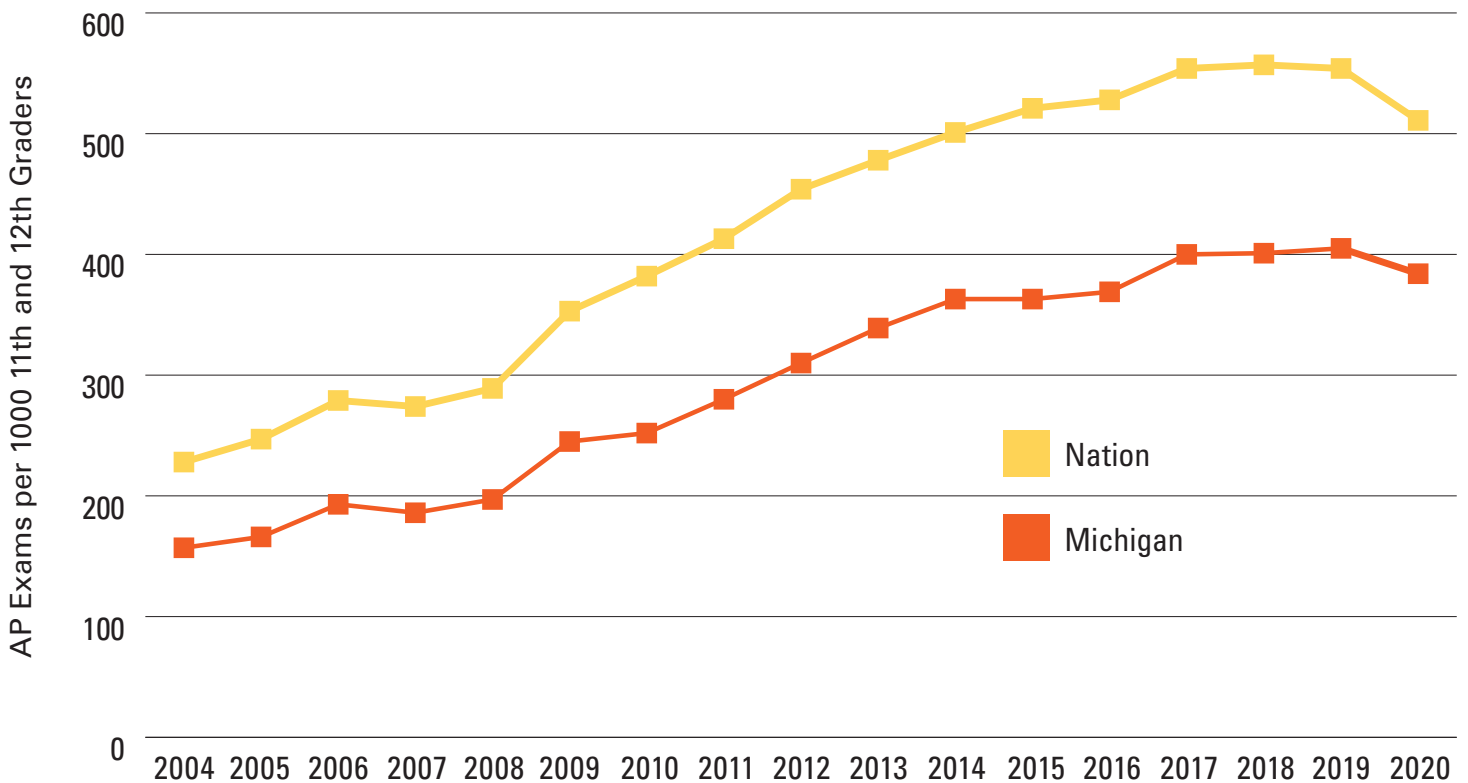
Access to rigorous coursework is measured by the College Board Advanced Placement (AP) Program Participation and Performance data. The data represent the total number of AP exams administered per 1,000 11th and 12th grade students.

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 having access to rigorous coursework and high quality instruction in high school is one of the best predictors of postsecondary success.^{vi} Michigan is currently ranked 27th for the total number of AP exams administered per 1,000 11th and 12th graders. Similar to the nation, Michigan saw a drop in AP Exam participation in the 2019-20 school year.

