

Meeting the Moment

2025 State of Michigan Education Report





Bridging Education Policy & Community

EdTrust-Midwest works for the high academic achievement of all Michigan students in pre-kindergarten through college. Our mission is to make Michigan a Top Ten education state for all groups of students, no matter their background, socio-economic status, or race.

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I. Executive Summary

By Jen DeNeal, Director of Policy and Research, and Charlotte Pierce, Senior Policy Analyst

Five years after the worst pandemic in a century, America's students continue to face significant learning losses resulting from the disruptions. Here in Michigan, students also continue to feel the impact of the pandemic. And today, their learning outcomes lag behind leading states in key subject areas.

Michigan's lackluster performance has been the result of underinvestment in public schools for more than two decades. The pandemic was devastating for children across the country, but due to Michigan's lack of investment over the years, our schools were not well positioned to recover academically and, unsurprisingly, pandemic recovery is not going well. Students and their families – particularly students from low-income backgrounds – are bearing the brunt of the cost of Michigan's chronic disinvestment.

Despite improvements in Michigan's school funding in recent years¹, Michigan still ranks in the bottom ten states in funding weights for students from low-income backgrounds, but in the top ten states when it comes to the foundation allowance – or amount that districts receive for every student, according to an updated analysis by EdTrust-Midwest.

To make sure students from every background have the opportunity to achieve at high levels, Michigan leaders should invest intentionally – not simply increase overall funding. Instead, policymakers should specifically target resources to students in our state with the greatest needs.

These investments take on greater urgency amid changes happening at the federal level. Michigan's public schools face great uncertainty as President Donald Trump's administration begins to make sweeping changes to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education, which works to close gaps in school funding for states and acts as a watchdog to ensure students of every background have access to public education. The planned changes could have a devastating impact

on hundreds of thousands of Michigan's students, especially students from low-income backgrounds, students with disabilities, first-time college-goers who are applying for financial aid, and multilingual learners – all of whom benefit from crucial federal funding and support.

In EdTrust-Midwest's latest State of Michigan Education report, *Meeting the Moment*, we explore the data, research and the reasons leading up to the academic crisis we see today for students across our state. We also explore research-based solutions necessary to protect our students and help our students recover and accelerate. Now is the time for collective leadership across sectors to meet the moment, especially for vulnerable students who have been underserved for decades.

Here's what we found:

- In 2024, Michigan ranked 44th in the country for 4th grade reading and 31st for 8th grade math, and the state's learning recovery trajectory so far does not paint an optimistic picture.²
- According to the Education Recovery Scorecard, Michigan students in grades three through eight are, on average, still about 40% of a grade level behind in mathematics and three quarters of a grade level behind in reading than where they were performing in 2019 before the pandemic.³ And our analyses demonstrate that this trend largely holds true across all geographic regions in Michigan.
- School districts in rural areas, suburban areas, and towns continue to show large gaps in student proficiency between 2019 and 2024.⁴
- Michigan's sluggish reading recovery places it in the bottom five states nationally for pandemic learning loss since 2019.⁵

- In 2024, there were stark differences in the performance of student subgroups in both math and reading scores on Michigan’s annual state assessment, the M-STEP. Students from low-income backgrounds, Black and Latino students, multilingual learners and students with disabilities all fell at least 10 percentage points below the statewide average on both the 3rd grade reading and 7th grade math tests.
- Fewer than one in five Black students were proficient in 3rd grade reading. In 7th grade math, the proficiency rate for Black students drops to fewer than one in 10. Similarly, fewer than one in five students with a disability were proficient in 3rd grade reading; fewer than one in 10 were proficient in 7th grade math.

Our research also found that even before the pandemic and for many years, Michigan has been woefully underfunding our public schools. Additionally, our state has long invested significantly less funding for students with additional needs than leading education states and what research recommends.⁶ For instance, from 1995–2015 – or for two decades – Michigan was the worst state in the nation for education revenue growth.⁷ That means for nearly two generations of students, Michigan was at the bottom nationally for education revenue growth during their entire K–12 experience.

Consider the outlook for Michigan’s public schools if we had invested more: if in 2016 after the 2008 economic recession, Michigan had returned to its 2006 school funding levels, Michigan would have spent 20% more – or \$22 billion dollars more – in K–12 education between 2016 and 2021.⁸ Those are dollars that could have been used to systemically improve our public education system on many fronts.

As federal leaders increasingly take actions that threaten funding for vulnerable students, Michigan’s underfunding of public schools becomes even more dire.⁹

Consider that no one has borne the brunt of this unfairness more than children from low-income backgrounds, as well as multilingual learners and students with disabilities. For instance, **according to a new analysis by EdTrust-Midwest, Michigan falls far below what most states provide for students from low-income backgrounds, ranking in the bottom ten – 23rd out of 30 – states with similar funding systems in 2024–2025.** For many years, Michigan’s school funding formula mandated an additional 11.5% in what is called “at-risk” funding on top of the foundation allowance – or base student spending – for students from low-income backgrounds. Yet that amount was often underfunded, with districts receiving on average only 9% per student more in additional “at risk” funding.¹⁰

But there is hope. Today, Michigan leaders have the opportunity to meet the moment and set in motion a plan to put Michigan back on track to becoming a Top 10 Education State, while safeguarding against federal changes that could harm public school students. Additionally, we can learn from the example of leading states that have blazed trails and defied expectations ahead of us. Michigan leaders should begin by doing three things, which will be tackled deeply in the pages to follow:

- 1. Invest Now, and Wisely**
- 2. Implement Stronger Systems of Fiscal Transparency and Accountability**
- 3. Innovate for the Future**

1. Invest Now, and Wisely

Today, there are significant new opportunities to change Michigan’s trajectory and put it on course to catch up with leading states. The Opportunity Index – a transformative new funding structure that legislators placed into state law in 2023 – has the potential to start addressing both the deep inequities of Michigan’s public school funding

system and ensure investment for students who need it most, regardless of geographic location.¹¹

That could make a transformational difference for Michigan's students because research shows that money matters in education, especially for students from low-income backgrounds.¹²

In 2013, California implemented the Local Control Funding Formula and dramatically overhauled its school funding formula and committed \$18 billion dollars over a period of eight years to be allocated based on students' needs.¹³ In a 2023 evaluation of the Local Control Funding Formula, researchers found that an investment of just an additional \$1,000 per pupil for three consecutive years improved students' math and reading achievement, reduced the likelihood of repeating a grade, decreased suspensions and expulsions, and increased the likelihood of high school graduation and college and career readiness.¹⁴

California's example demonstrates the power of substantial, targeted, and sustained investments to improve student achievement – a lesson Michigan policymakers would be wise to heed.

Unfortunately, Michigan's Opportunity Index is currently underfunded by more than \$2 billion dollars.

To start to make a transformational difference, state lawmakers should fund the Opportunity Index to the levels in state law in the next five years. State legislators should also ensure that the level of federal funding for vulnerable student groups is preserved amid any changes to the U.S. Department of Education.

2. Implement Stronger Systems of Fiscal Transparency and Accountability

While Michigan leaders should undoubtedly invest more into the state's public education system, that investment should come with increased transparency. Greater investment – and a greater return on that investment – is more

important than ever in the face of globalization, deindustrialization in Michigan, and a slow pandemic recovery.

Putting into place stronger systems of fiscal transparency and accountability will become even more important if federal funding for vulnerable students is instead funneled to states in the form of block grants, which often lack transparency and accountability for how the money is spent.

3. Innovate for the Future

To truly get more from our public education system, we also must realign and redesign our expectations for what students *should* achieve by high school graduation, and we can look to leading states for positive examples of what's possible.

The last time Michigan evaluated and updated its curriculum standards in 2006, it resulted in the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) – a forward-looking set of college and career ready standards.¹⁵ Although the MMC was never fully implemented as designed, it still resulted in increased college-going,¹⁶ increased math-course taking, and improvements in science ACT scores.¹⁷ Michigan can now follow the example of leading education states in crafting a new Michigan Education Guarantee – one that ensures Michigan students graduate high school prepared for a successful future.

For instance, Michigan can follow the lead of Indiana in creating a transferable College Core and provide all students with access to at least one year of college-level classes in high school at low or no cost to families.¹⁸ Such a goal could be achieved, in part, through the expansion of dual credit opportunities and improved access to advanced coursework opportunities.

Please see page 13 for more about these best practice ideas.

To ensure that *all* students are prepared for post-secondary success, a new Michigan Education Guarantee should include strong career and trades pathways for students. To increase graduation rates and prepare Michiganders for jobs in in-demand fields, the state should expand work-based learning opportunities by offering financial incentives for employers and intermediaries, as well.

Our children are Michigan's future. They are the talent force of tomorrow. In Michigan, that future depends on what we Michiganders and our leaders do now.

Now is the time to meet the moment. Michigan students are as bright and full of potential as the

children of other states – other states which have invested urgently and wisely in that potential. Transformational school funding and stronger systems of fiscal transparency and accountability build a sturdy foundation on which Michigan can build a truly innovative and future-ready public education system. Michigan families deserve affordable, high-quality, rigorous options to prepare their children for their adult lives. It is time for Michigan's public education system to deliver on that promise. Now, more than ever, we must strengthen — not weaken — our public schools, which serve the vast majority of America's students.



II. The Promise of Public Education

“Education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer...”¹⁹

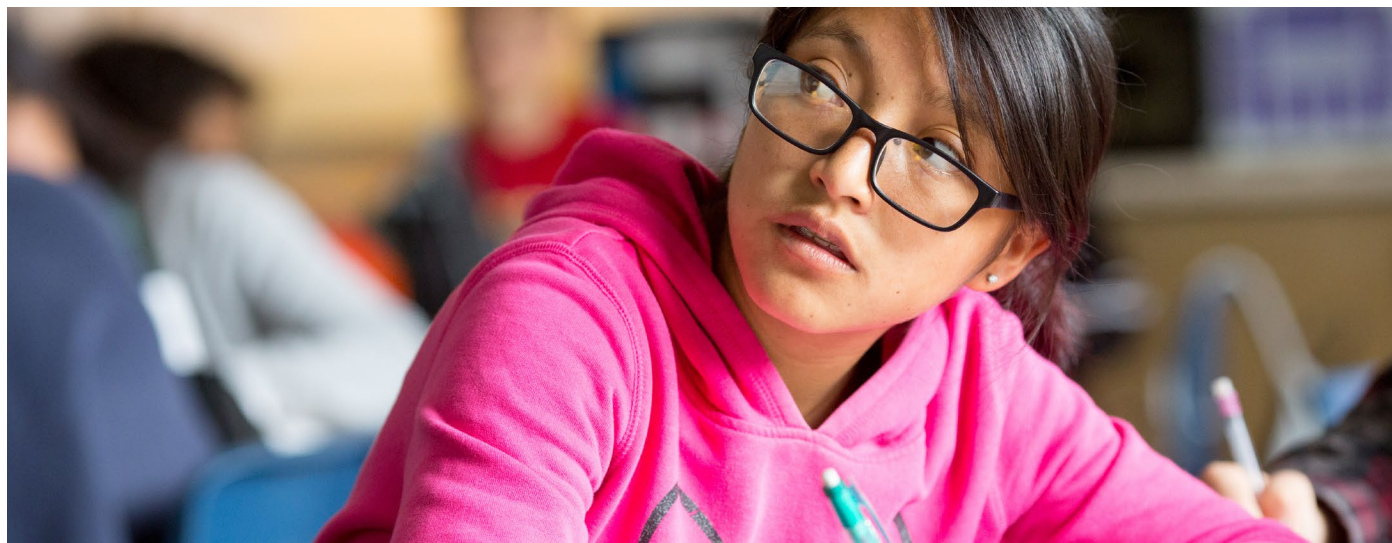
These words, written nearly 200 years ago by Horace Mann – commonly known as the father of American public education – demonstrate the necessity of public schooling as the very foundation of the American Dream. A free, publicly provided education available to all children in this country paves the road to not only economic success but also to participation and meaningful engagement in our democracy.

Decades of underinvestment in education have undermined Michigan’s public education system and left it unprepared for the extreme challenges of a global pandemic – and the results speak for themselves: despite recent increases, Michigan is still underinvesting in its students and that same underinvestment and lack of focus is failing to support a strong recovery for our students. Michigan’s lack of investment has fallen hardest on students from low-income backgrounds across all geographic regions of Michigan.

In this 2025 State of Michigan Education Report, EdTrust-Midwest highlights the historic inequities and challenges that have led Michigan’s public education system to this current moment: a moment in which too many of our children are being left behind. From Marquette to Monroe and everywhere

in between, Michigan children are still reeling from pandemic learning losses and decades of systematic underinvestment in our state’s public schools. They are also facing one of the biggest threats to public school in decades as the federal government begins dismantling the U.S. Department of Education. The good news is that here in Michigan, we can do better for all of our students, and particularly for those students who have been most underserved by the system.

Today, we have the ability to turn the tide by urgently investing now and wisely in our public schools, ensuring that schools and districts are held accountable for effective and transparent spending, and by making public education a good value proposition for families: transforming our expectations for students and the system itself to ensure that all children receive future-ready preparation. In *Meeting the Moment*, EdTrust-Midwest provides important background, data and analyses, and examples from leading education states to guide our way in putting Michigan back on track to becoming a Top 10 Education State. We also explore ways to protect and support our public schools so that they flourish amid the many changes happening at the federal level.

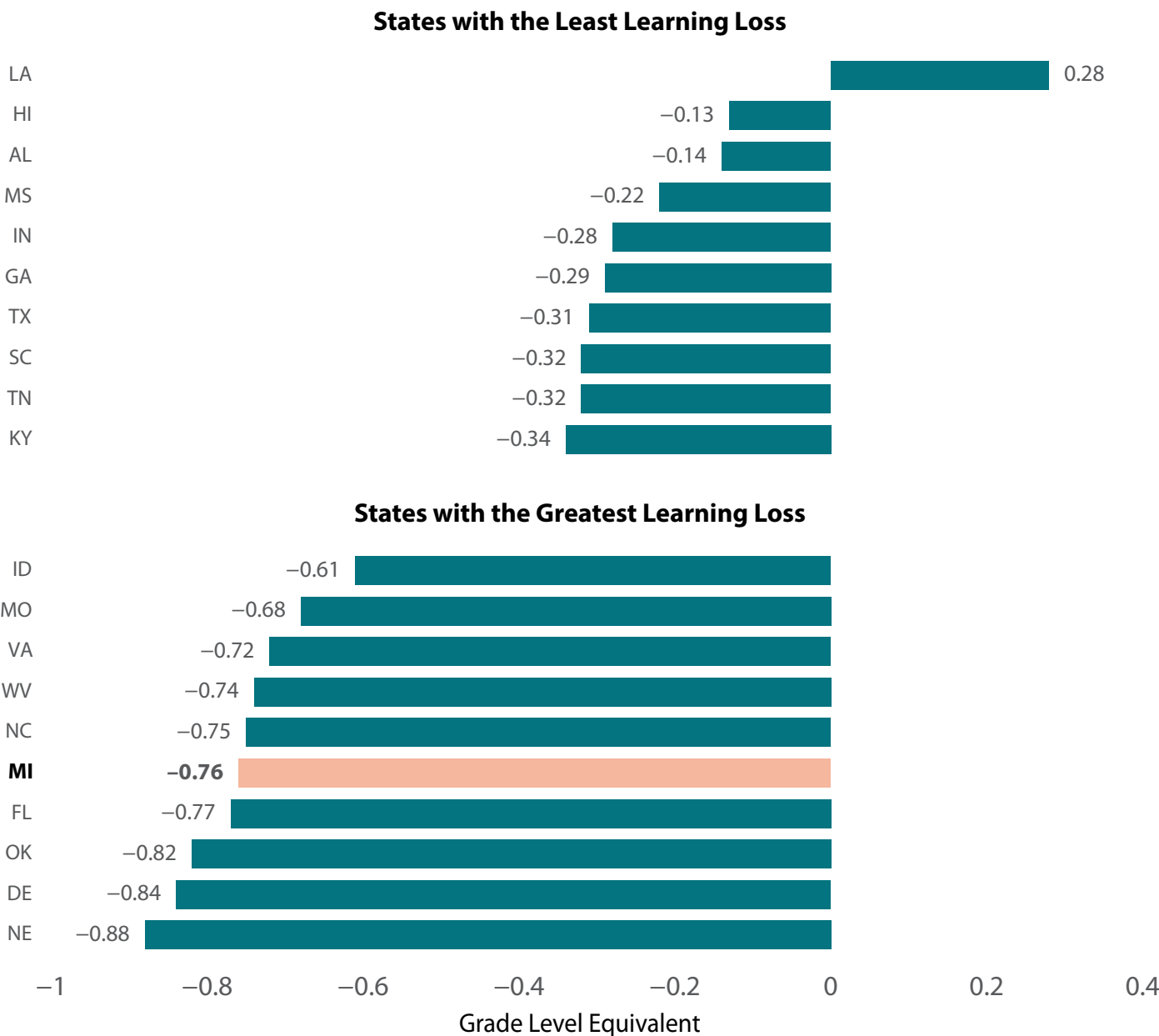


III. Michigan's Failure to Thrive

To understand Michigan's academic crisis, EdTrust-Midwest's researchers examined national and state assessment data from before the pandemic in 2020. Results of recent state and national assessments show that Michigan has a statewide pandemic recovery problem.

