



**Michigan
Achieves!**

BECOMING A TOP TEN EDUCATION STATE

SUMMARY



DEAR FELLOW MICHIGANDERS,

Michigan is at a crossroads. After years of struggling to recover from the Great Recession, Michigan is beginning to rebuild its economy. Our public education system, however, is not on the rebound.

Over the past ten years, our state has fallen behind much of the rest of the country on national education rankings. Since 2003, Michigan's relative rank has fallen from 28th in the nation to 38th in fourth-grade reading; our fourth-graders now read at lower levels today than they did 10 years ago. What's more, if Michigan stays on its current course, our state could fall to the bottom ten states for student learning in both reading and math by 2030. Within the next five years, if nothing changes, Michigan will be trying to catch up with what had been America's chronically lowest-performing education states.

For our most vulnerable students, our state's continued academic stagnation and decline will mean the path out of poverty will continue to narrow. Opportunities to attain the skills to compete in our global economy will be few, reducing the chances these students will succeed in Michigan's new and developing industries.

Our students deserve better. Now more than ever, at a time when the middle class is shrinking and global competition is growing, college- and career-ready skills continue to offer a ticket to upward mobility.

In our 2015 report, The Education Trust-Midwest offers a comprehensive, research based analysis of Michigan's educational performance and progress. (For the complete report, see MichiganAchieves.com.) With that report, we launched an initiative called Michigan Achieves, with an ambitious vision for making Michigan a top ten education state by 2030. To get there, we need to start with what we know is essential for success in life and school: making sure all Michigan children read well by third grade.

This effort will not be easy. Michigan needs comprehensive systemic changes to transform our current system. This will require a deeper commitment by everyone – from state leaders to district leaders to parents – to implement and invest in the best ways to accelerate progress. Thousands of school leaders, teachers, and families strive daily to prepare all students for college and careers, even though many lack critical tools and resources. It is with them in mind that we launched the Michigan Achieves campaign, a call for all Michiganders to join them in strengthening our public schools.

Once, Michigan was a place where families came to find new opportunities, including great public schools, and to realize the American dream. We can be that state again. But to do so, we must rebuild our public schools just as we have worked so hard to rebuild our economy. We know we can do it. Let's start today.



AMBER ARELLANO
Executive Director
The Education Trust-Midwest



KEN WHIPPLE
Chair
Michigan Achieves Leadership Council

BY 2016 MICHIGAN SHOULD:



GUARANTEE COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READINESS FOR EVERY STUDENT

- Stay on track with college- and career- aligned state assessments, as well as interim and alternate assessments to track progress in early grades, especially in reading.
- Implement high standards for teaching and learning from the classroom up, leveraging the opportunity to transform classroom and school practices.
- Train all Michigan teachers and administrators – starting with K-3 – on college- and career-ready standards.
- Ensure Michigan business, civic and policy leaders, and parents understand that the new standards are necessary to prepare students to thrive and compete in a global economy.



INSIST ON ACCOUNTABILITY FOR STUDENT LEARNING

- Examine the role and functions of the Michigan Department of Education, including an assessment of the department's current capacity and effectiveness.
- Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness and role of the intermediate school district systems across the state, including feedback from teachers and principals.



IMPROVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Ensure student discipline policies are sensible and equitable – and focused on keeping students in school.
- Research best practices from leading states for funding public schools equitably and begin to develop a plan to revamp Michigan's school funding formula.



PROVIDE EFFECTIVE TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS FOR EVERY STUDENT

- Invest in the proposed digital library, which would provide useful materials for teachers in every classroom.
- Starting with K-3, train all teachers on the most effective research-based methods of teaching literacy.
- Also boost early literacy by implementing interim assessments to diagnose problems early on, and holding schools and districts accountable for improving early literacy achievement.
- Approve the blueprint developed by the Michigan Council for Educator Effectiveness (MCEE) and subsequent plans for a statewide system of evaluation and support for teachers, and provide adequate funding to implement it.
- Establish an effective state plan to ensure greater access to effective teachers for low-income students and students of color.

This is an edited version of complete set of recommendations found in the full report at MichiganAchieves.com.

To learn more and join the movement, go to: MichiganAchieves.com.

THE GOOD NEWS:

WE CAN DO FAR BETTER – AND LEADING STATES SHOW THE WAY.

KEY LESSONS FROM LEADING STATES

- Educators matter a lot. Invest in them.
- High standards are the first step.
- Both accountability *and* state school and educator capacity-building are critical.
- Successful implementation is essential.
- Focus first on what matters most for student learning – then bring bureaucracy along.
- Spend effectively.

WHERE DO WE START?

STEP 1: Implementation of College- and Career-Ready Teaching and Learning for All Students.

STEP 2: Support Teachers' and Principals' Efforts to Teach at Higher Levels.

STEP 3: Hold Educators and Schools Accountable for Higher Levels of Performance.

STEP 4: Invest Smartly – and Implement Effectively.

STEP 5: Equitable School Funding and Equitable Access to Effective Educators.



MICHIGAN ACHIEVES STRATEGY

HIGH-LEVERAGE
STRATEGIC
INVESTMENTS

TOP TEN
EDUCATION
STATE BY 2030
STARTING WITH
EARLY LITERACY
IMPROVEMENT
BY 2020

HOLISTIC
STRATEGIES
TO BOOST STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT



PHOTO: AMY SACKA



BECOMING TOP TEN WITH EARLY LITERACY

To become a top ten education state by 2030, Michigan needs to focus on and invest in the highest leverage strategies and learning opportunities for students. To be sure, there's a lot to do, and we can't do it all at once. That's why it's important to start where research and cost-effectiveness meet: early literacy.