Michigan Still Lags Nation in AP Exam Participation

AP Exam Participation (2004-2020)



SOURCE: College Board AP Program Participation and Performance Data 2004-20

School Funding Equity

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

43rd

2030 PROJECTION

Not Yet Available

WHAT IT IS

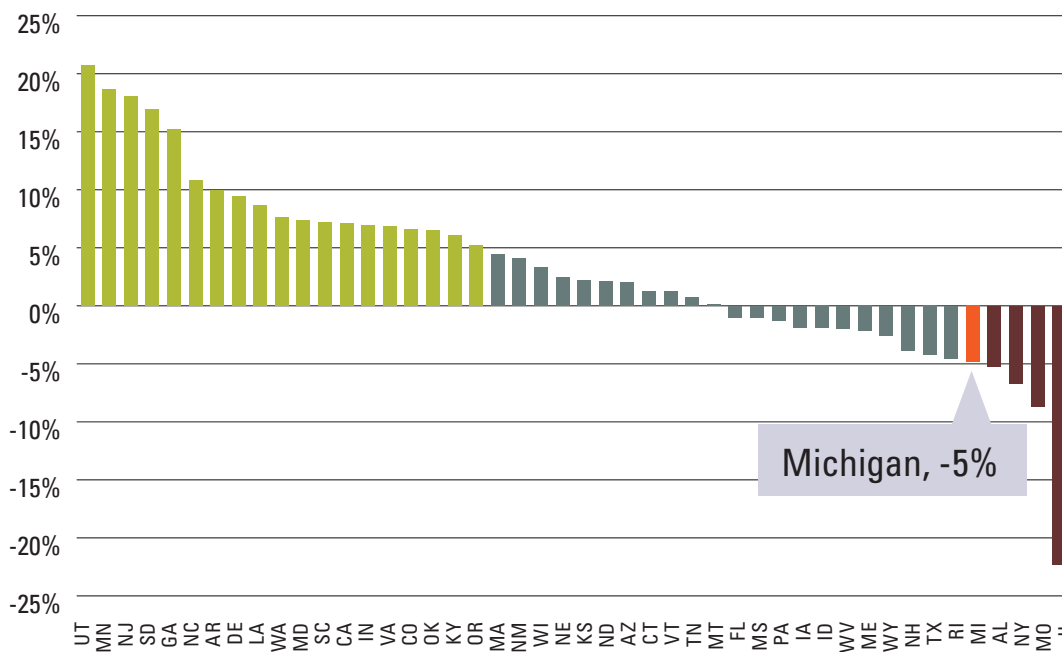
This measure represents how the highest and lowest poverty districts are funded based on state and local revenues and whether it is equitably distributed or not.

WHY IT MATTERS

Michigan ranks in the bottom five states nationally for funding gaps that negatively impact students from low-income families. On average, Michigan spends about 5 percent less in its highest poverty districts than its lowest poverty districts. This lack of equity can lead to further imbalances in our educational system as a whole.

Michigan is One of Only Sixteen States Providing Less Funding to Highest Poverty Districts than to Lowest Poverty Districts

Funding Gaps Between the Highest and Lowest Poverty Districts, By State (2018)



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 green, 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 maroon, 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. Though included in the original publication, data from Ohio are now excluded from this chart because of subsequently discovered anomalies in the way Ohio reported its fiscal data to the federal government.

Teacher Salary Equity

CURRENT
PERFORMANCE

\$10,056

2030
PROJECTION

**Not Yet
Available**

**Avg. Salary Gap for highest and
lowest poverty districts**

WHAT IT IS

This measure represents the gap in average teacher salaries between Michigan's highest income and lowest income districts.