In fact, Michigan's sluggish reading recovery places it in the bottom five states nationally for learning loss since 2019.²⁰ On average, Michigan students in grades three through eight are still about 40% of a grade level behind in mathematics, and three quarters of a grade level behind in reading than where they were performing in 2019 before the pandemic. Nationally, Michigan ranked 44th in the country for 4th grade reading and 31st for 8th grade math in 2024.²¹

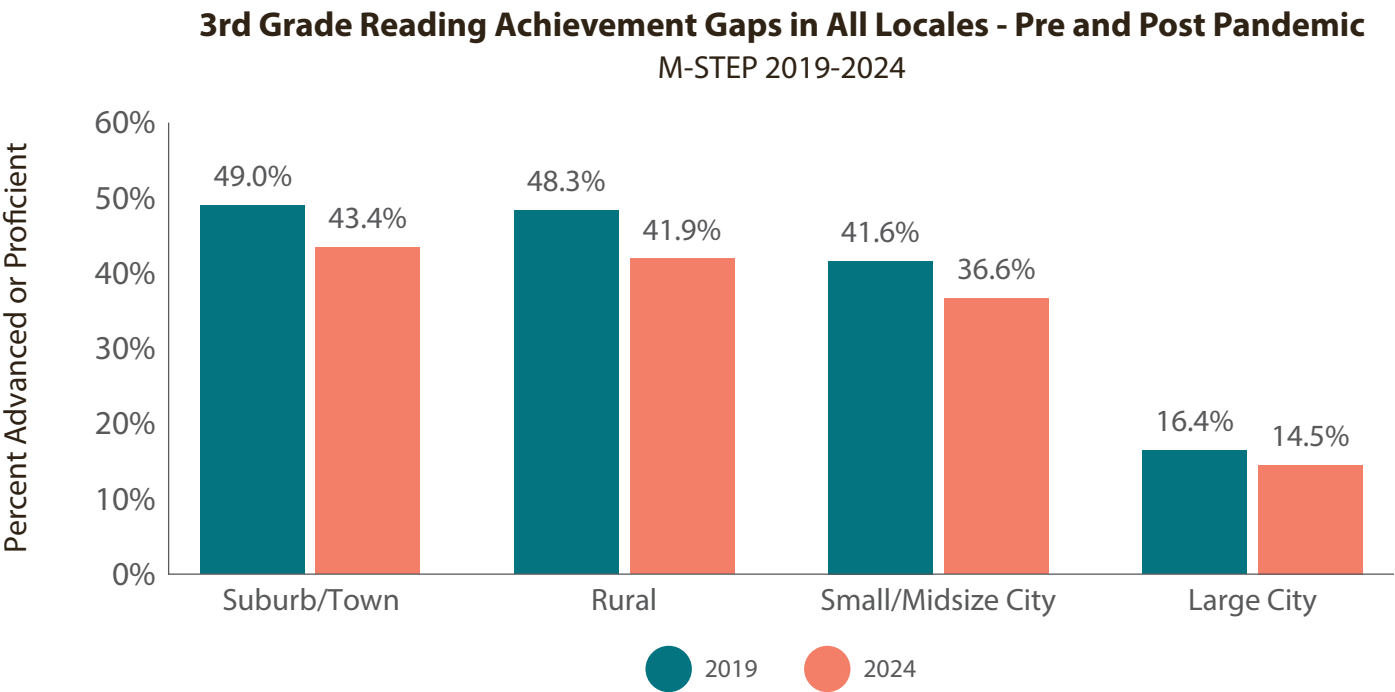
Top 10 and Bottom 10 States for Learning Loss
Grades 3-8 - Reading - All Students - 2019-2024



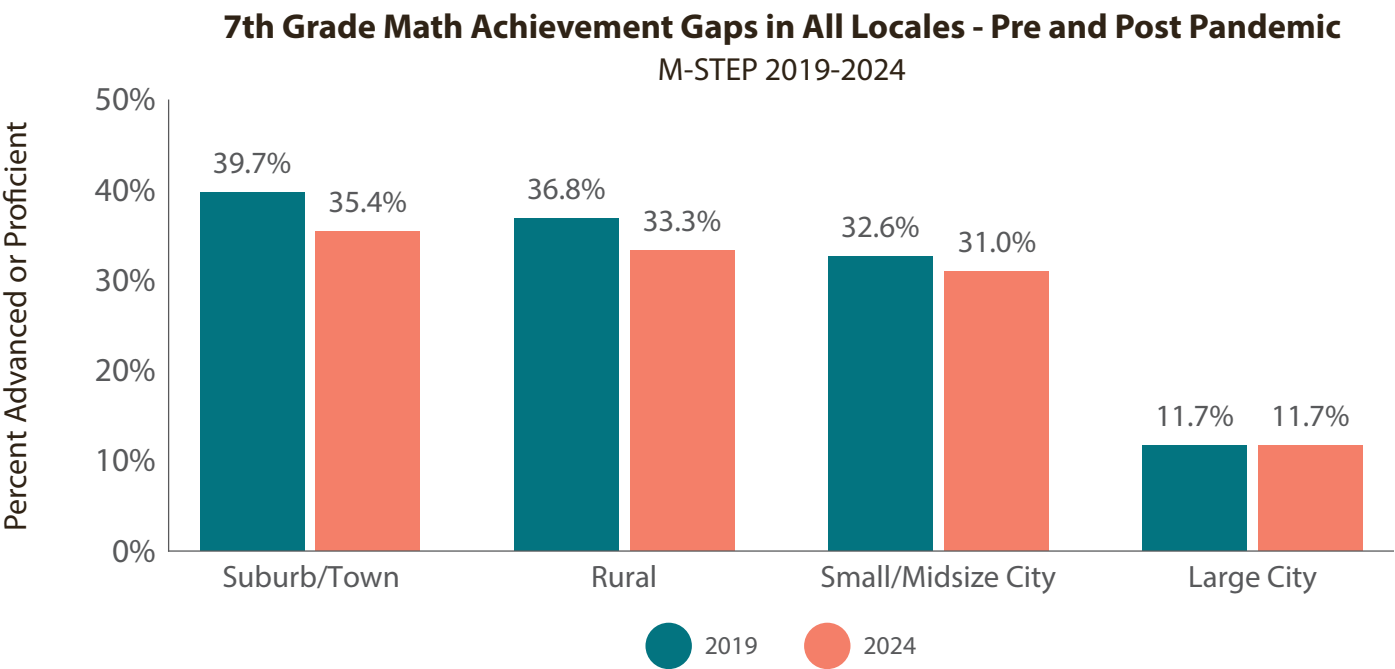
Source: Education Recovery Scorecard, January 2025

Michigan’s failure to recover from the pandemic is evident across all regions of the state and across many different demographics. Statewide, 60.4% of Michigan’s 3rd graders were reading **below** grade level on 2023-24 assessments and 67.9% of Michigan’s 7th graders were performing **below** grade level in math.

Across all geographic regions in Michigan, students are largely performing below where they were in 2019 in both reading and math, with school districts in rural areas, suburban areas, and towns still showing large gaps in student proficiency between 2019 and 2024.²²



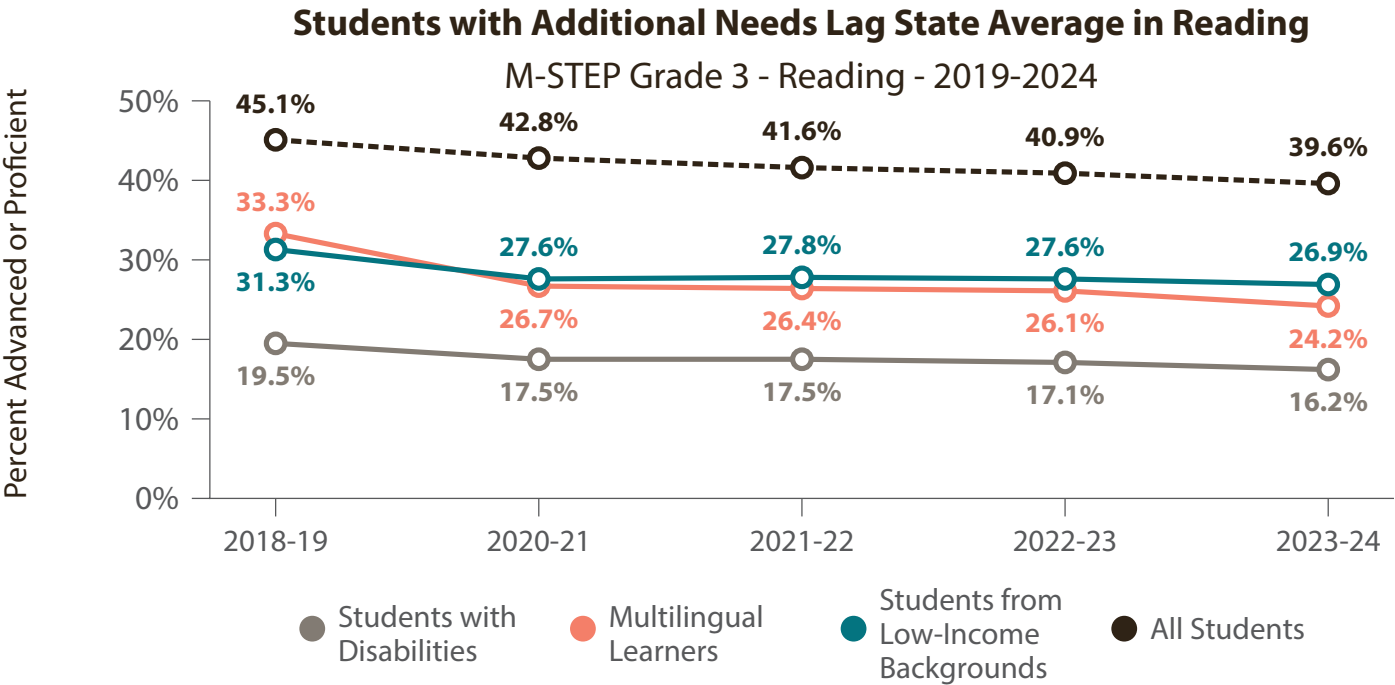
Source: MDE, M-STEP Results 2019-2024



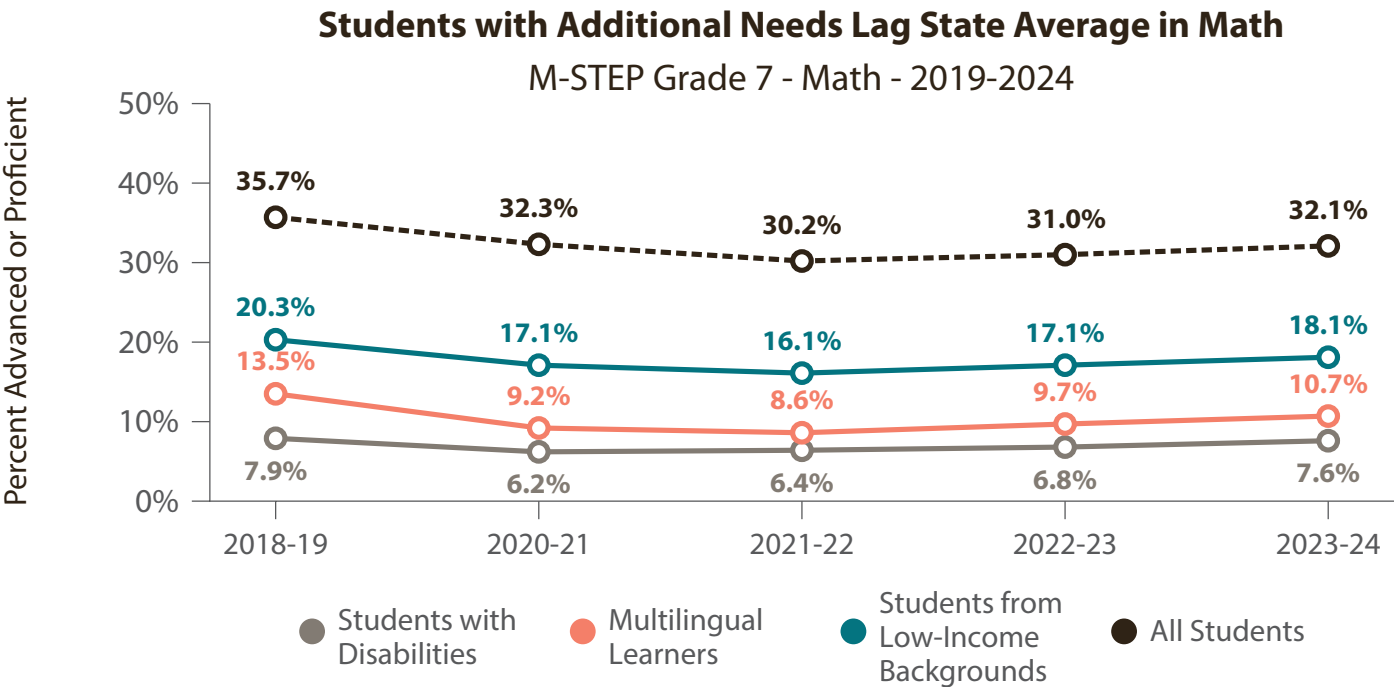
Source: MDE, M-STEP Results 2019-2024

The picture is even worse for students who have long lacked access to strong educational resources in Michigan: students from low-income backgrounds across all regions of the state, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners, in particular, are still struggling to perform above their pre-pandemic academic levels in math and reading.

- In fact, third grade reading achievement for multilingual learners has dropped nearly 10 percentage points since 2019, further widening the gap between multilingual learners and the statewide average performance.
- In seventh grade math, there are persistent achievement gaps for students from low-income backgrounds, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities compared to the statewide average performance.

