

Voices for Michigan's Children

AN ISSUES PRIMER FOR MICHIGAN'S 2011 LEADERS

*FROM CRADLE TO CAREER:
EARLY CHILDHOOD*

*GROWING MICHIGAN'S
WORK FORCE
FROM THE START*

*ECONOMIC IMPACT:
ASTRONOMICAL*

WHERE MICHIGAN STANDS

Early deprivation affects the ability to learn, hampering school readiness and chances for success. Scientists have proven that by the time children reach school age, between 80 and 90 percent of the intellectual and emotional wiring of their brains has been set for life. Despite the evidence that children's earliest experiences affect the very architecture of their brains, too many young children are facing the type of deprivation that has been shown to thwart their growth and potential.

- More than one of every five children in Michigan under age six live in poverty, with much higher rates for Native American (47%), African American (44%), and Hispanic (38%) and Latino youngsters.
- Nearly 1,000 Michigan infants die in the first year of life, with Michigan ranking 33rd in the U.S., largely because African American children are three times more likely to die before age 1.
- The state's youngest children are more likely to be the victims of child abuse and neglect, with the number of child victims up 16 percent between 2000 and 2008.

Too few services are available to help parents become their children's first and best teachers, and to prevent child abuse and neglect. Michigan has devoted few resources to supporting parents, and deep cuts have been made in prevention and family support programs during the state's recent fiscal crises. New federal funds are expected for home visitation programs as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act signed into law by the President on March 23rd, and state planning is underway, led by the Department of Community Health and the Early Childhood Investment Corporation.

Too many children enter school unprepared because of their lack of access to high quality early learning and preschool programs. An estimated 40,000 at-risk four-year-olds currently eligible for the Michigan's Great Start School Readiness program are not served because current funding levels allow for less than half of all eligible children to enroll. A recent survey of Michigan kindergarten

Key Stats

1 of every 5 - Michigan children under age 6 live in poverty

16% - Increase in child abuse victims from 2000-2008 in Michigan

35% - Of Michigan kindergarteners are not ready to learn

\$1.1 Billion - Saved in Michigan last year due to school readiness efforts since 1984

83% - Of Michigan voters think early ed programs are absolutely necessary

teachers found that only 65 percent of children entering their classrooms are ready to learn, and the lack of opportunity to attend a preschool program is a primary reason that kindergartners are already trailing behind their peers. Further, 9 out of every 10 kindergarten teachers report that the time needed to work with children who are behind when entering school affects their ability to teach the rest of the students in their classes.

In addition approximately 36,000 young Michigan children are in child care settings subsidized by the state so their parents can work or participate in training and education programs. With subsidy payments averaging at less than 30 percent of the current market rate, two of every three children in publicly-subsidized child care in Michigan are in unregulated care, where little is known about safety or quality—a rate much higher than other states.

CAUSES & CHALLENGES

Despite strong science about the impact of the early years, state investments in early education and care services have eroded. While there were some increases in funding for Michigan's Great Start School Readiness program and local Great Start Collaboratives in 2007 and 2008, overall funding for early childhood programs is down over the last decade, with cuts in family preservation and support services, home visiting, child care, and preschool programs.

The state's current investments in young children are through a patchwork of services that result in too many children falling through the cracks. To ensure that children are healthy and ready to learn, Michigan must adopt reforms that help the state move from an array of disconnected programs to a more accountable system that engages parents and communities, and that links to Michigan's K-12 education system.

A stronger focus on the quality of services for young children is critical. The evidence is clear that Michigan will reap the benefits of early childhood investments only if children receive high quality services. In a time of budget retraction, too little has been done to invest in high quality services, and cuts in programs and reimbursements for providers have further jeopardized quality.