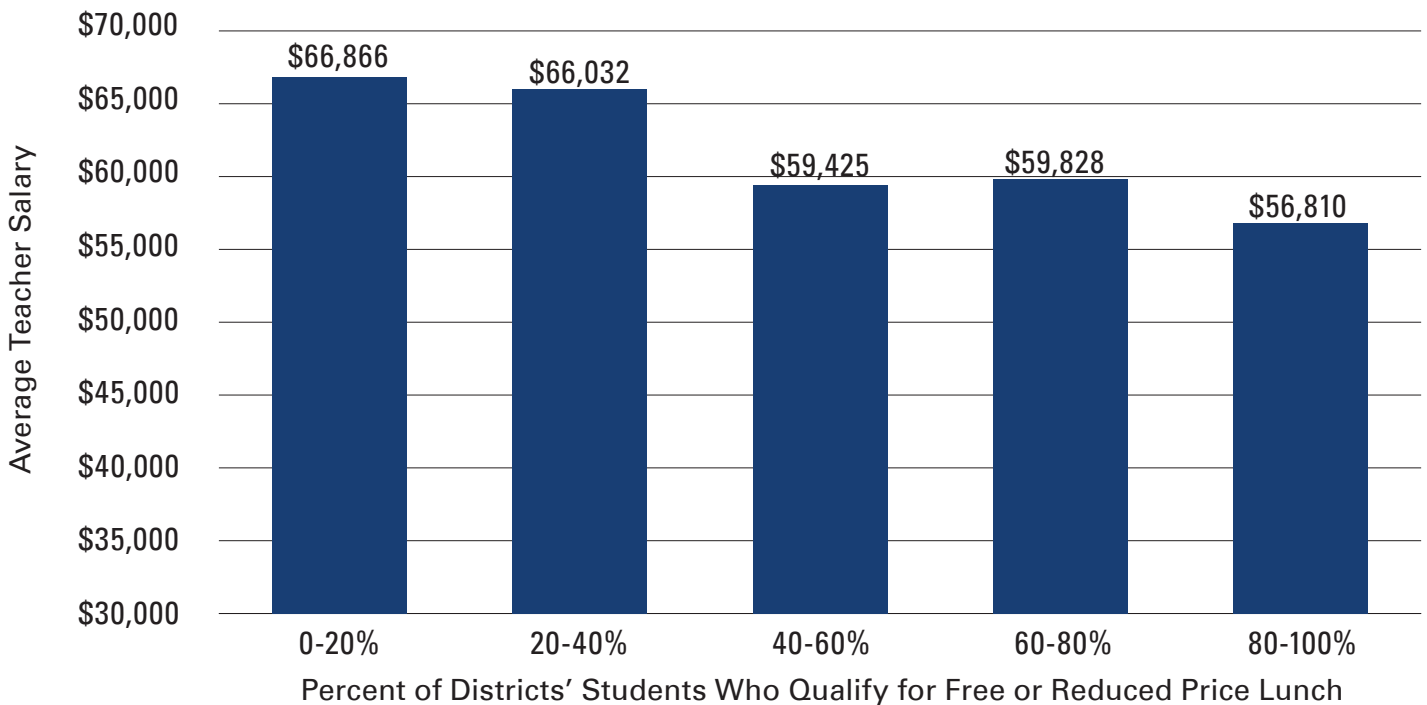
WHY IT MATTERS

Teachers in Michigan's wealthiest districts are paid about \$10,000 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.

\$10,000 Gap in Average Teacher Salaries Between Michigan's Highest Income and Lowest Income Districts

Average Michigan Teacher Salary based on Percent of Free and Reduced Price Lunch (2018-19)



SOURCE: MDE Bulletin 1011, 2018-19; MDE Free and Reduced Priced Lunch, Fall 2018-19 (District)