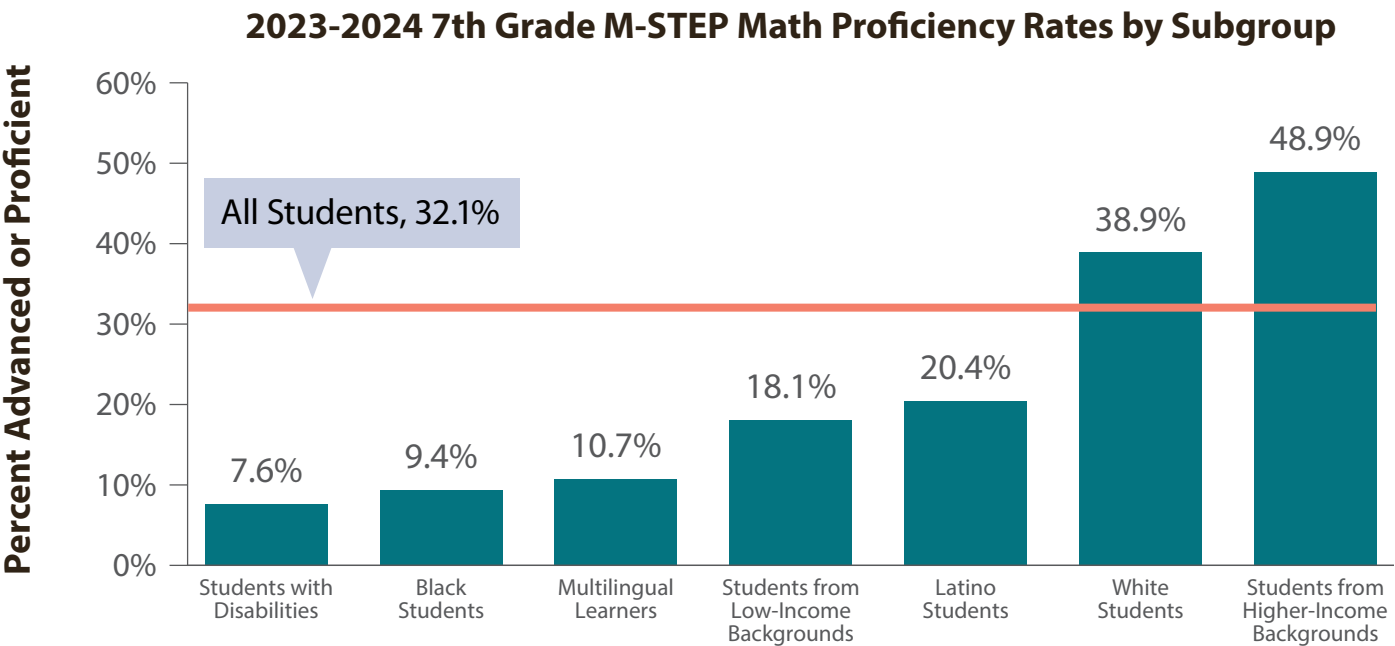
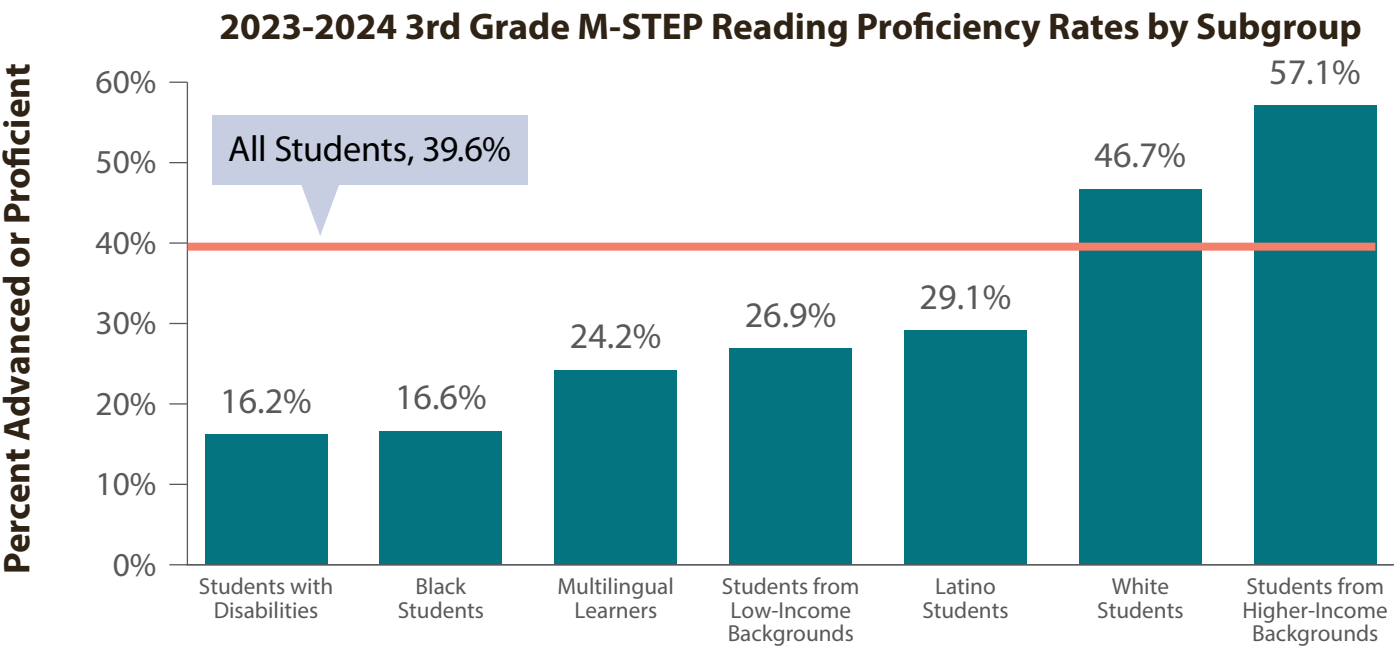


Source: MDE, M-STEP Results 2019-2024



Source: MDE, M-STEP Results 2019-2024

In 2024, stark differences in the performance of student subgroups in both math and reading on Michigan's annual state assessment illuminate concerning opportunity gaps for Michigan children. Consider that academic outcomes for Black students, Latino students, students from low-income backgrounds, multilingual learners and students with disabilities all fell at least 10 percentage points below the statewide average in 2024 for both 3rd grade reading and 7th grade math. In fact, fewer than one in five Black students were proficient in 3rd grade reading. In 7th grade math, the proficiency rate for Black students drops to fewer than one in 10. Similarly, fewer than one in five students with a disability were proficient in 3rd grade reading; fewer than one in 10 were proficient in 7th grade math.



These dismal statistics and longstanding disparities paint a picture of an entire state struggling to educate all children at high levels and provide them with the strong foundation they need to become successful adults. While certainly troubling, persistent, and heartbreaking, the challenges of this moment are not insurmountable.

IV. Meeting the Moment: A Policy Agenda

Today, Michigan leaders have the opportunity to meet the moment and set in motion a plan to put Michigan back on track to becoming a Top 10 Education State. We can learn from the example of leading states that have blazed trails and defied expectations ahead of us. To join the ranks of the nation’s best educational performers, Michigan leaders should begin by doing three things:

- 1. Invest Now, and Wisely
- 2. Implement Stronger Systems of Fiscal Transparency and Accountability
- 3. Innovate for the Future

Only doing one or two of these things will not be enough. Michigan leaders should commit to a transformational overhaul of the status quo. We simply cannot wait any longer, especially amid threats to cut federal funding.

1. Invest Now, and Wisely

Even before the pandemic, for many years, Michigan had been woefully underfunding its public schools. Additionally, Michigan invests significantly less funding for students with additional needs than leading education states and what research recommends.²³ For instance, from 1995-2015 – or for two decades – Michigan was the worst state in the nation for education revenue growth.²⁴ That means for nearly two generations of students, Michigan was at the bottom

nationally for education revenue growth during their entire K-12 experience.

Not only were other states outpacing Michigan for growth in education revenue, but Michigan was also investing less of its available funding in education over time. In fact, Michigan’s level of investment in education has greatly decreased since 2006.²⁵

Michigan Leads in Funding Adequacy, but Falters in Funding Fairness

In 1994, Michigan voters adopted Proposal A, to establish a per student funding floor for all school districts and target funding amounts which were not reached until nearly 30 years later in 2022.²⁶ Proposal A prioritized funding adequacy – the idea that all students should receive a minimum amount of funding to achieve an adequate educational experience. **Michigan is currently 7th in the country, among states with similar funding formulas, for per-student funding adequacy, but in the bottom ten states for equity – or fair funding – when it comes to students from low-income backgrounds and multilingual learners.**

State	FY25 Base Student Amount
New Jersey	\$13,946
Rhode Island	\$13,322
California	\$12,144
Connecticut	\$11,525
North Dakota	\$11,072
Massachusetts	\$9,806
Michigan	\$9,608
Nevada	\$9,414
Florida	\$8,959
Maryland	\$8,789

There is widespread agreement in national research that money matters in education, especially for students who have long lacked access to strong educational opportunities,²⁷ and one of the best examples of this evidence comes from California. In 2013, California implemented the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and dramatically overhauled its school funding formula to send greater resources to students with additional needs. In fact, California leaders committed \$18 billion dollars over a period of eight years to be allocated based on students’ needs.²⁸ **Currently, California allocates an additional 20% of funding for each “targeted disadvantaged” student in a school and provides an additional 65% of funding per student identified as “targeted disadvantaged” in districts where these students**

make up 55% or more of the total enrollment.²⁹ **That means that California provides an impressive 85% weight for targeted disadvantaged students in districts with higher concentrations of poverty in addition to federal dollars received from the U.S. Department of Education.** While Michigan’s new Opportunity Index, passed in 2023, provides additional funding to districts based on the concentration of student poverty, California’s investment in students with additional needs is dramatically higher than both what Michigan does now and the goal weights of 35% to 47% written in state law.

Please see pages 15-17 for more about Michigan’s Opportunity Index.

California Local Control Funding Formula for “Targeted Disadvantaged” Students			
Base Grant	Supplemental Grant	Concentration Grant	Total Weighted Funding
Akin to Michigan’s Foundation Allowance	20% weight for students identified as “targeted disadvantaged”	65% weight for students identified as “targeted disadvantaged” in districts where these students make up at least 55% of the total enrollment	85% more for students from disadvantaged backgrounds learning in higher concentrations of poverty

In a 2023 evaluation of the Local Control Funding Formula, researchers found that **an investment of just an additional \$1,000 per pupil for three consecutive years improved students’ math and reading achievement, reduced the likelihood of repeating a grade, decreased suspensions and expulsions, and increased the likelihood of high school graduation and college and career readiness.**³⁰ Investments in instructional inputs like class size reduction, teacher salaries, and teacher retention were associated with the largest and most consistent boost in student outcomes.

California’s example demonstrates the power of substantial, targeted, and sustained investments to improve student achievement – a lesson Michigan policymakers would be wise to heed.

Consider the outlook for Michigan’s public schools if its leaders had invested more: if in 2016 after the 2008 economic recession, Michigan had returned to its 2006 school funding levels, Michigan would have spent 20% more – or \$22 billion dollars more – in K-12 education between 2016 and 2021.³¹ Those are dollars that could have been used to systemically improve the public education system and student learning on many fronts.

No one has borne the brunt of this unfairness more than children from low-income backgrounds, as well as multilingual learners and students with disabilities. According to a new analysis by EdTrust-Midwest, **among 34 states with similar funding formulas, Michigan ranks 27th for multilingual learner funding.**

We know that the unique challenges associated with learning while experiencing poverty detrimentally affect academics. Over the years, researchers have studied the effects of poverty on student outcomes and found that, on average, students from lower-income districts demonstrate lower levels of academic achievement than their peers in wealthier districts.³²

Because of these challenges, research recommends that students from low-income backgrounds need 100% to 200% more funding than their peers from more advantaged backgrounds to close gaps in opportunity and outcomes.³³ Additional spending for students from low-income backgrounds has been shown to increase graduation rates, lead to higher wages, and lower the likelihood of poverty in adulthood for these students.³⁴

Unfortunately, Michigan's funding formula falls far below what most states provide and what research recommends for students from low-income backgrounds.³⁵ According to a new analysis by EdTrust-Midwest, Michigan currently ranks 23rd out of 30 states with similar funding systems for low-income funding weights. For many years, Michigan's school funding formula mandated an additional 11.5% in what is called "at-risk" funding on top of the foundation allowance – or base student spending – for students from low-income backgrounds. Yet that amount was often underfunded, with districts receiving on average only 9% per student more in additional "at risk" funding.³⁶

When poverty is concentrated in an area like a school district or even an individual school, its impact on students can be compounded, and academic outcomes are even worse.³⁷ Schools with high concentrations of students from low-income backgrounds face additional challenges, including fewer resources, less experienced teachers,³⁸ more teacher turnover, and increased exposure to environmental hazards and safety concerns.³⁹ As EdTrust-Midwest's [recent report](#) found, many of these findings are true in Michigan.⁴⁰

Until 2023, Michigan's funding formula did not account for concentrations of poverty in school districts.⁴¹ In fact, between 2018 and 2020, Michigan was one of only 15 states providing less funding to its highest poverty districts than its wealthiest districts.⁴²

Today, there are significant new opportunities to change Michigan's trajectory and put it on course to catch up with leading states. The Opportunity Index – a transformative new funding structure – is now in place and can address both the deep inequities of Michigan's funding system and ensure investment for students who need it most, regardless of geographic location.

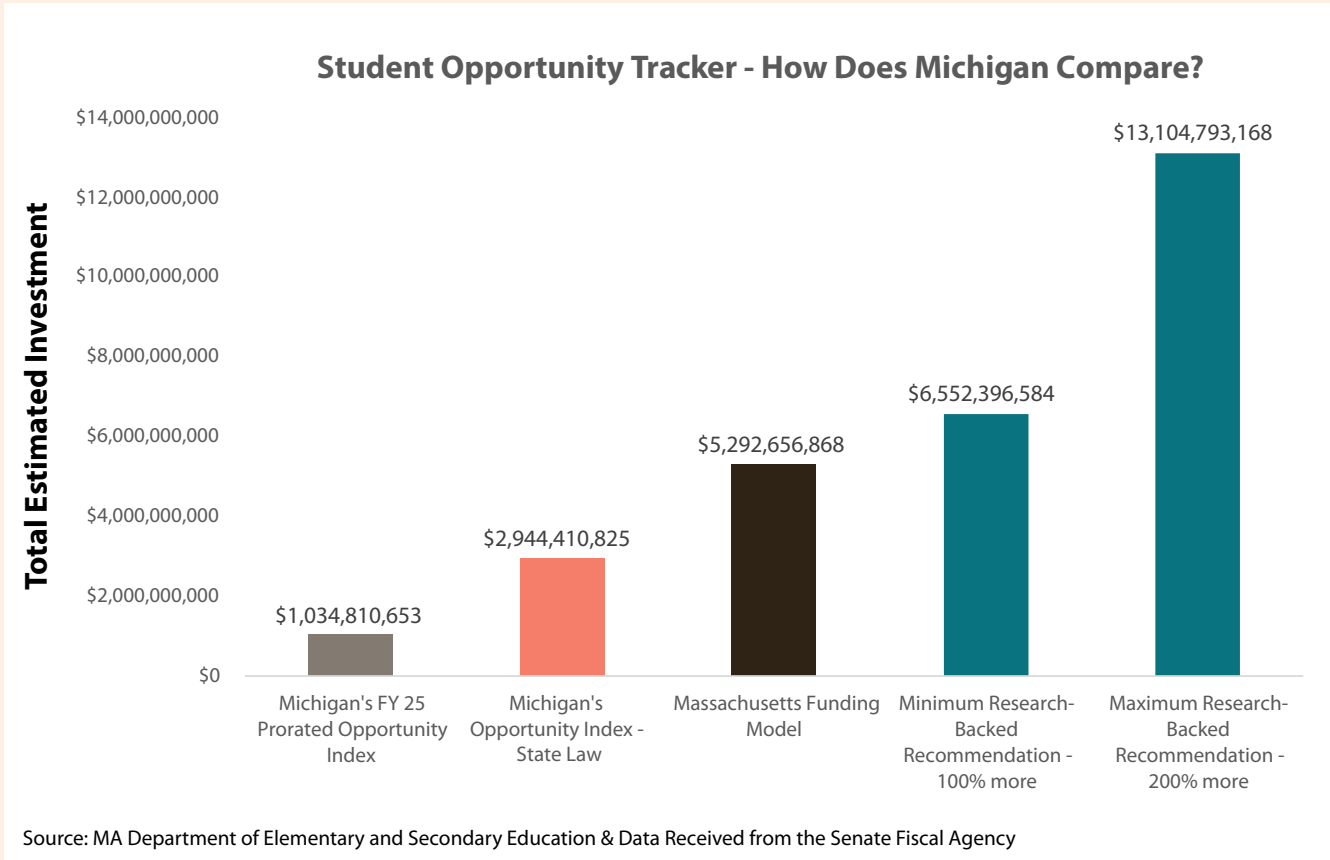
Michigan's new Opportunity Index, placed into law in 2023, transforms the way the state allocates "at-risk" funding by dividing school districts into six categories, called bands, based on the concentration of poverty – or the percentage of students the state considers "economically disadvantaged" – in each district. Within each band, districts are assigned additional funding calculated as a percentage of the foundation allowance, also known as a weight. The weights increase as the concentration of poverty in a district increases.⁴³ That means that districts will receive an additional amount on top of the foundation allowance based on the concentration of poverty in the district. Districts with higher levels of concentrated poverty are assigned a higher weight and receive greater funding to account for their students' additional needs.⁴⁴



Student Opportunity Tracker – How Does Michigan Compare?