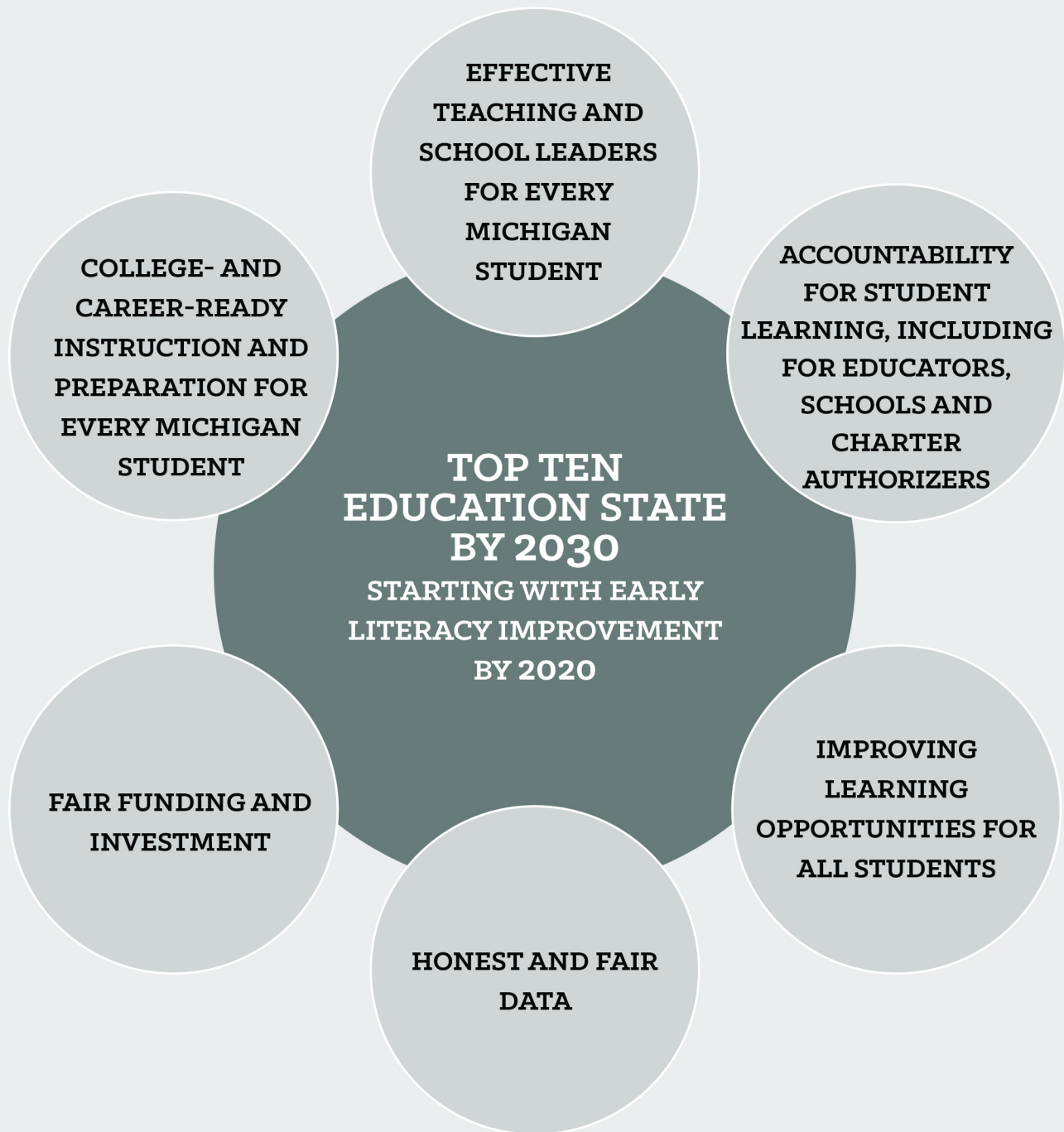
ABOUT THE EDUCATION TRUST—MIDWEST

The Education Trust-Midwest (ETM) promotes high academic achievement for all Michigan students at all levels – pre-kindergarten through college – with a particular focus on African American, Latino, American Indian and low-income students. As a nonpartisan education research, policy, technical assistance and policy organization, ETM works alongside parents, educators, policy makers, and community and business leaders in Michigan to transform schools and colleges into institutions that serve all students well. Lessons learned in these efforts, together with unflinching data analyses and research, shape the organization's work with the goal of making Michigan a top ten education state for every student, starting with our youngest and most vulnerable students.

ETM also houses the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Led by veteran educators who have deep expertise and experience in high-poverty schools, the CETL with the ETM team provides instructional support, coaching, consulting, data analytic and other technical assistance to P-12 schools and educators.

ETM is part of the national Education Trust, which is headquartered in Washington, D.C. ETM and ET are widely recognized as unrivaled sources of effective advocacy, expert analysis and testimony, research, concise presentations and technical assistance to districts, colleges, and community-based organizations.

MICHIGAN ACHIEVES: PILLARS FOR MICHIGAN



To learn more and join the movement, go to: MichiganAchieves.com.

For the digital version of the report and for our 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014 State of Michigan Education reports, go to: edtrustmidwest.org.

To request a presentation or community conversation about this report or other ETM reports, contact: ETMinfo@edtrustmidwest.org.