Teacher Attendance

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

26%

2030 PROJECTION

Not Yet Available

Teachers Absent More than 10 Days

WHAT IT IS

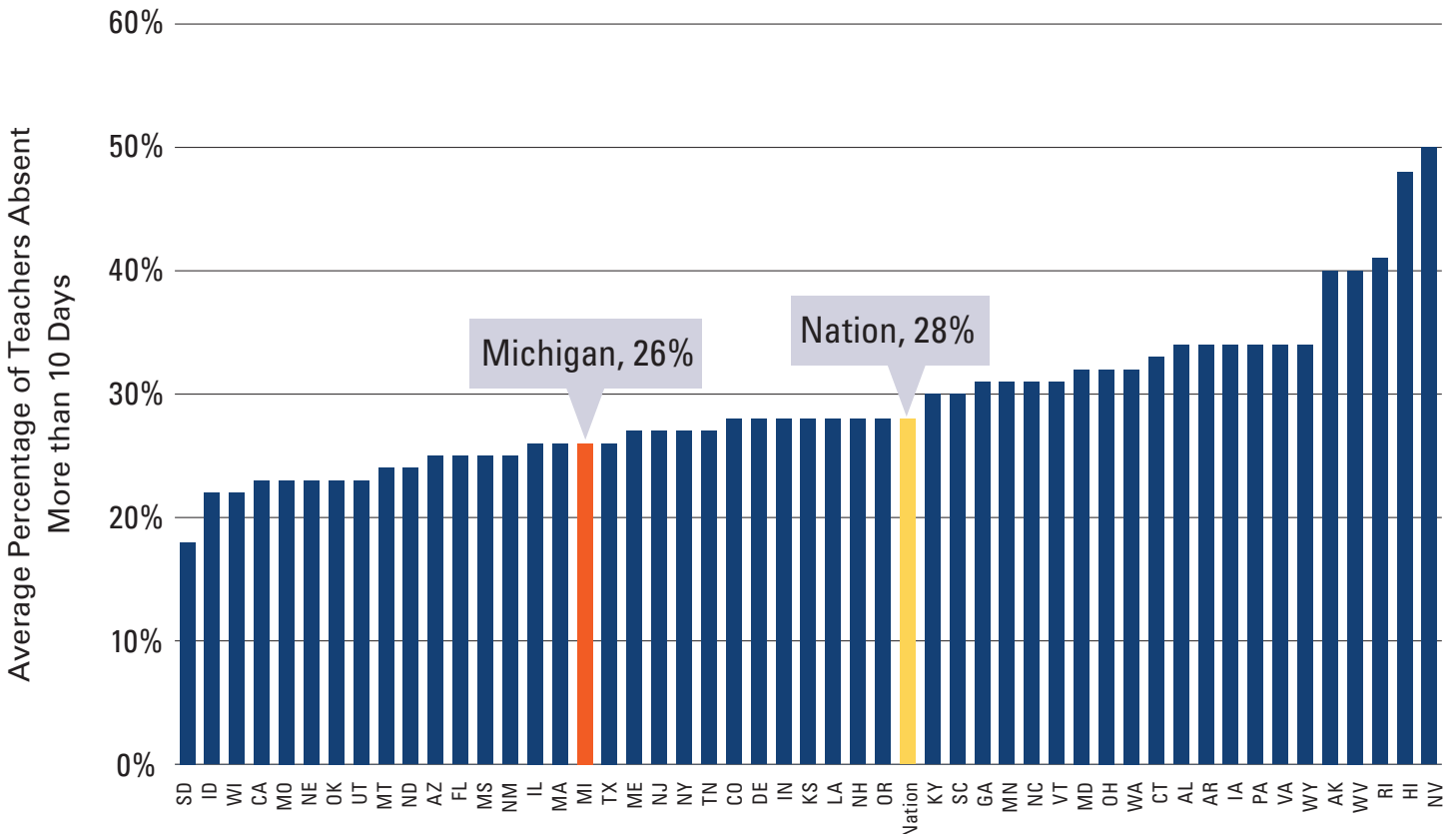
This measure represents the percent of teachers absent from work for more than 10 days over the course of one school year at the state level.

WHY IT MATTERS

According to a recent report from *Education Week*, about 26 percent of teachers in Michigan were absent from their job more than 10 days, on average.^{vii} 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 26% of Teachers in Michigan Were Absent from Their Job More than 10 Days

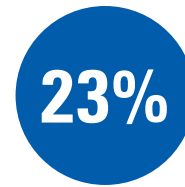
Average Percentage of Teachers Absent More than 10 days (2015-16)



SOURCE: Education Week, "How Many Teachers Are Chronically Absent From Class in Your State?," 2018, Civil Rights Data Collection 2015-16