Research recommends that students from low-income backgrounds need 100% to 200% more funding than their peers from more advantaged backgrounds due to the various challenges associated with learning in poverty.⁴⁵ In Michigan, investing in our students from low-income backgrounds at the levels recommended by research means that Michigan would invest anywhere from \$6.5 to \$13 billion dollars annually. Massachusetts, widely considered a leading education state, in 2019 redesigned its state funding formula to move closer to those researched-backed recommendations – establishing weights of 40% to more than 100%.⁴⁶ If Michigan funded students from low-income backgrounds like Massachusetts, we would invest more than \$5 billion dollars annually. Instead, Michigan’s Opportunity Index, when funded as written in current law, would invest closer to \$3 billion dollars. Unfortunately, this year, Michigan is only scratching the surface of what is needed, with an investment of slightly more than \$1 billion dollars.

Student Opportunity Tracker				
	Michigan’s Current Prorated Opportunity Index Funding	Michigan’s Opportunity Index as Written in Law	Massachusetts Funding Model	What Research Says is Needed
Weights	12.4% to 16.7%	35% to 47%	40% to 101%	100% to 200% more
Total Estimated Investment	\$1 billion	\$2.9 billion	\$5.3 billion	\$6.5 - \$13.1 billion



Leading State Example: Mississippi



The “Mississippi Miracle” provides a powerful example for how targeted, intentional investments in students with the highest needs yield strong results in academic achievement. Starting in 2013, after years of low performance on national reading assessments, the state implemented a series of interventions to promote early literacy, including mandatory dyslexia screenings, required trainings for teachers on the science of reading, and the deployment of trained literacy coaches to the lowest-performing schools.⁷⁶ These interventions have led to drastic improvement on national test scores, including the most recent NAEP test, where 4th grade students ranked first for reading and math gains since 2013.⁷⁷ Similarly, 4th grade reading rankings jumped from 49th in 2013 to 9th in 2024.⁷⁸ The results out of Mississippi didn’t happen overnight; they were honed through years of concentrated, targeted state investment toward students who needed it. In just over ten years of intentional investment in early literacy, Mississippi became an example for how patience and persistence pay off for young readers.

The historic creation of the Opportunity Index in 2023 made Michigan among the nation’s first ten states with a funding formula that includes an index for concentrations of poverty, among states with similar funding systems.⁴⁷ National policy organizations such as Bellwether Education Partners have [highlighted](#) it as a model for innovation.

In light of the widespread challenges districts across the entire state are having in recovering from the pandemic, it is especially important to note that the funding from the Opportunity Index benefits students from across Michigan. When funded to the levels in state law:

- The biggest winners in the state are town and suburban districts, which together will receive approximately half of new dollars – nearly \$1.5 billion – invested in the Opportunity Index.
- Midsized and small cities will receive approximately \$615 million.
- Rural districts will receive roughly \$520 million.
- Eleven percent of the total new Opportunity Index dollars – or about \$311 million – will go to urban school districts.

The truth is children from all over the state – from town and suburban districts like Alpena and Okemos, to midsized and small cities like Warren and Grand Rapids, to rural districts like Pellston and Galesburg-Augusta

and to urban centers like Detroit – benefit from the Opportunity Index.

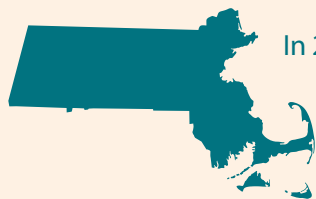
Unfortunately, the Opportunity Index is currently underfunded by more than \$2 billion dollars. At its current funding level, Michigan’s funding weights for students from low-income backgrounds place it in the bottom ten among states with similar funding formulas.

To begin to make a transformational difference, state lawmakers should fund the Opportunity Index to the levels in state law in the next five years. In the most recent two state school aid budgets, state lawmakers invested an additional \$287 million into the Opportunity Index, bringing the total investment in students from low-income backgrounds to more than one billion dollars.⁴⁸

This is a step in the right direction, but far more is needed. Unless policymakers invest dramatically more in the Opportunity Index, foundation allowance increases will outpace the gradual Opportunity Index increases, meaning that the Opportunity Index will never be funded to the levels in state law.⁴⁹

Policymakers should take the bold and necessary step of increasing Opportunity Index funding at a minimum of \$400 million annually to achieve truly fair and adequate funding by 2030.⁵⁰

Leading State Example: Massachusetts



In 2019, Massachusetts took a position of national leadership by adapting its funding formula to explicitly address concentrations of poverty in school districts with transformational weights ranging from 40% to more than 100% – meaning that students who have the greatest needs receive the greatest resources – up to double the base funding amount.⁷⁹ Massachusetts divides districts into 12 categories based on the concentration of poverty in each district, and districts with greater concentrations of poverty receive higher weights. Massachusetts committed to phasing in its new funding formula over a period of 7 years.⁸⁰



2. Implement Stronger Systems of Fiscal Transparency and Accountability

Funding alone is not enough. Schools and districts should be held accountable for spending to ensure that the dollars intended for students with the greatest needs actually reach the schools where those students learn. Parents, policymakers, and the public deserve to know that state dollars intended for students with additional needs are actually reaching their schools. A recent report found that only 55% of Michigan's largest school districts were distributing funding fairly based on student needs during the 2018-19 school year – meaning that almost half of those districts were not fairly allocating resources to schools serving students with additional needs.⁵¹ Michigan is not unique in facing this challenge.

When California overhauled its school funding system, the state did not put strong enough fiscal accountability and transparency systems in place, leading to concerns that increased equity investments were not reaching the students for whom they were intended. The California State Auditor found the State Legislature and State Board of Education — and the new funding system in California — had for years failed to ensure that billions of dollars targeted for children from low-income backgrounds and other students reached those students' schools. On average, school districts were directing only 55 cents of every dollar of extra funding from the Local Control Funding Formula to the schools where students with additional needs (and who generated those funds) attended.⁵² Consider that the impressive academic successes for California students as a result of the Local Control Funding Formula could have been *even better* if California had prioritized fiscal transparency and accountability from the start.

The California story highlights the importance of implementing strong fiscal accountability and transparency systems alongside funding reform.

Leading State Example: Tennessee



Tennessee's
Investment in

Student Achievement

(TISA) Act requires all districts to submit an annual report to the Tennessee Department of Education including descriptions of goals for student achievement, how the budget will help the district meet those goals, and how the previous year's budget contributed to making progress toward academic achievement goals.⁸¹ These reports could be a valuable tool for greater transparency for communities, an opportunity for school districts to reflect on their investments, and as a source of data for education policymakers to understand how spending decisions can impact student outcomes. Michigan school districts and communities could benefit from a well-designed and implemented financial plan requirement which would allow all education stakeholders to understand clearly how investments are supporting students.

It is particularly important, at this moment, for Michigan leaders to think strategically about fiscal transparency and accountability due to potential changes in federal education oversight and loosening restrictions associated with federal dollars.⁵³ In this moment, it is more important than ever that the state commits to honest and transparent information for the public about how school districts are investing in their children.

Transparency and Accountability Under Threat

Fiscal transparency and accountability should be coupled with strong systems of academic transparency and accountability, but current proposed legislation threatens Michigan's progress toward stronger transparency and accountability when it comes to student performance. House Bills 4157 and 4158 would allow up to 90 school districts to participate in a pilot program to replace Michigan's annual assessment, the M-STEP, with a new test.⁵⁴ Because pilot districts would not be required to administer the M-STEP while testing out the new assessment, annual statewide assessment data would be rendered meaningless.

Policymakers will be unable to make comparisons between student performance across districts. Statewide, there will be no way to meaningfully understand how student academic performance has changed over time and we will almost certainly lose the ability to understand whether Michigan students are truly recovering from pandemic learning disruptions.

Families in the pilot districts will be unable to benchmark their students' progress with peers across the state or even understand how their students' academic performance has changed from the year before. These bills disregard the critical importance of data continuity – the ability to track student performance over time – and pose a clear threat to honest and transparent student academic information for parents, policymakers, and the public.

3. Innovate for the Future

Michigan leaders should undoubtedly invest more into the state's public education system, and that investment should come with increased guardrails and transparency. However, in order to invest more, we should be getting more from the system. Greater investment – and a greater return on that investment – is more important than ever in the face of globalization, deindustrialization in Michigan, and a slow pandemic recovery.

To truly get more from our public education system, we must realign and redesign our expectations for what students *should* achieve by high school graduation.

The last time Michigan evaluated and updated its curriculum standards resulted in the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) – a forward-looking set of college and career ready standards. Although the MMC was never fully implemented as designed, it still resulted in increased college-going,⁵⁵ increased math-course taking, and improvements in science ACT scores.⁵⁶ Michigan can now follow the example of leading education states in crafting a new Michigan Education Guarantee – one that ensures Michigan students graduate high school prepared for a successful future.

Michigan can follow the lead of Indiana in creating a transferable College Core and provide all students with access to at least one year of college-level classes in high school at low or no cost to families.⁵⁷ Such a goal could be achieved, in part, through the expansion of dual credit opportunities, and improved access to advanced coursework opportunities.

Please see page 21 for more about the Indiana College Core.

Michigan is only one of two states whose state education agency uses the College Board PSAT tool to send letters to families to indicate the likelihood of student success in Advanced Placement courses based on the student's PSAT scores⁵⁸, and the Michigan Department of Education sent nearly

90,000 letters in 2023-24, which is commendable.⁵⁹ However, local schools are responsible for determining eligibility requirements and what they use to make that determination varies widely. A letter does not mean students will enroll in an advanced class. Whether students are overlooked due to implicit bias, unawareness, lack of confidence, or other reasons, opt-out policies can change the odds for students and our state, ensuring that all students who are ready for advanced coursework are automatically enrolled into those opportunities unless they choose to opt-out.

Leading State Example: Indiana



Indiana's College Core program offers a guarantee of 30 college-level credits that transfer between all public higher education institutions in the state, which saves students both time and money while building competencies that will help them be college and career ready.⁶⁰ The high school certificate program partners higher education institutions with high schools to help students earn transferable college credit, getting them ahead in their college journey and encouraging them to stay in state to complete their education. Nearly 300 high schools across the state currently offer their students the opportunity to earn the Indiana College Core Certificate by earning a full academic year of general education college-level courses. Credits can be obtained through a combination of AP, IB, dual enrollment, or CLEP courses.

To ensure that *all* students are prepared for post-secondary success, a new Michigan Education Guarantee should include strong career and trades pathways for students. Students who take career-aligned coursework and earn industry-based

certifications in high school are more likely to enroll in two-year colleges and earn degrees.⁶¹ Importantly, not all Michigan students have equitable access to high-quality work-based learning opportunities.

To increase graduation rates and prepare Michiganders for jobs in in-demand fields, the state should expand work-based learning opportunities by offering financial incentives for employers and intermediaries, who often incur costs to offer work-based learning. To offset some of these costs, Michigan leaders could consider offering a tax credit for employers, other financial supports to employers who provide work-based learning, and/or offer financial incentives to schools, post-secondary institutions, or intermediaries. Currently, at least 22 states offer tax credits to employers who support work-based learning.⁶² Another 22 provide some form of financial support to employers, and at least 30 states provide financial incentives to schools, post-secondary institutions or intermediaries.⁶³ There are plenty of leading states for Michigan to join in promoting fair access to work-based learning for all interested Michigan students.



V. The Urgency of the Moment

In addition to state strategies to improve public education, it is incumbent on state leaders to fill key roles amid the federal government's aggressive plans to radically shrink its role in public education. This is a critical moment for state leadership in education funding, as well as for state leadership in clear, accessible, and understandable state-level accountability and transparency for Michigan families.

President Donald Trump in March signed an Executive Order aimed at dismantling the U.S. Department of Education.⁶⁴ The new U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon in her first hours in the role sent an email to staff titled "Our Department's Final Mission." In that memo she said her vision is "aligned with the President's: to send education back to the states."⁶⁵

Michigan's students from low-income backgrounds and students with disabilities of every geographic region are among the students with the most at stake amid the changes.

Consider that:

- The federal government plays an important role by addressing school funding gaps for states to address students' needs. Indeed, in Michigan, federal funding comprised 13.8% of K-12 education funding, totaling over \$3.7 billion, in fiscal year 2023.⁶⁶
- More than half of Michigan's students — over 717,000 students — are from low-income backgrounds.⁶⁷ The federal government provides Michigan about \$580 million in funding — called Title I funding — to support these students and their public schools. In Michigan, it is the equivalent of about 13,570 entry-level teacher positions.⁶⁸ It's important to note that federal Title I funds are intended to be a supplement to state funding. Federal dollars do not exist to replace our effort as a state. The federal dollars are extra to help get us over the hump to actually close the achievement gap.
- Under the federal Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), the U.S. Department of Education also provides more than \$400 million to Michigan to fund students with disabilities with the intent that they receive the education, support and

services to which they are entitled.⁶⁹ These funds are critical for the development and implementation of students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), which can include specialized instruction and learning environments, behavioral services and/or additional staff to support inclusion in the least restrictive environment, for example.

It is uncertain whether these crucial funds will continue to flow to vulnerable students in Michigan and other states if the U.S. Department of Education is dismantled. However, that's not the only action being considered. There has been conversation at the federal level to turn Title I funds and IDEA funding into block grants that lack the accountability and assurances to make sure the dollars will reach the students for whom they are intended.

The Trump administration frames their new executive order to dismantle the Department of Education as "returning control to states."⁷⁰ In reality, block grants make it easier for politicians to slash education funding with no accountability. That's expected to mean fewer resources, larger class sizes, and more kids left behind.

In Michigan, those actions could negatively impact the funding and services for more than 217,000 students with disabilities in the state⁷¹ and the 717,000 students from low-income backgrounds, as well as other groups whose public and charter schools depend on the federal funding.

Additionally, there are concerns that the federal government's role as a watchdog will be greatly diminished, which could have significant ramifications for vulnerable student groups.

As an example, the federal government's role was critical to spur a recent federal investigation into the

Michigan Department of Education, which found that Michigan systematically violated the rights of students with disabilities during the COVID-19 school closures. The investigation determined students with disabilities “did not receive the services and instruction they were entitled to under federal anti-discrimination laws.”⁷² In a state where the four-year high school graduation rate is 61% for Michigan’s students with disabilities and 73% for students from low-income backgrounds, the federal watchdog function is an essential one.⁷³

It’s also crucial that the U.S. Department of Education does not diminish its role to ensure families have

honest information and data about student outcomes and the performance of public schools. Currently, the U.S. Department of Education collects and analyzes student performance data, which helps to ensure that schools are held accountable for serving all students.⁷⁴ These accountability requirements to report subgroup performance were enacted during the former U.S. President George W. Bush administration.⁷⁵ They have since resulted in greater scrutiny and accountability for states and school districts to serve all of their students, regardless of disability, income, race, gender and more.



VI. Conclusion

Our children are our future. In Michigan, that future depends on what we do now. Michigan’s education system has failed too many of our students for too long. Michigan students are as bright and full of potential as the children of other states – other states which have invested urgently and wisely in that potential. Transformational school funding and stronger systems of fiscal transparency and accountability build a sturdy foundation on which Michigan can build a truly innovative and future-ready public education system. Michigan families deserve affordable, high-quality, rigorous options to prepare their children for their adult lives. It is time for Michigan’s public education system to deliver on that promise.

The challenges facing Michigan students and families today are great and they will require strong and focused leadership from Michigan policymakers. There is nothing less at stake than the very future of our state. We urge Michigan leaders to rise to the challenge and meet the moment.

