

MICHIGAN'S COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY COMMITMENT

Why Is Michigan's Commitment To College and Career Readiness So Critical?

A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA IS NO LONGER ENOUGH FOR SUCCESS

Today, nearly every good job requires some postsecondary education and/or training – such as an associates or bachelors degree, certificate, license, or completion of an apprenticeship or significant on-the-job training.

In 1950, 60% of jobs were classified as unskilled, attainable by young people with high school diplomas or less. Today, less than 20% jobs are considered to be unskilled.ⁱ

One result: The demand for middle- and high-skilled workers is outpacing the state's supply of workers educated and experienced at that level.

- 79% of Michigan's jobs are middle- or high-skill (jobs that require some postsecondary education or training).
- Yet only 36% of Michigan's adults have some postsecondary degree (associate's or higher).ⁱⁱ

TOO MANY STUDENTS GRADUATE UNPREPARED FOR REAL WORLD CHALLENGES

Currently, far too many students drop out or graduate from high school without the knowledge and skills required for success, closing doors and limiting their post-high school options.

Michigan's graduation rate – both the state-reported and the independently-reported – demonstrates how the education system is not working for all students.

Graduation Rate (class of 2008)	State Reported ⁱⁱⁱ	Independently Reported ^{iv}
	75%	74%

As of 2009, Michigan had 78 "dropout factories" or high schools that graduate 60 percent or less of their students.^v

Far too many students enter two- and four-year postsecondary institutions unprepared for college-level coursework.

Michigan's Remediation Data

33% of Michigan's high school graduates enrolled in the state's public colleges (including research, state colleges, universities and two-year colleges) require remediation/learning support.^{vi}

Employers of graduates entering into the workforce directly after high school note gaps in their knowledge and skills:

- 41% of employers are dissatisfied with graduates' abilities.
- Only 18% believe that new graduates, with no further education beyond high school, have the skills necessary for advancement.^{vii}

THE COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY AGENDA

The best way to prepare students for life after high school is to ensure they graduate with a strong foundation in the core academic areas that will leave all doors open in the future.

Over the past five years, states have driven the college- and career-ready agenda – a policy agenda that seeks to ensure all students graduate high school, and graduate ready for their next steps.

The momentum created by the states has been bolstered by the federal government's Race to the Top competition, which has further incentivized the adoption of common, college- and career-ready standards and assessments.

Support is very strong among voters for college- and career-ready policies, across demographic and party lines:

- *89% of voters agree that "to really get ahead in life a person needs at least some education beyond high school, whether that means university, community college, technical or vocational school."*
- *83% of voters believe all students should "be pushed to take rigorous and broad academic requirements in high school to make sure they have as many options as possible upon graduation."^{viii}*

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What Michigan Has Accomplished To Date^{ix}

- In 2006 Michigan aligned its high school academic standards in mathematics with college- and career-ready expectations
- Michigan adopted the Common Core State Standards in June 2010.
- In 2006 Michigan adopted college- and career-ready graduation requirements – the Michigan Merit Curriculum – for all students.

Michigan is one of only 21 states (including DC) with requirements at this level

- Michigan requires all students to take the ACT, along with sections of WorkKeys and state-developed tests, as part of its high school assessment system, the Michigan Merit Exam.

Michigan is one of only 14 states with high school tests used by higher education for admissions/ placement decisions letting students know if they are ready for college-level coursework while still in high school and giving them time to address any readiness gaps

- Michigan is a governing state in the SMARTER BALANCED Assessment Consortium, a group of states working to develop a common assessment system using Race to the Top Common Assessment funds.
- Michigan's longitudinal data system satisfies eight of the ten essential Data Quality Campaign elements, providing a foundation for strong and sound student-level data collection.
- While Michigan has the capacity to collect a range of college- and career readiness indicators, the state currently collects and uses just one. Michigan will need to expand its use of these data in a variety of ways to get a more complete picture of how their students are faring in K-12 and beyond.

How Michigan Can Further Advance the College- and Career-Ready Agenda

- ✓ ...Realize the promise of the Common Core State Standards by implementing them fully and successfully, taking into consideration the related curricular and policy changes.
- ✓ ...Remain committed to the goals of the common assessment consortium and developing a next-generation, computer-based assessment system that will measure the full range of skills in the Common Core State Standards.
- ✓ ...Further progress on the state's data collection efforts, particularly the linking of K-12 and postsecondary student-level data, and ensuring student-level data are available to key stakeholders (such as parents, teachers, students).
- ✓ ...Re-examine the state's K-12 accountability system to determine how it can reward measures of college and career readiness, in alignment with the state's standards, course requirements and assessments.
- ✓ ...Focus efforts around increasing the state's graduation rate (and decreasing the dropout rate) through student support programs and partnerships with higher education.

ⁱ Carnevale, Anthony P. and Donna Desrochers (2003). *Standards for What? The Economic Roots of K-12 Reform*, Education Testing Services. <http://www.learn2earn.org/For-Educators/Standards-for-What.pdf>

ⁱⁱ National Center for Higher Education Management Systems' analysis of American Community Survey (2009) <http://www.higheredinfo.org>

ⁱⁱⁱ Michigan NCLB State Report Card 2007-08, www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/State_Report_Card_2007-08_264321_7.pdf

^{iv} Education Week Diplomas Count 2011, www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2011/06/09/index.html

^v America's Promise Alliance (2011). Building a Grad Nation: March 2011 Update. www.americaspromise.org/Our-Work/Grad-Nation/Building-a-Grad-Nation.aspx

^{vi} Mackinac Center for Public Policy (Sept 2000). *The Cost of Remedial Education: How Much Michigan Pays When Students Fail to Learn Basic Skills*. www.mackinac.org/archives/2000/s2000-05.pdf

^{vii} Peter D. Hart Research Associates/Public Opinion Strategies, *Rising to the Challenge: Are High School Graduates Prepared for College and Work?* prepared for Achieve, Inc., 2005.

^{viii} Achieve (2010). *Achieving the Possible: What Americans Think About the College- and Career-Ready Agenda*. www.achieve.org/AchievingthePossible

^{ix} Achieve (2011). *Closing the Expectations Gap 2011: 50-State Progress Report on the Alignment of High School Policies with the Demands of College and Careers*. www.achieve.org/ClosingtheExpectationsGap2011

College- and Career-Ready Indicator	Publicly Reported	State Set Goal	Incentive to Improve	Accountability Formula
CCR Diploma				
CCR Testing	YES			
Postsecondary Remediation				
Exceeding CCR				