Student Attendance

CURRENT PERFORMANCE



2030 PROJECTION



8th Graders Absent Three or More Days in Surveyed Month

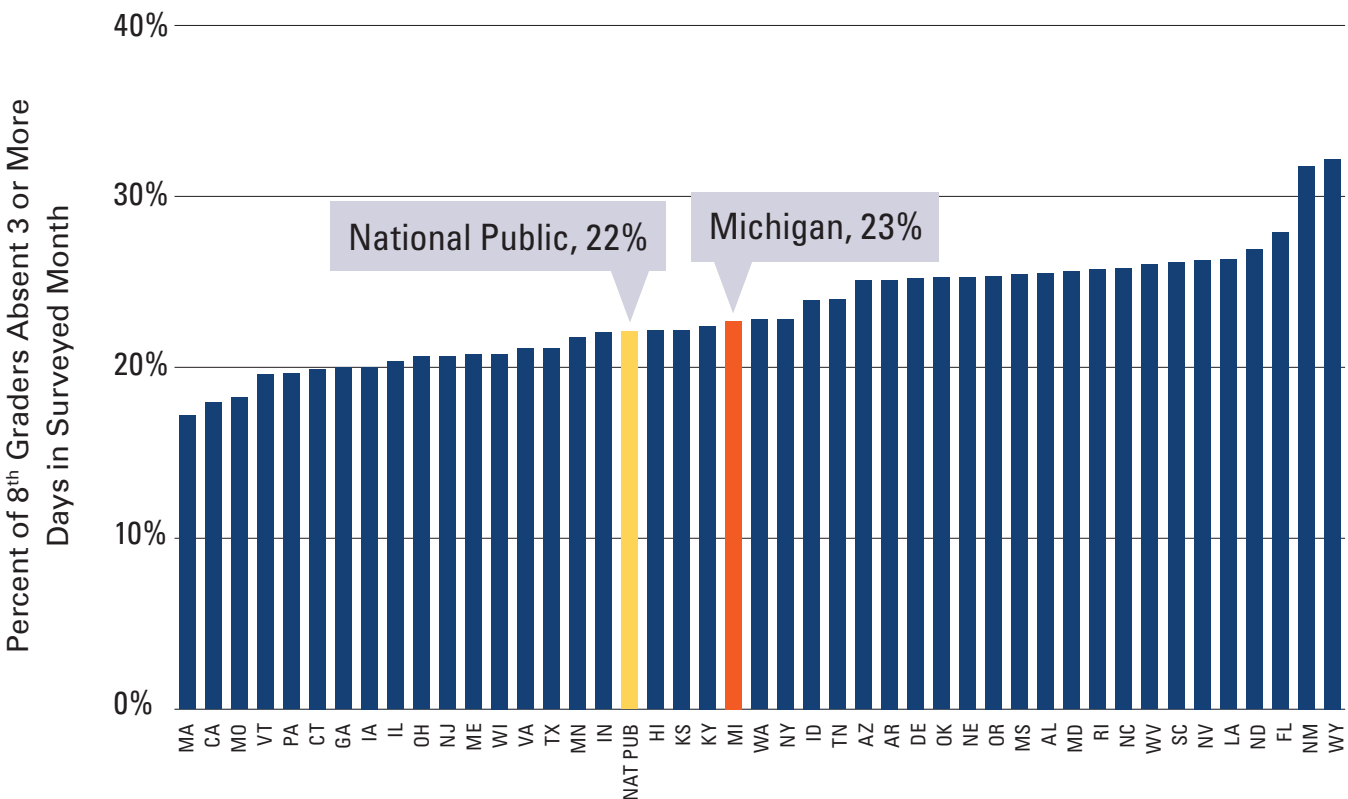
WHAT IT IS

This measure represents the percentage of eighth-graders absent three or more days in the last month before the administration of the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP).

WHY IT MATTERS

Not only are Michigan’s teachers missing too much school, but Michigan’s students—especially 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 2019 national assessment, 23 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 41 percent of students absent three or more days in the last month.

Nearly One Quarter of Michigan Eighth Graders were Absent 3 or More Days in Last Month in 2019
Percent of Eighth Graders Absent Three or More Days in Last Month, NAEP Grade 8 – Math – All Students (2019)



SOURCE: NAEP Data Explorer, NCES (Reported for 8th Grade Math) 2019

NOTE: AK, CO, MT, NH, SD and UT are not included in the analysis because data was not available.