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2025 Michigan Achieves! Indicators

4th Grade Reading

CURRENT
PERFORMANCE



2030
PROJECTION



What it is

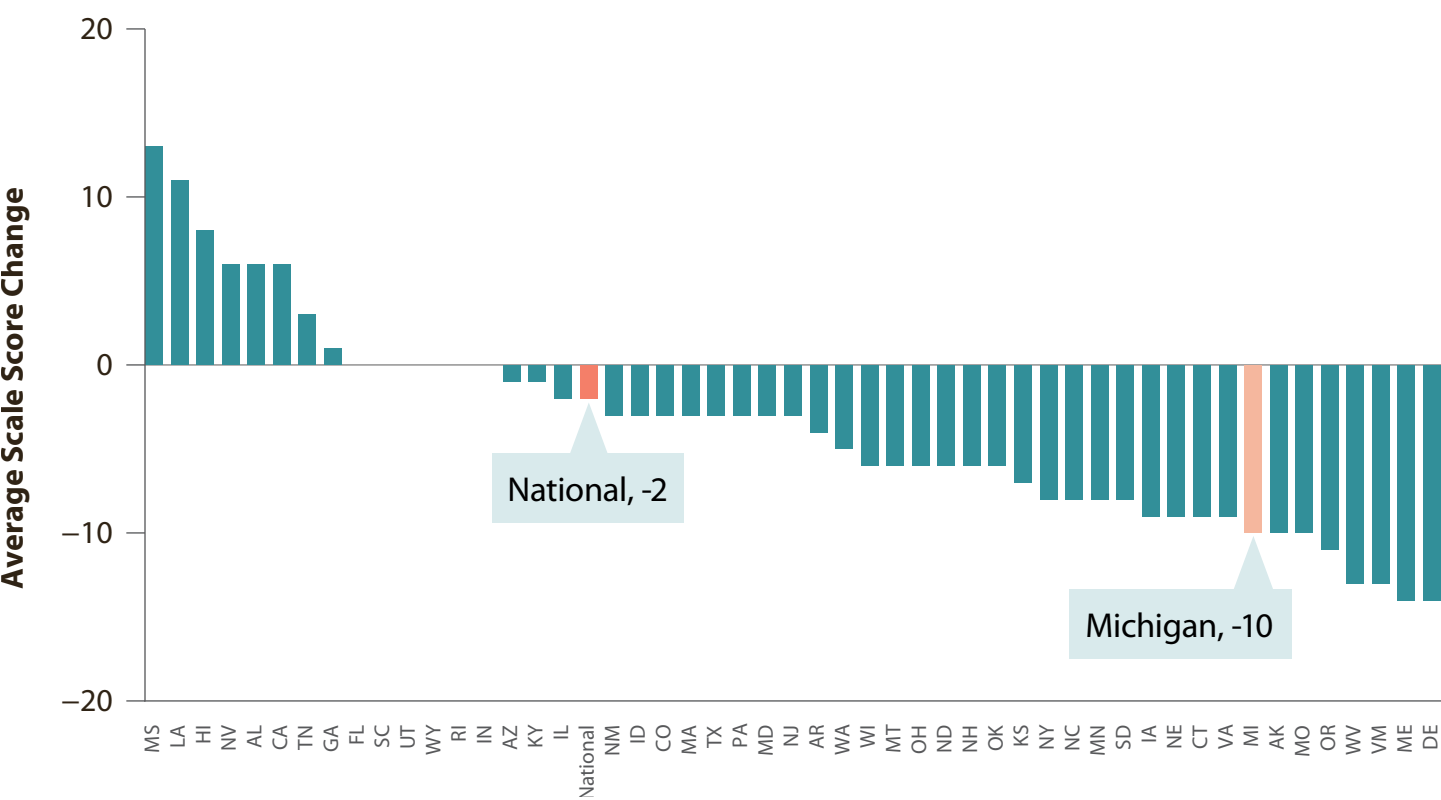
Early learners’ reading proficiency is a telling indicator of whether Michigan’s students are being prepared for success. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative assessment that provides for long-term comparisons of what America’s students know 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 4th 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 children from low-income backgrounds and students of color from fulfilling their potential.

Michigan is State with the 8th Largest Decline in Early Literacy

Average Scale Score Change, NAEP Grade 4 – Reading – All Students (2003-2024)

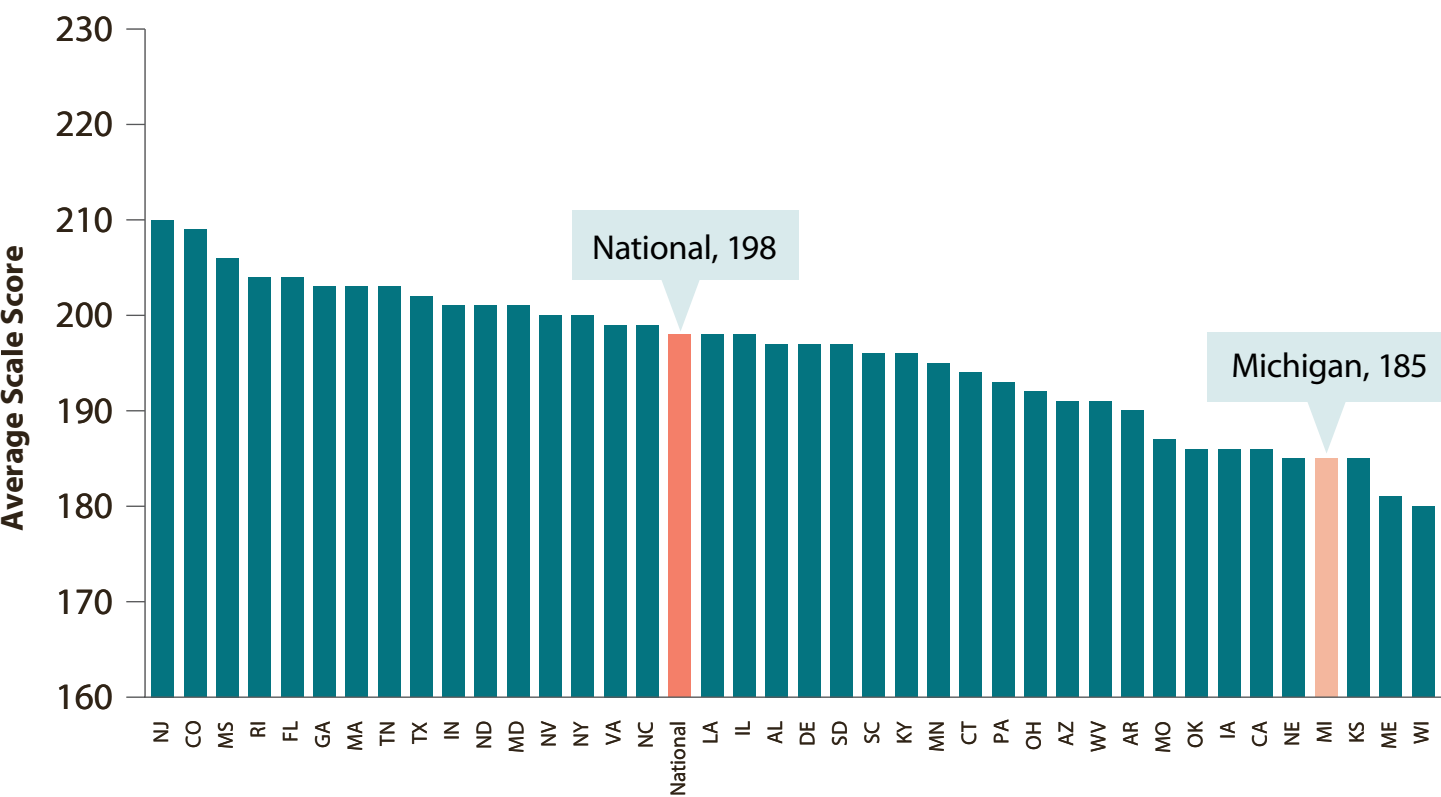


SOURCE: NCES, NAEP Data (Proficient Scale Score=238; Basic Scale Score=208) 2003-2024

4th Grade Reading (cont'd)

Michigan in Bottom Five for Black Students in Early Literacy

Average Scale Score, NAEP Grade 4 – Reading – Black Students (2024)



SOURCE: NCES, NAEP Data (Proficient Scale Score = 238; Basic Scale Score = 208) 2003-2024



What it is

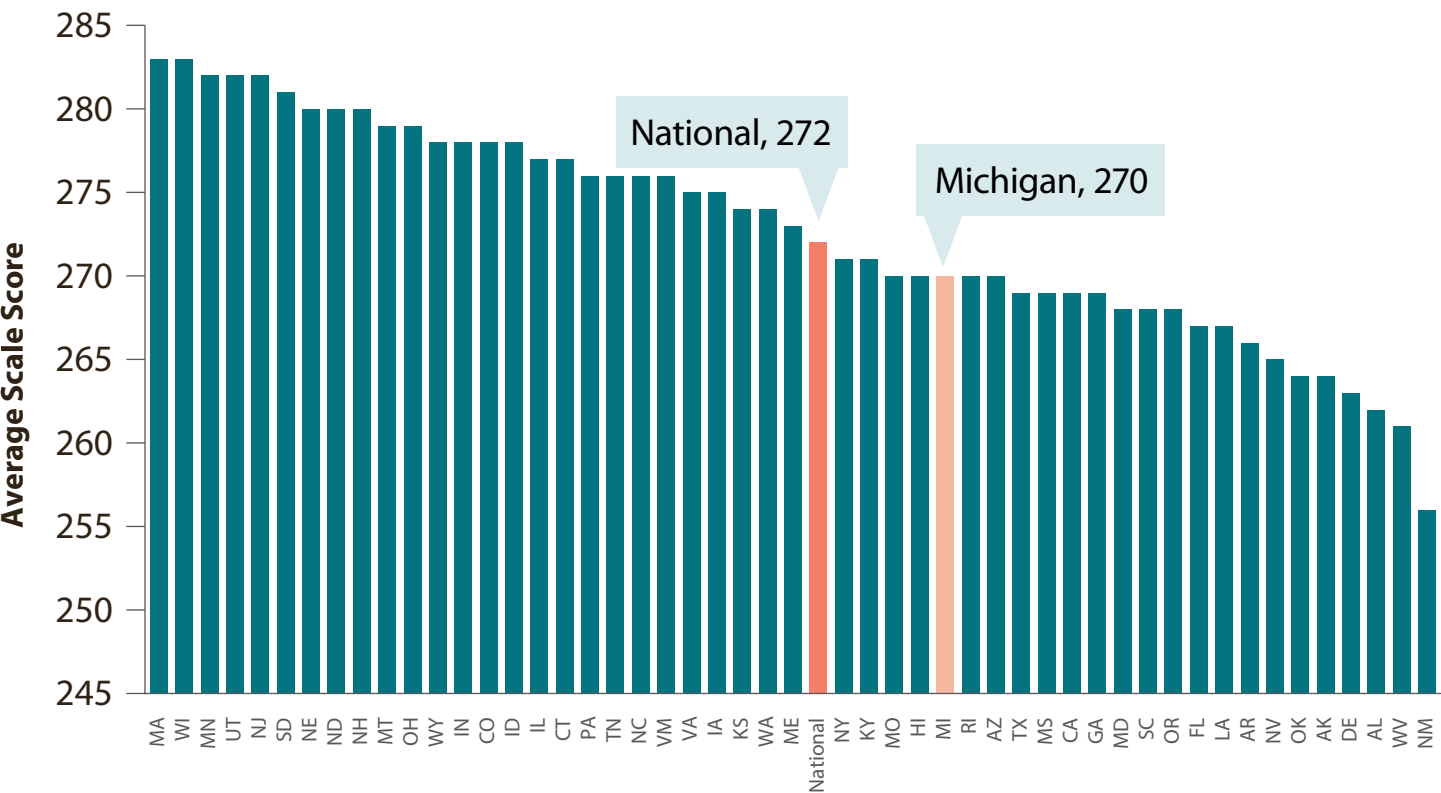
The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative assessment that provides for long-term comparisons of what America’s students know and can do in various subject areas. The assessment is given every two years and provides necessary information about student performance and growth for several indicators, including 8th 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 8th 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 Closely Follows National Average for All Students in 8th Grade Math

Average Scale Score, NAEP Grade 8 – Math – All Students (2024)

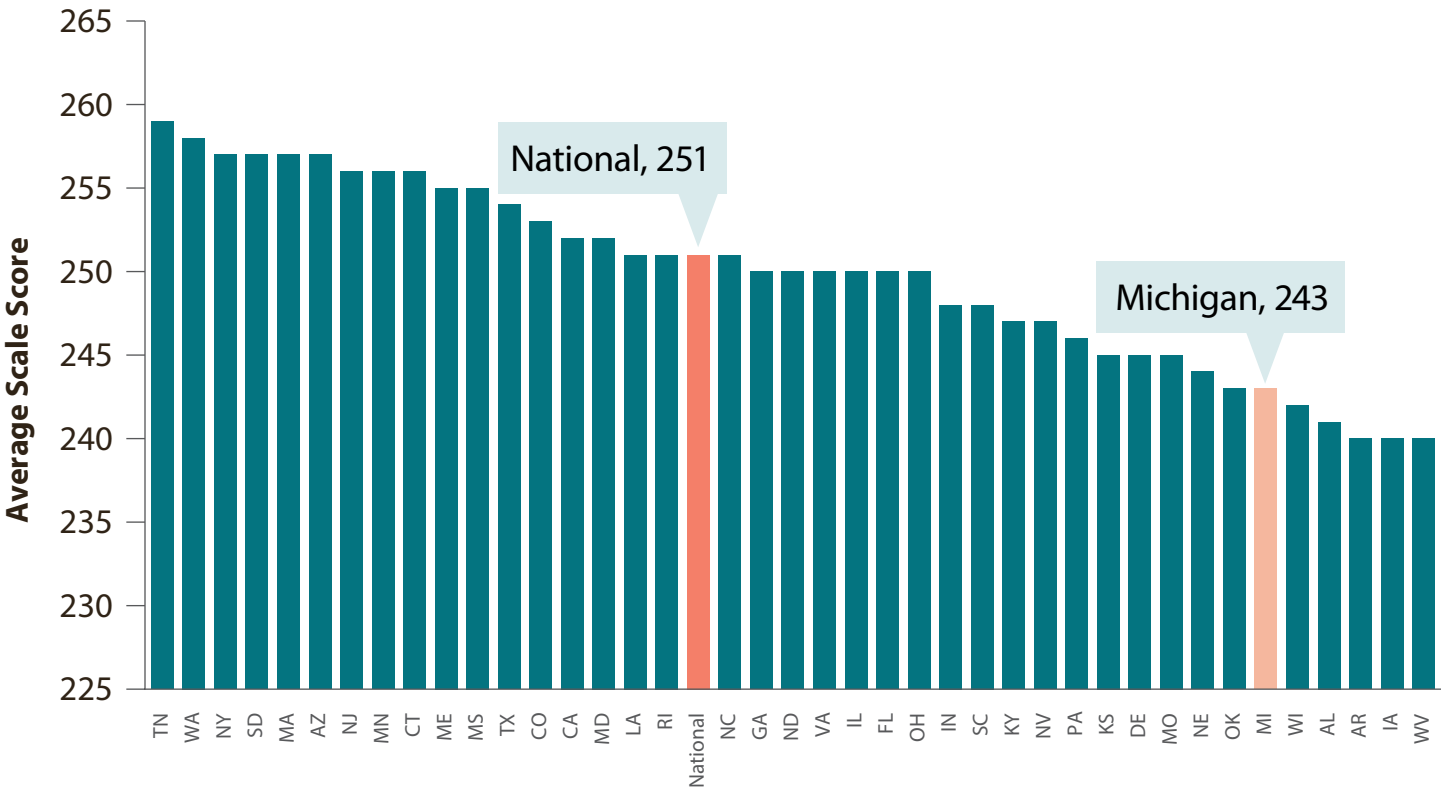


SOURCE: NAEP Data, NCES (Basic Scale Score = 262; Proficient Scale Score = 299) 2024

8th Grade Math (cont'd)

Michigan 6th Lowest Scoring for Black Students in 8th Grade Math

Average Scale Score, NAEP Grade 8 – Math – Black Students (2024)



SOURCE: NCES, NAEP Data (Proficient Scale Score = 299; Basic Scale Score = 262) 2024



Kindergarten Readiness

Michigan recently leveraged historic federal investment and committed substantial state investment to improve early childhood education access and increase the number of students who enter kindergarten ready to learn at high levels. From 2012 to 2023, the proportion of Michigan four-year-olds enrolled in prekindergarten increased from 19% to 34%.² The program saw a decrease in enrollment of almost 30% in 2020-2021, likely due to the pandemic.³ However, enrollment has been rising again in the following years. In 2024-2025, 56% of eligible four-year-olds were enrolled in publicly funded prekindergarten programs in Michigan. Enrollment in the Great Start Readiness Program, the state's primary preK program, is up almost 24% since Governor Whitmer announced the PreK for All initiative in 2023.⁴ A longitudinal data system that includes

enrollment and quality metrics for all early childhood programs across the state would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of trends and their relationship to outcomes in kindergarten and beyond.