Out-of-School Suspensions

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

43rd

2030 PROJECTION

Not Yet Available

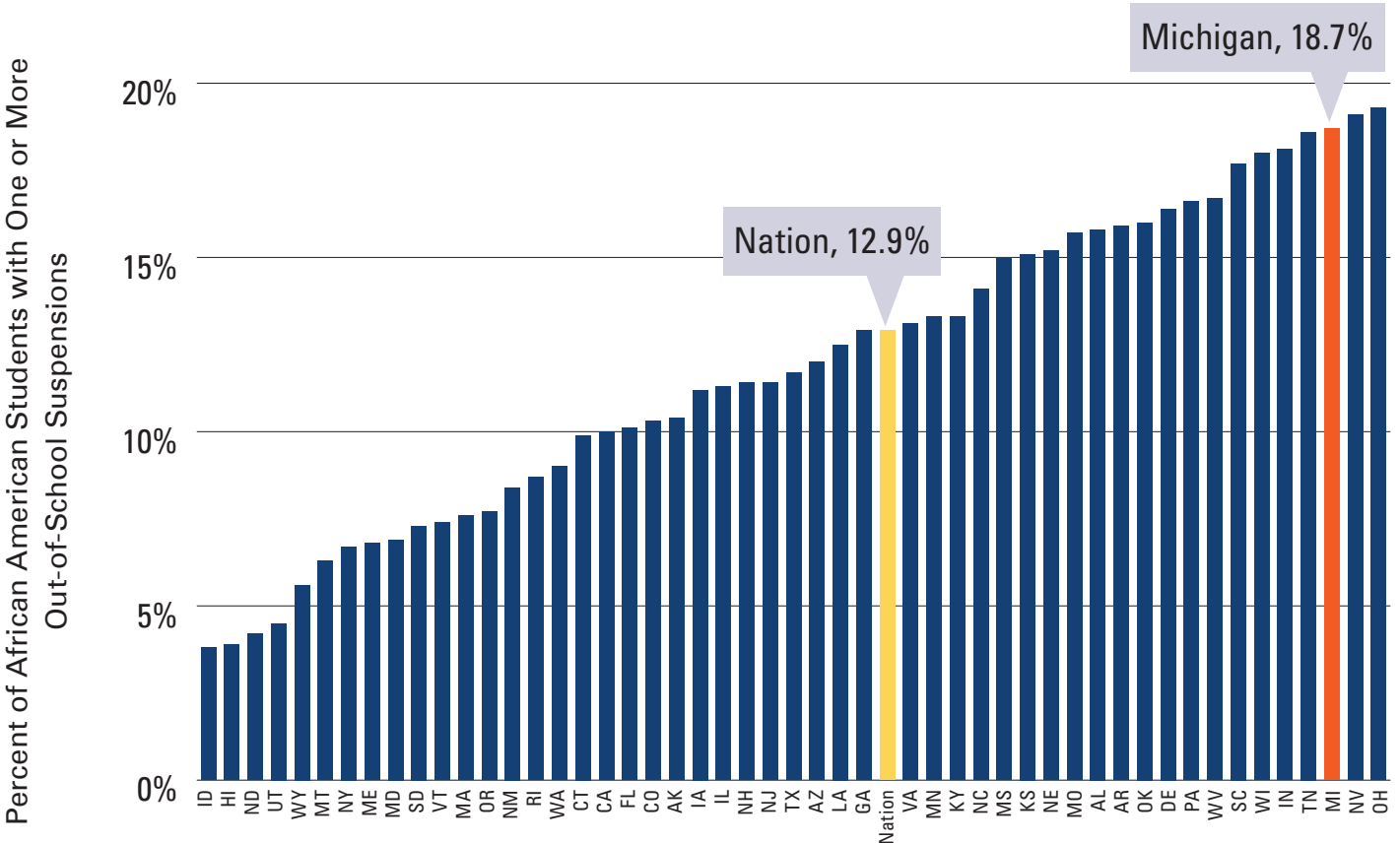
WHAT IT IS

This data measures the percentage of students in each state who have one or more suspensions within a school year.

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. For all students, Michigan ranks 43rd when comparing out-of-school suspension rates. For African American students, Michigan ranks 48th, meaning Michigan has the third highest out-of-school suspension rate in the country. 18.7 percent of African American students in Michigan schools were suspended at least once in the 2015-16 school year.

Michigan Has 3rd Highest Out-of-School Suspension Rate Nationally for African American Students
African American Out-of-School Suspension Rates (2015-16)



SOURCE: Civil Rights Data Collection 2015-16

College Affordability

CURRENT
PERFORMANCE

29th

2030
PROJECTION

Not Yet
Available

WHAT IT IS

This indicator measures the affordability of four-year public institutions by state for an average Pell Grant recipient who lives on campus, receives the average amount of grant aid, takes out the average amount of federal loans and works over the summer. Data represent the additional dollars needed to cover the cost of attendance.

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. On average, a low-income Michigan student paying in-state tuition at a four-year public institution, who lives on campus and works over the summer, faces a \$1,659 affordability gap. This means that despite financial aid and summer wages a low-income student still falls \$1,659 short, on average, of being able to afford Michigan's four-year public institutions. Michigan is currently ranked 29th for college affordability. Additionally, a recent report by The Education Trust found that low-income students would need to work 20 hours per week at minimum wage to afford Michigan's public four-year institutions. Low-income students at Michigan's community and technical colleges would need to work 11 hours per week at minimum wage. Both figures exceed the recommended 10 hours per week of work—and if students worked only 10 hours at minimum wage they would face a \$4,595 and \$425 affordability gap at public four-year institutions and public community and technical colleges, respectively.^{viii}