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 inform alignment and provide families and educators with important information about strengths and needs as students enter elementary school.

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

“

Enrollment in the Great Start Readiness Program, the state's primary preK program, is up almost 24% since Governor Whitmer announced the PreK for All initiative in 2023.

”

College Readiness

CURRENT
PERFORMANCE



2030
PROJECTION



Percent enrolled in at least one remedial course.

What it is

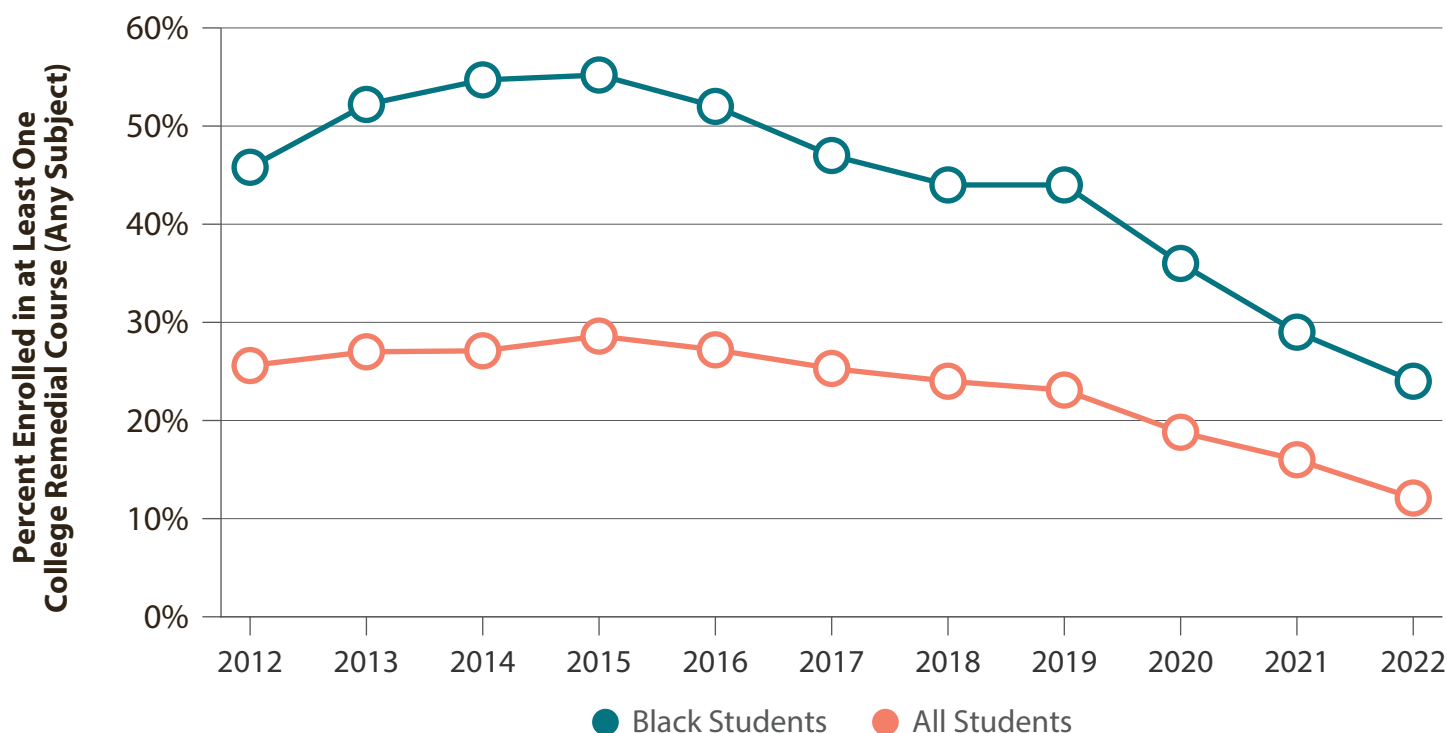
Remedial coursework is necessary for students who lack fundamental skills in a subject area – skills that should have been developed in K-12. These courses also are not credit bearing, meaning they don't count toward a degree.

Why it matters

12.1% of all Michigan students were required to take at least one remedial course in 2- and 4-year college or university programs, according to the most recent data from 2021-2022. That's about 1 in 8 Michigan 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 – 24.1% of Black students in Michigan 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 Black Students

**Michigan College Remediation Rates
(Community Colleges & Four-Year Universities, 2012-2022)**



SOURCE: CEPI College Remedial Coursework Enrollment Trend 2012-22

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.



What it is

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

Why it matters

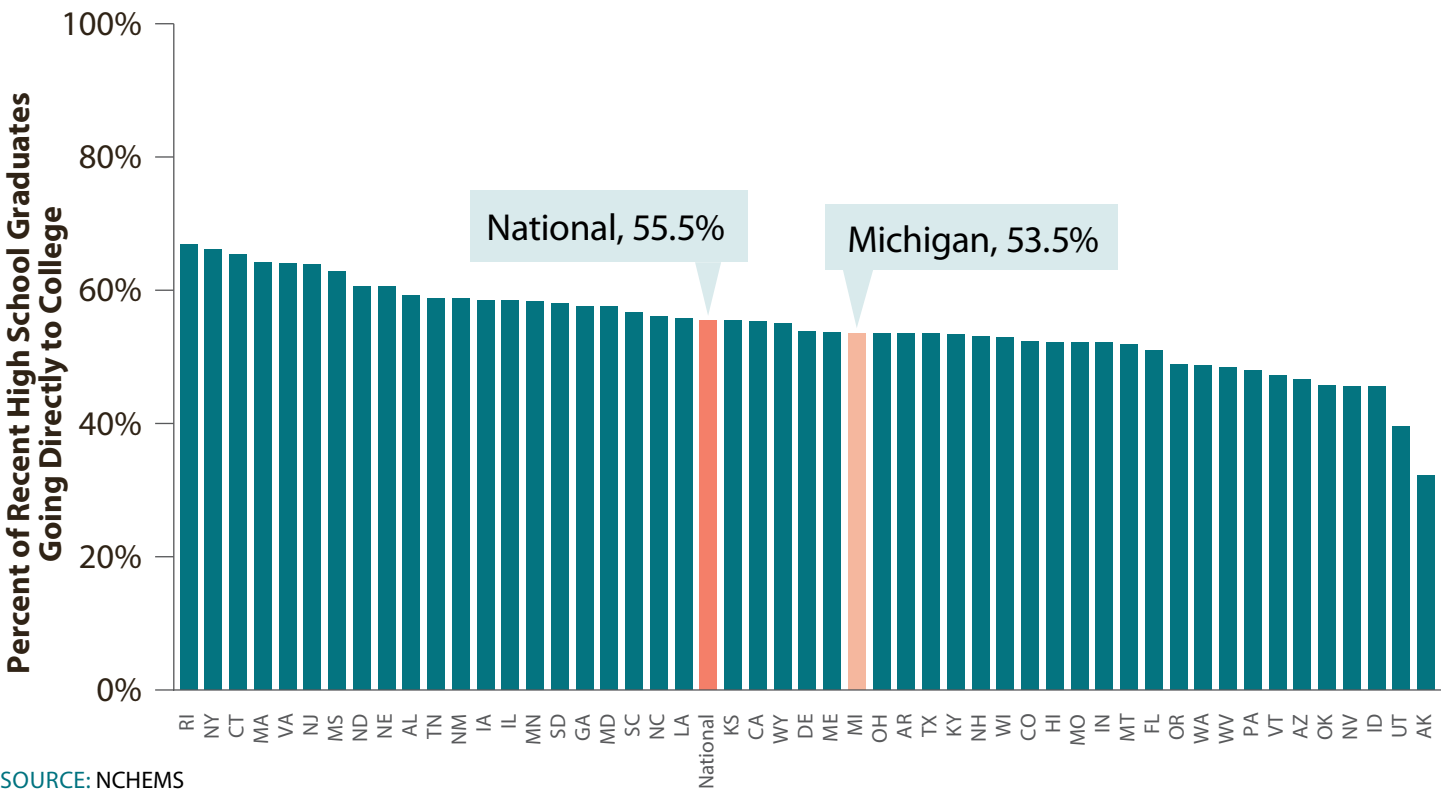
In order for Michigan’s students to fulfill their true potential and be the leaders of tomorrow, more must enroll in postsecondary training, whether that be at a trade school, community college, or a four-year university. On this measure, Michigan is slightly below the national average, ranking 27th, with about 53.5% of high school graduates going directly to college in the fall of 2022.⁵

Michigan’s Center for Educational Performance and Information reports that 53.3% of Michigan’s 2023 high school graduates enrolled in a postsecondary program within 6 months of graduation.⁶

In addition, research shows that completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) leads to higher postsecondary enrollment.⁷ For the graduating class of 2024, the National College Attainment Network reported that Michigan ranked 24th (at 53%) in the percentage of high school seniors completing the FAFSA, below the national average of 54%.⁸

Michigan Slightly Below National Average with 53.5% of High School Graduates Enrolling in College

Higher Education Enrollment Rate for Recent High School Graduates (2022)



SOURCE: NCHEMS

College Attainment

CURRENT (2023)
PERFORMANCE



2030
PROJECTION



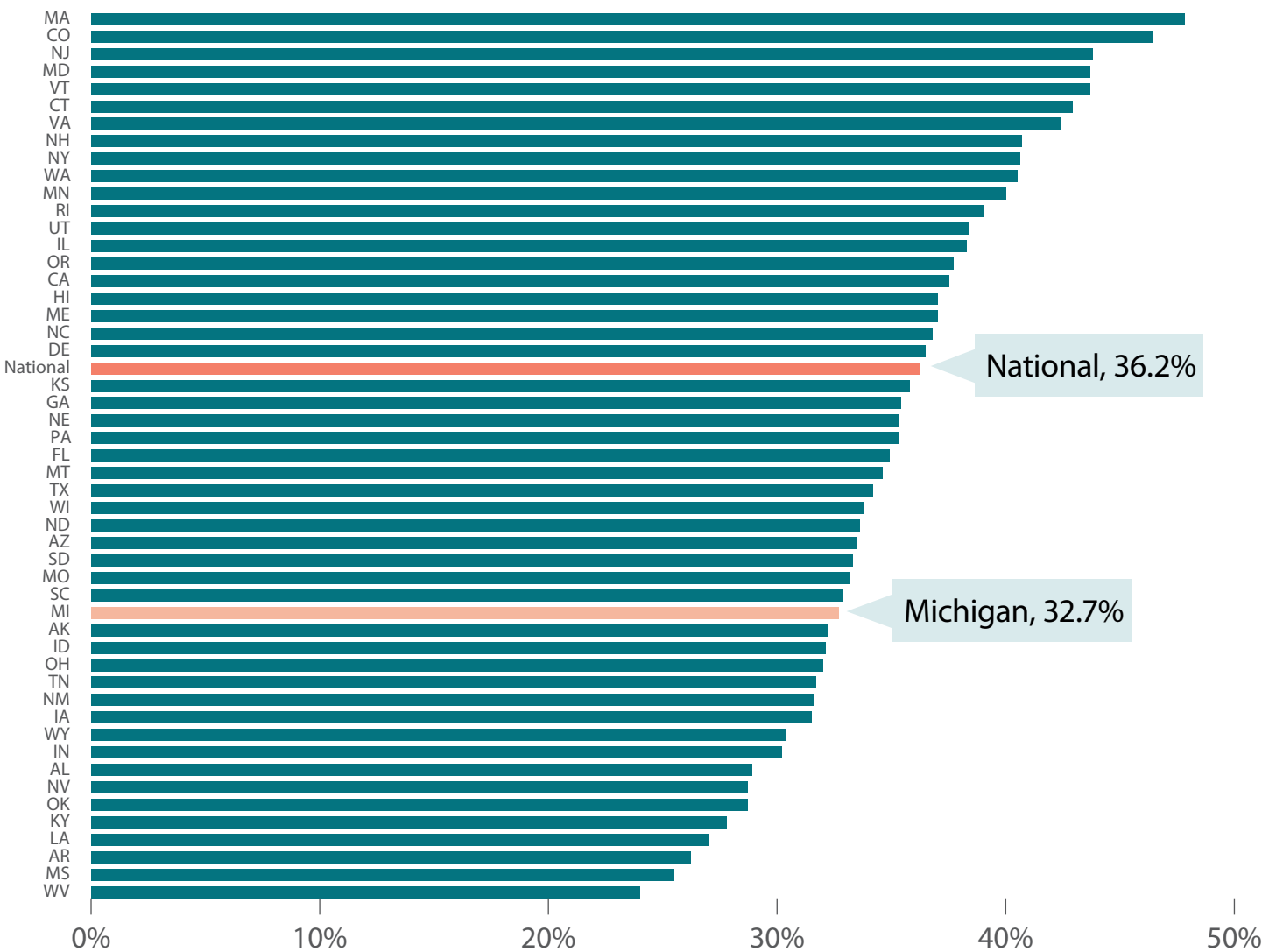
What it is

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 2023, Michigan ranked 34th in the percentage of adults 25 or older who have completed a bachelor’s degree or higher, at 32.7%. Roughly 20% of Black Michiganders and 24% of Latino Michiganders have completed a bachelor’s degree or higher.

Percent of People 25 Years and Older with a Bachelor’s Degree or Greater in 2023

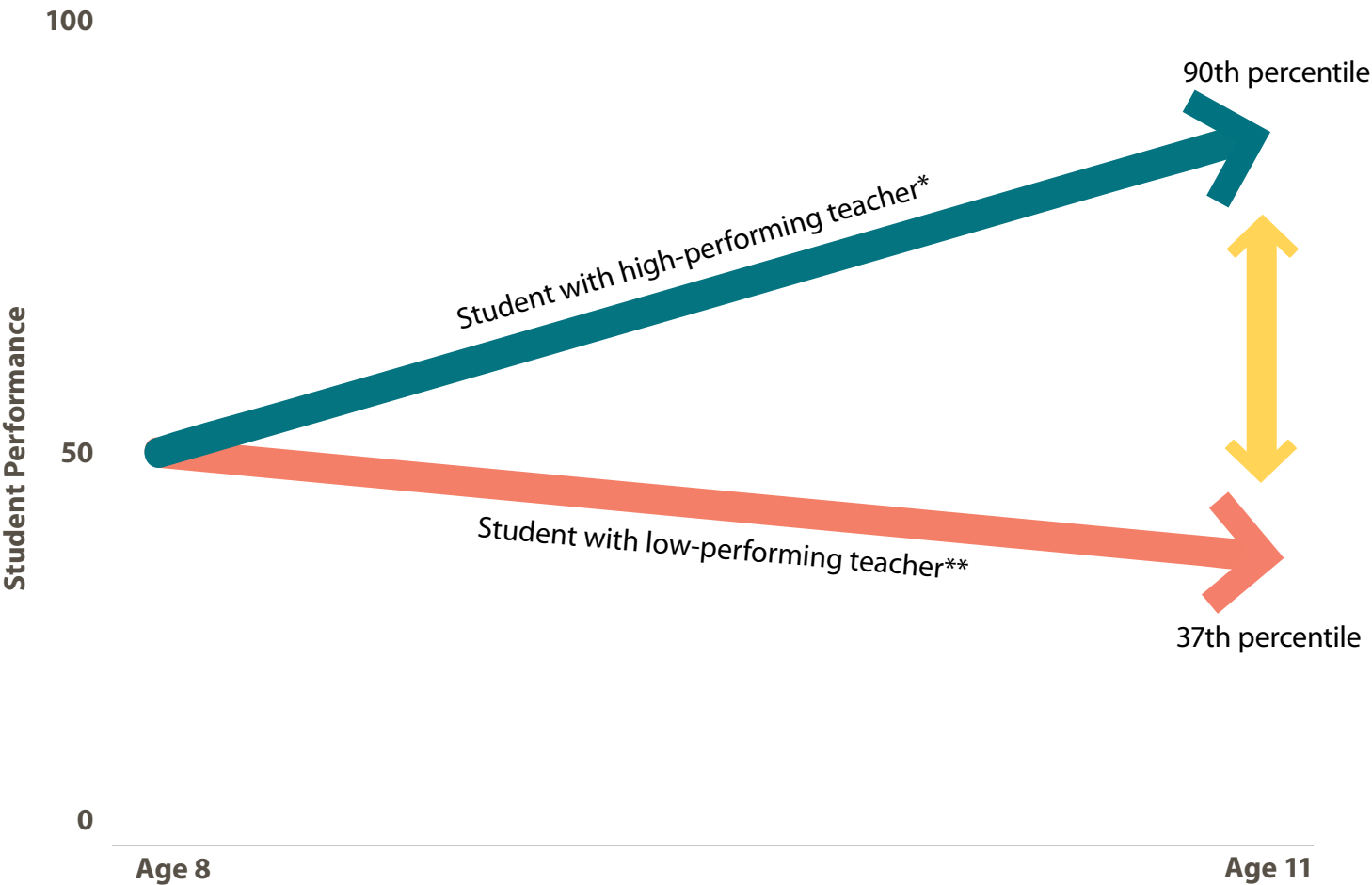


SOURCE: United States Census – American Community Survey – 1 Year Estimates 2023

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.⁹ 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 affected 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

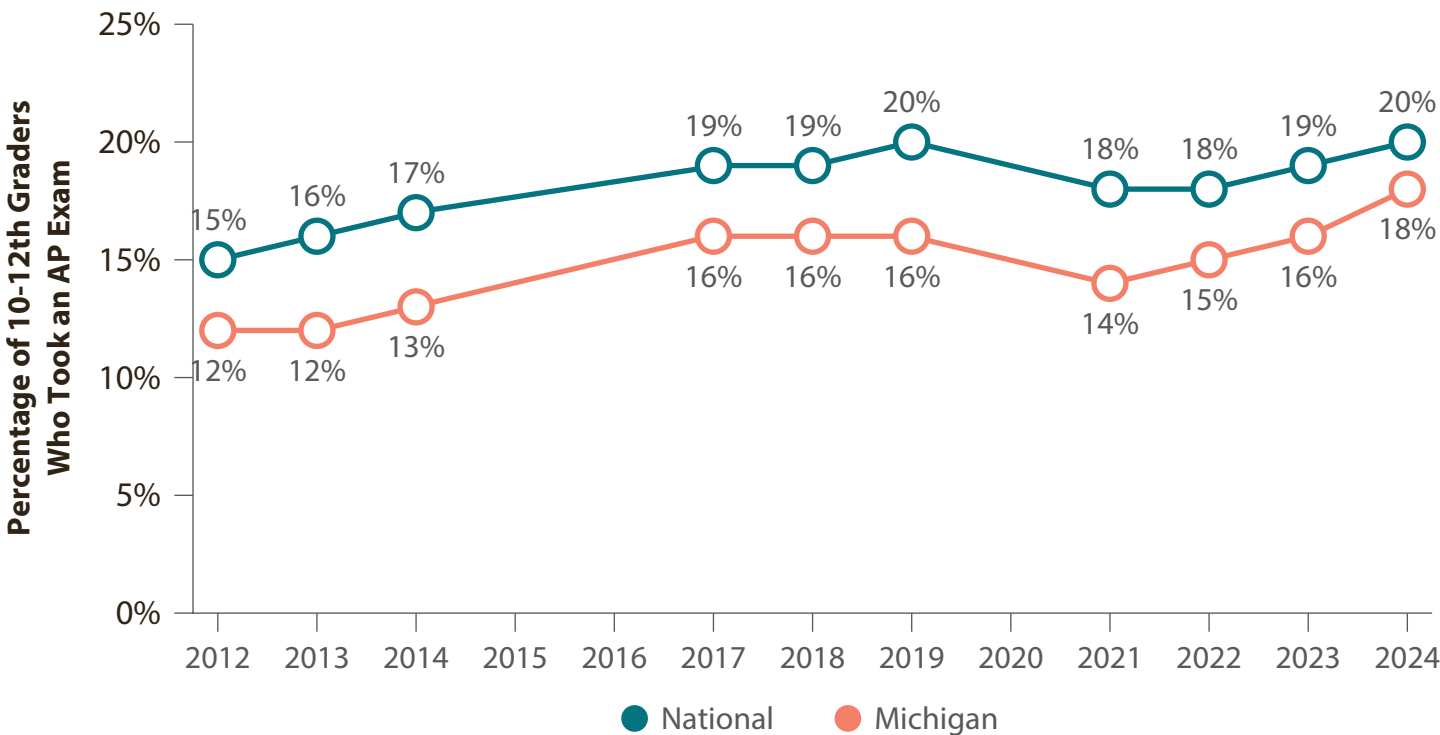
Advanced Placement (AP) exam participation is measured by the College Board’s “Percentage of Graduates Who Took an AP Exam During High School.” AP exam participation signals access to rigorous coursework throughout a student’s high school tenure.

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. Michigan is currently ranked 19th for the percentage of graduates who took an AP exam during high school. Similar to the nation, Michigan saw a very slight increase in the percentage of students who took an AP exam during high school in the 2023-2024 school year. While 18% of students in Michigan took an AP exam, just 8% of Black students completed an AP exam during the 2023-2024 academic year.

Michigan Still Lags Nation in the Percentage of Graduates Who Took an AP Exam During High School

Percentage of Students Who Took an AP Exam During High School (2012-2024)



SOURCE: College Board AP Data: AP Participation 2024
NOTE: Data are only available for 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023, & 2024

School Funding Equity

CURRENT
PERFORMANCE



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.

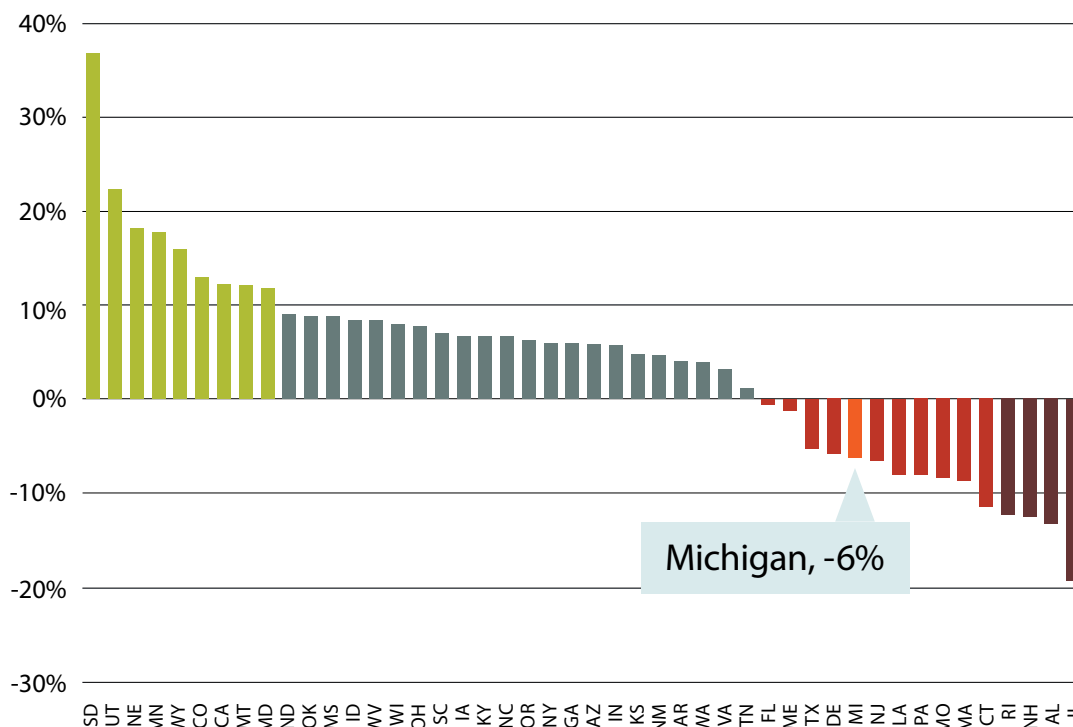
Why it matters

In recent years, Michigan has ranked an abysmal 36th of 46 states in the nation for funding gaps that negatively impact students from low-income backgrounds. Historically, Michigan districts serving the highest rates of students from low-income families received about 6% less in state and local funding per student than more affluent districts. This lack of equity that persisted for decades led to further imbalances in our educational system as a whole and left long-lasting impacts. While Michigan made historic investments in school funding equity this year through the creation of the Opportunity Index in 2023, there is still much progress to be made.

**Current performance is based on pre-pandemic data. Performance may change based on future post-pandemic data.*

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

Funding Gaps Between the Highest and Lowest Poverty Districts, By State (2018-2020)



READING THIS FIGURE:

In states shaded in light green (Moderately Progressive), the highest poverty districts receive between 10-40% percent more in state and local funds per student than the lowest poverty districts; in states shaded in grey (Neutral), they receive between 0-10% more, in states shaded light red (Moderately Regressive), they receive between 0-10% less, and in states shaded in dark red (Regressive), they receive at least 10 percent less. 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 2022

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. Vermont is also excluded. Because so many New York students are concentrated in New York City, we sorted that state into two halves, as opposed to four quartiles.

Teacher Salary Gaps

What it is

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

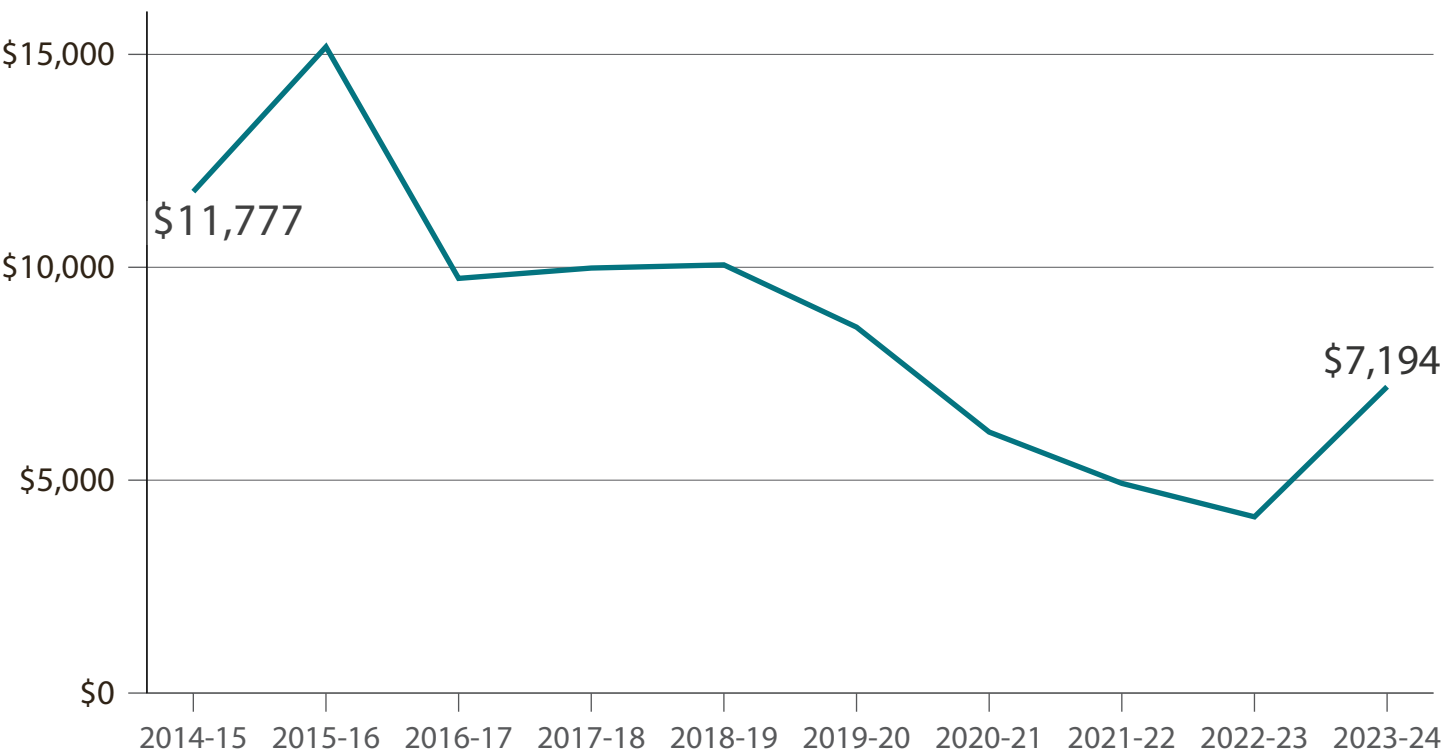
Why it matters

Teachers in Michigan’s wealthiest districts are paid just over \$7,000 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 students from low-income backgrounds and students from more affluent backgrounds. Notably, the recent salary gap increase from 2022-23 to 2023-24 was largely driven by increased average salary in the lowest-poverty districts. In order to close the gap, average salary increases should be targeted to teachers in the highest poverty districts.

To recruit and retain highly effective teachers in the schools that need them most, Michigan must close the gap in teacher pay. The good news is that gaps in teacher salaries have overall been narrowing in Michigan. Since 2015, this gap has shrunk by \$4,583. While this is promising, there is still work to do before we reach equitable salaries across districts.

Note: Ideally, any analysis of teacher salary equity would account for teachers’ years of experience. However, data are not publicly available from the State of Michigan to conduct such an analysis.

Gap in Average Teacher Salaries Between Michigan’s Highest Income and Lowest Income Districts Over Time



SOURCE: MDE Bulletin 1011, 2014-15 to 2023-24 ; MI School Data Student Counts 2014-2015 to 2023-2024 (District)



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.

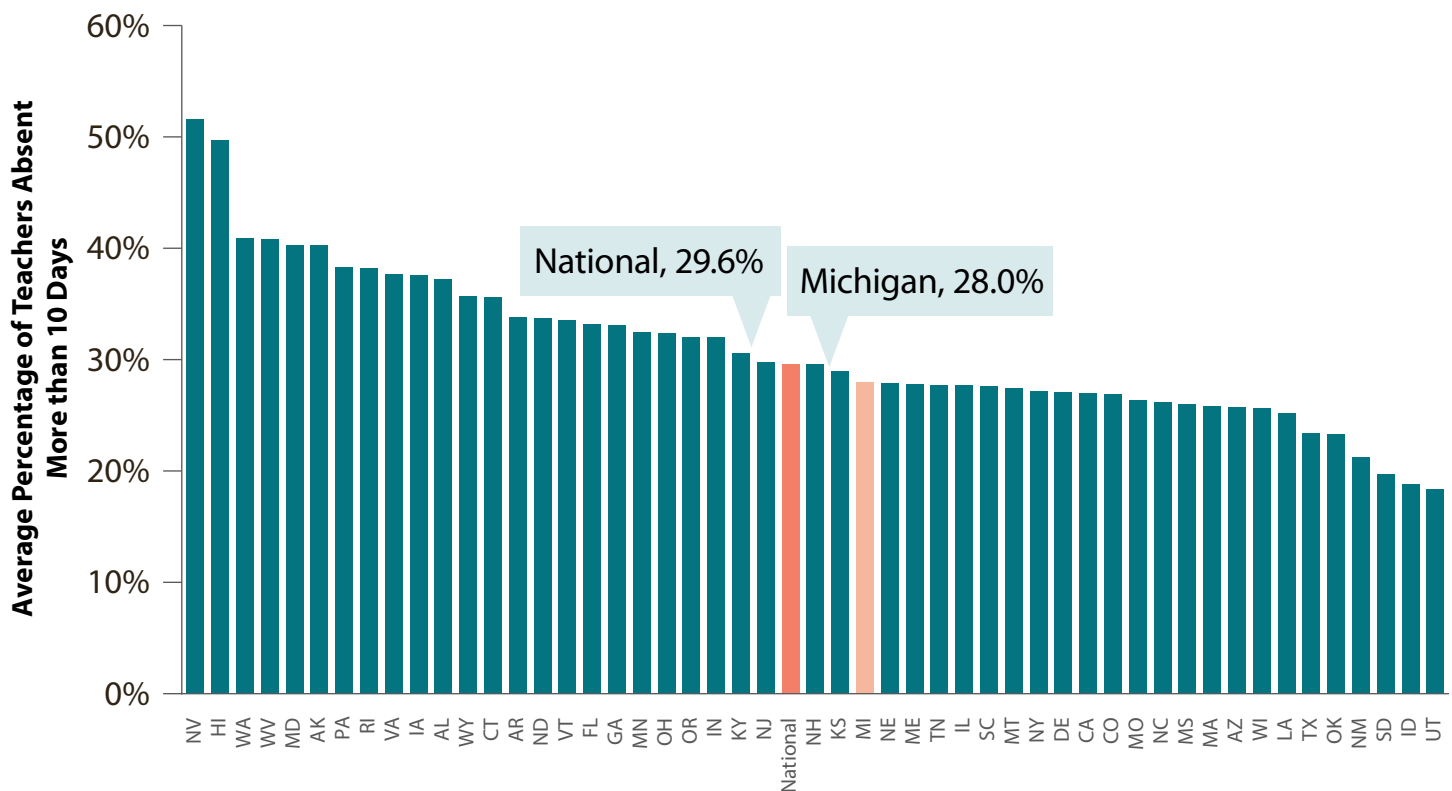
Why it matters

28% of teachers in Michigan were absent from their job more than 10 days, on average, in the 2017-18 school year.¹¹ That's about 6% 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.