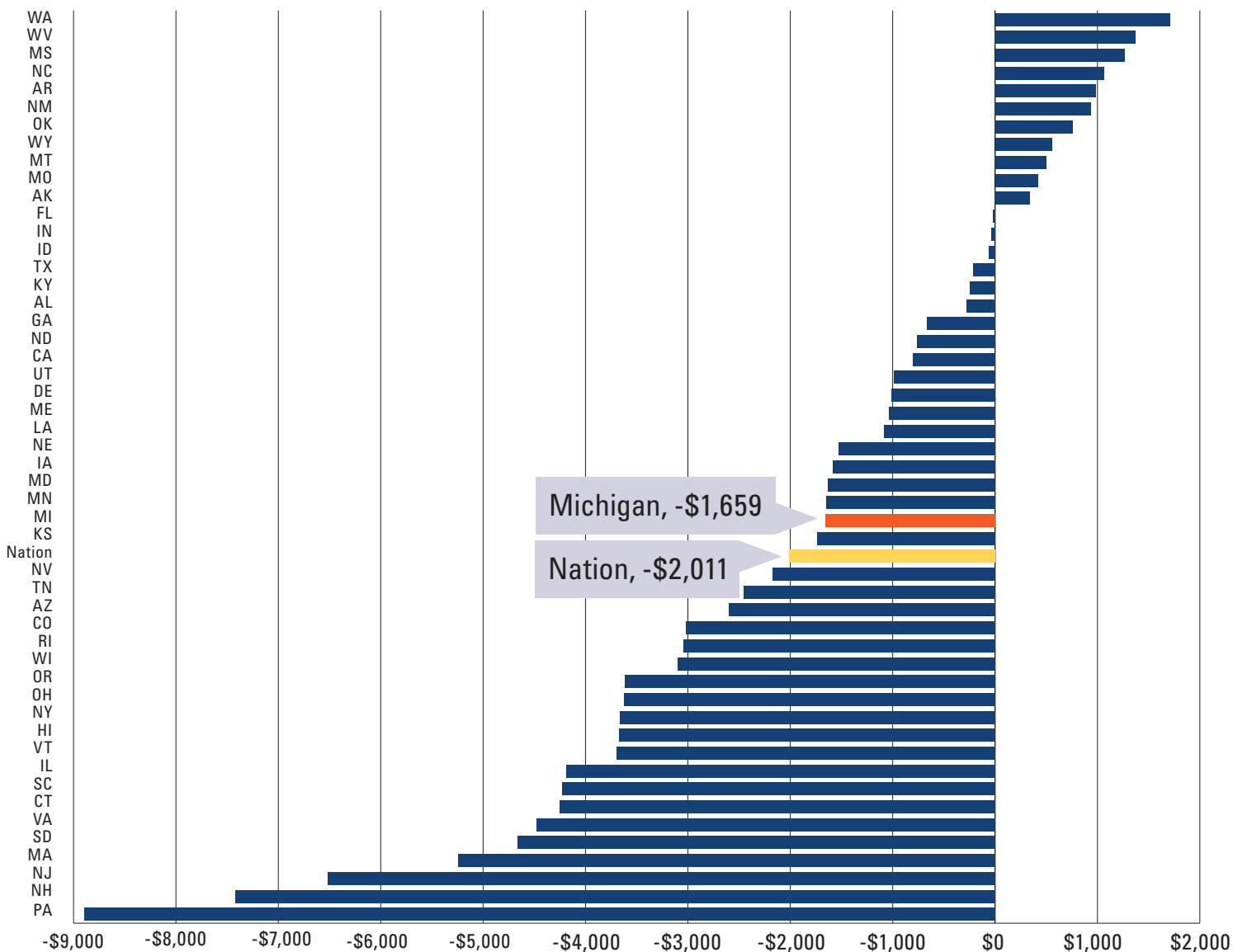


Photo by Allison Shelley for American Education: Images of Teachers and Students in Action.

College Affordability (cont.)

Low-Income Students Fall Short \$1,659, On Average, of Affording the Cost of Attending Michigan Four-Year Public Institutions

Four-Year Public Institution Affordability Gaps for In-State Students Living on Campus with Summer Work (2018)



SOURCE: National College Access Network, Shutting Low-Income Students Out of Public Four-Year Higher Education 2018

Endnotes

To ensure the highest quality data available and up-to-date resources are used, the data sources used to track some Michigan Achieves! Indicators have been updated over time.

ⁱ ACT, Inc., “Ready for College and Ready for Work: Same or Different,” (Iowa City, IA: ACT, Inc., 2015). <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/research/pdfs/ready-for-collegeandreadyforworksameordifferent.html>

ⁱⁱ W. Steven Barnett, Megan E. Carolan, Jen Fitzgerald and James Squires, “The State of Preschool 2012,” (New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, April 2013). <http://nieer.org/state-preschool-yearbooks/the-state-of-preschool-2012>; Allison H. Friedman-Krauss, W. Steven Barnett, Karin A. Garver, Katherine S. Hodges, G.G. Weisenfeld and Beth Ann Gardiner, “The State of Preschool 2019,” (New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, April 2020). <http://nieer.org/state-preschool-yearbooks/2019-2>

ⁱⁱⁱ National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, College-Going Rates of High School Graduates, 2015-2016

^{iv} Michigan Department of Education, College Enrollment by High School 2018

Note: According to [mischooldata.org](http://michigan.gov/mischooldata.org), this metric is subject to change in the “within 12 months” timeframe as more data become available and is incorporated. The data published in this report reflect what was available on 12/23/2020.

^v Steven G. Rivkin, Eric A. Hanushek and John F. Kain, “Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement,” *Econometrica*, vol. 73 no. 2, March 2005, pp. 417-58. <https://econ.ucsb.edu/~jon/Econ230C/HanushekRivkin.pdf>

^{vi} Clifford Adelman, “The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion from High School Through College,” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, February 2006). <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/toolboxrevisit/toolbox.pdf>

^{vii} Debra Viadero, “How Many Teachers Are Chronically Absent From Class in Your State?” *Education Week*, June 2018. http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/inside-school-research/2018/06/chronic_absenteeism_teachers.html

^{viii} Andrew Howard Nichols, Marshall Anthony Jr. and Oliver Schak, “How Affordable Are Public Colleges in Your State?” (Washington, D.C.: The Education Trust, December 2019). <https://edtrust.org/resource/affordability-gap/>



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 updated reporting on many of the same benchmarks. For more on those outcomes, please see pages 25-43.

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.com.

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