**Current performance is based on pre-pandemic data. Performance may change based on future post-pandemic data. This item was removed from the 2020-2021 CRDC administration but will be available in future years.*

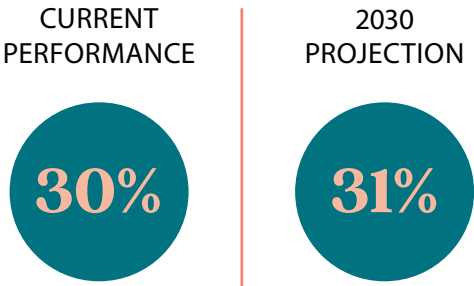
About 28% of Teachers in Michigan Were Absent from Their Job More than 10 Days

Average Percentage of Teachers Absent More than 10 Days (2017-18)



SOURCE: Civil Rights Data Collection 2017-18

Chronic Absenteeism



Percentage of Michigan Students that are Chronically Absent

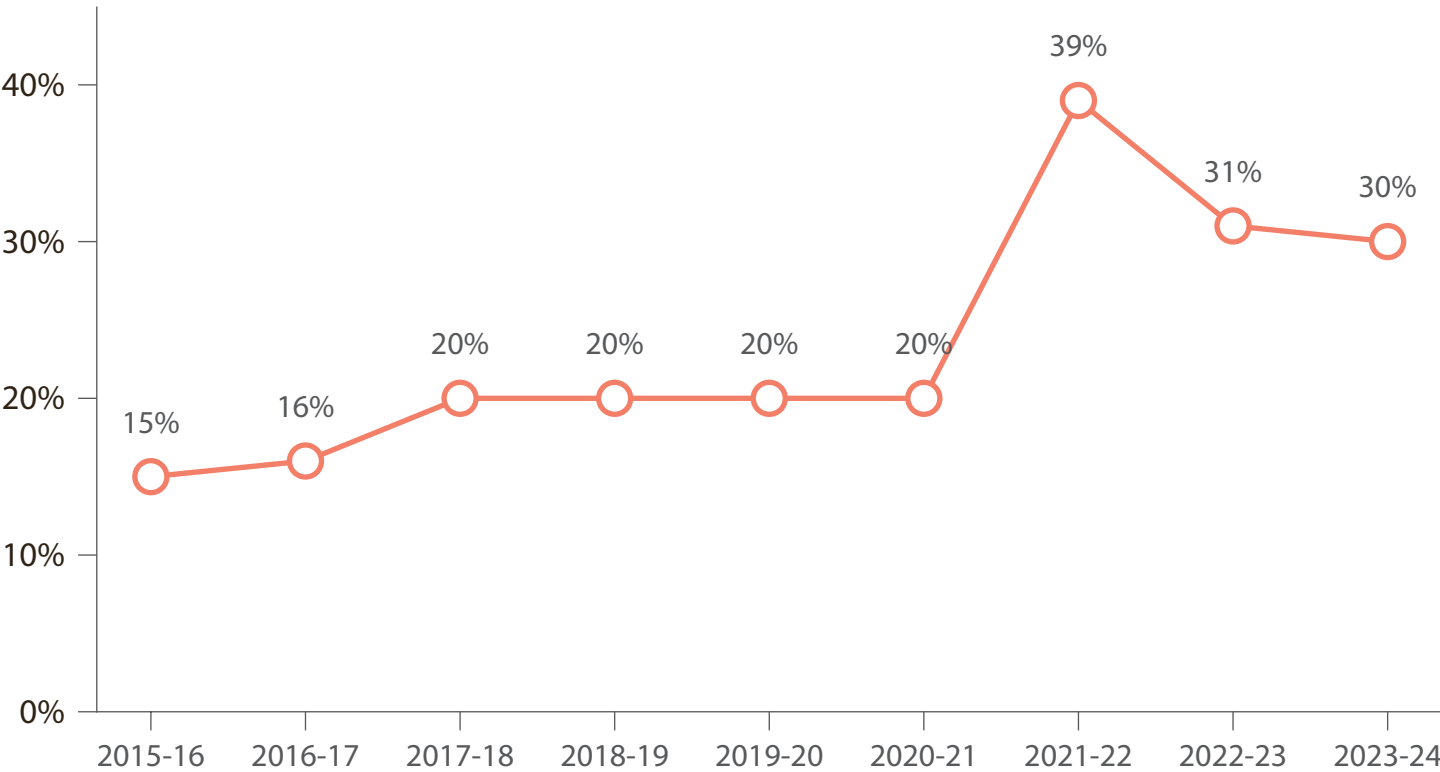
What it is

This measure represents the percentage of Michigan students who were chronically absent from school, as measured by the Center for Educational Performance and Information. To qualify as “chronically absent,” a student must miss at least 10% of the school year.

Why it matters

Not only are Michigan’s teachers missing too much school, but Michigan’s students are missing far too many days of school. Chronic absenteeism has serious implications for academic success and student engagement.¹² Unfortunately, chronic absenteeism is often related to non-academic factors in students’ lives, such as poverty.¹³ The COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying challenges, including remote learning and lack of access to appropriate technology, likely contributed to the increase in chronic absenteeism over recent years.¹⁴

Percentage of Michigan Students Who Were Chronically Absent Since 2015



SOURCE: MI School Data Student Attendance Report 2015-16 to 2023-24.

Out-of-School Suspensions

CURRENT
PERFORMANCE
(2017-18)

45th*

What it is

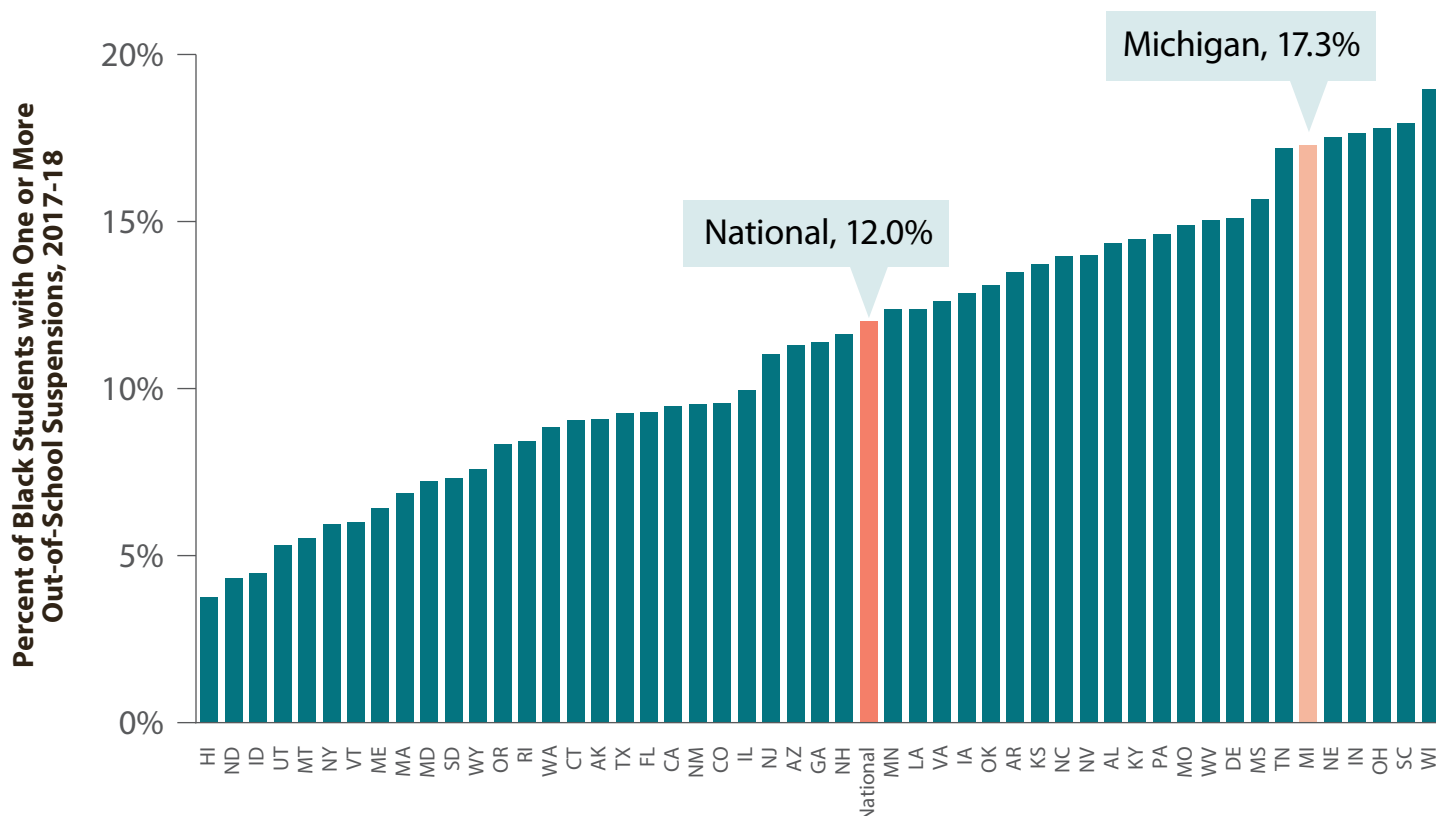
This data measures the percentage of students in each state who have one or more suspensions within a school year.

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 and specifically for Black students, Michigan ranked 45th nationally when comparing out-of-school suspension rates. This means Michigan had the sixth highest out-of-school suspension rate in the country. In the 2017-2018 school year, 17.3% of Black students received at least one out-of-school suspension.

**Current performance is based on pre-pandemic data. Recently released data on out-of-school suspensions during the 2020-21 school year are impacted by the shift to virtual learning, which dramatically decreased the suspension rate and does not provide meaningful data on exclusionary school discipline practices.*

Michigan Had 6th Highest Out-of-School Suspension Rate Nationally for Black Students in 2017-18



SOURCE: Civil Rights Data Collection 2017-18

33rd

What it is

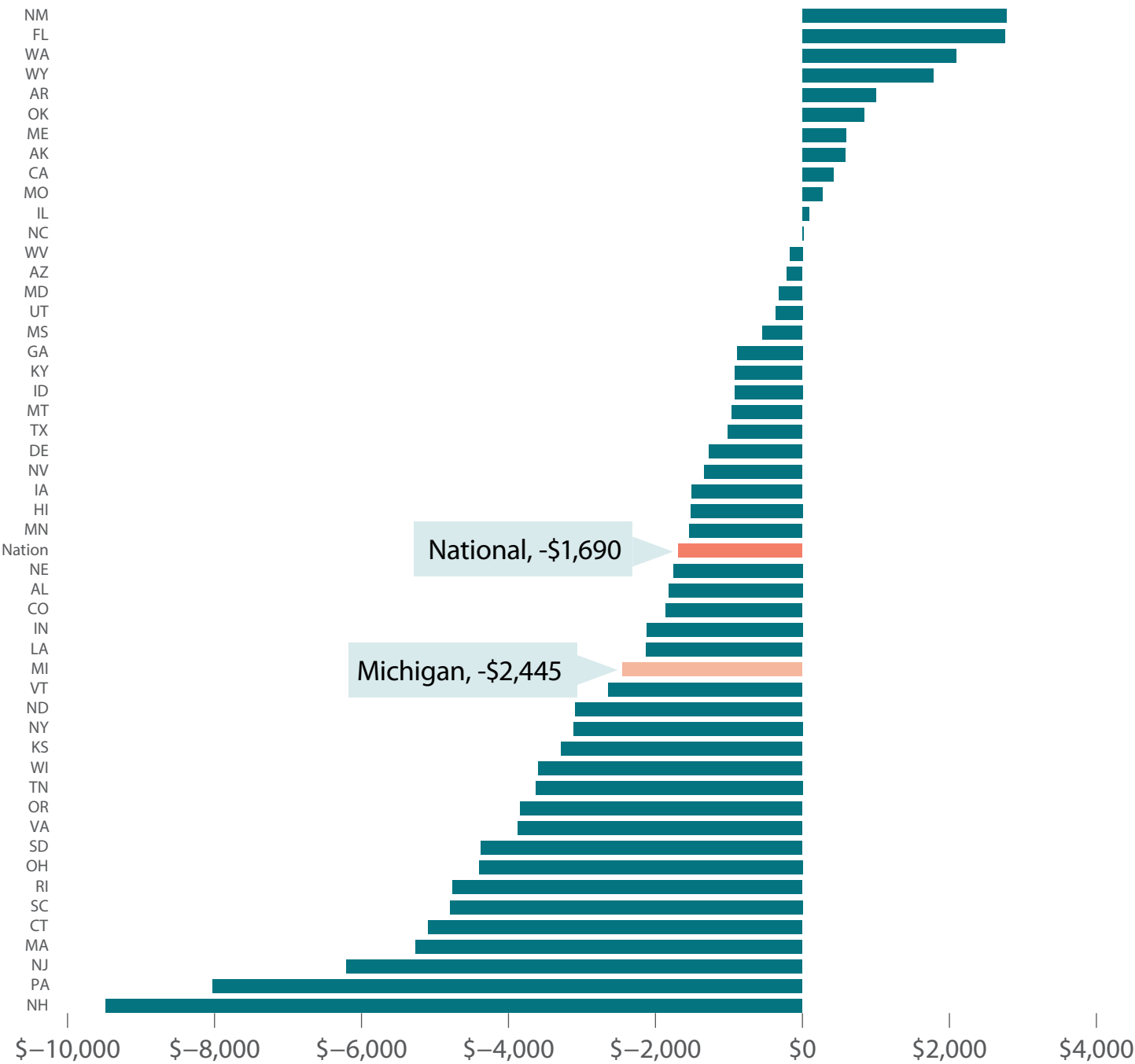
This indicator measures the affordability of four-year public institutions by state for an average Pell Grant recipient who lives on campus, receives the average amount of grant aid, takes out the average amount of federal loans and works over the summer. Data represent the additional dollars needed 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 Michigan student from a low-income background who is paying in-state tuition at a four-year public institution, who lives on campus and works over the summer, faces a \$2,445 affordability gap. This means that despite financial aid and summer wages, a student from a low-income background still falls \$2,445 short, on average, of being able to afford Michigan's four-year public institutions. Michigan is currently ranked 33rd for college affordability. This is a notable drop from Michigan's previous ranking of 14th, highlighting a troubling reality in college affordability both in Michigan and nationwide. Additionally, a [2019 report](#) by the Education Trust found that students from low-income backgrounds would need to work 20 hours per week at minimum wage to afford Michigan's public four-year institutions. Students from low-income backgrounds 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.¹⁵ While these gaps may have improved in some states and worsened in others since 2019, both changes in college affordability¹⁶ and minimum wages across the country are likely to have affected affordability gaps at public institutions.¹⁷

Four-Year Public Institution Affordability Gaps for In-State Students Living On Campus with Summer Work (2022)



SOURCE: National College Access Network, The Growing Gap: Public Higher Education’s Declining Affordability for Pell Grant Recipients, 2024

Endnotes

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