BUDGET IMPACT

Early childhood programs have been cut, and continue to be at-risk. In the current fiscal year, state lawmakers closed a \$2.8 billion deficit in part by reducing child care subsidies for low-income working parents, cutting preschool programs for more than 2,200 low-income four-year-olds, and further reducing funding for proven family support programs such as the Nurse Family Partnership and the 0 to 3 Secondary Prevention programs. As the Michigan Legislature faces additional deep shortfalls in the fiscal year 2011 budget, early childhood education and care programs continue to be at-risk.

The failure to invest in early education and care programs has a negative impact on the overall state budget. Research shows that every \$1 invested in high quality early care and education services for low-income children reaps a return to society of more than \$17—a return on investment that has convinced leading economists of the importance of starting early. A recent Michigan study shows that Michigan saved \$1.1 billion in 2009 alone due to investments made in the state's school readiness efforts over the past 25 years, with savings accruing from reduced costs related to K-12 education, child abuse and neglect, crime, public assistance, and substance abuse.



VOTER VOICE

Voters value early childhood services and are willing to pay for it. A 2009 poll of Michigan voters showed that most (83%) believe that early childhood development and education programs are an absolute necessity for their communities. Further, the majority favor making the funding investments needed to ensure that all children arrive at school ready to learn—even if it increases their taxes. Finally, a majority of voters would cast their vote based on a candidate’s position on early childhood investments.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Help all children prepare for school and life by protecting funding for children’s programs and services as the Governor and state lawmakers work to balance the state budget and resolve Michigan’s fiscal and economic problems.
- Improve coordination and impact of services and programs by reforming state early childhood systems, starting with better integration of early learning and K-12 education programs.
- Make as a top state priority investments in what all young children need to thrive, including:
 - Expanded access to high quality child care and early learning programs for at-risk children.
 - Increased access for parents and caregivers to the supports needed to be children’s first and best teachers, including home visitation services for at-risk children and families.
 - Improved access to preventive and primary health and mental health services for young children.

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*FROM CRADLE TO CAREER:
EDUCATION*

*PROVIDING PATHS TO
GRADUATION FOR A
BRIGHTER FUTURE*

*ECONOMIC IMPACT:
ASTRONOMICAL*

WHERE MICHIGAN STANDS

Too many Michigan young people aren't succeeding through high school graduation. More than 35,000 Michigan young people did not receive a high school diploma in the spring of 2009 – nearly one-quarter of the students who began high school four-years earlier. In 2007, 155,000 young adults aged 18-24 did not have a high school diploma in Michigan. Young people of color or those from economically disadvantaged families remain the least likely to graduate “on-time” with their peers.

Many young people need more time or different paths to reach a diploma. Of the students who failed to graduate in four-years, fully 19,000 were still on a path toward high school completion. The share of students in this group has increased more than 50 percent since 2007, illustrating the need for increased attention to programs that serve young people who may need more time or different paths to graduate.

The economic consequences of dropping out are high. Dropouts have significantly less earning power, and much higher likelihood of unemployment, substance abuse, incarceration and poor health. Communities, which lose tax revenue and take on higher monetary and social costs, can be economically vibrant only when their residents are engaged in life-long learning beginning with a high school diploma.

We know how to graduate more young people from high school. There is strong research that allows us to predict which students are at-risk of dropping out. Young people who fall behind in credits are much more likely to not complete school, yet there are very limited options for credit recovery for these students. Once young people fall behind in school, or when they face significant personal and educational obstacles, a traditional high school setting is not always successful in reengaging them, yet few alternatives exist. In addition, school discipline policies often contribute to disengagement and lost credits. These barriers to success have always had significant implications for young people, their families and communities. Those implications have only grown with the recent change to compulsory attendance laws.

Young people face barriers to graduation that education alone cannot remove. Educational success is an outgrowth of successes and failures within many systems that have been built over the course of young

Key Stats

25% of Michigan students did not graduate in 2009 after four years of high school

155,000 young adults aged 18-24 did not have a high school diploma in 2007

2/3 of teen moms in Michigan do not complete high school

1 in 6 births in Michigan is to a mom who has not completed high school

people's lives. For students to successfully navigate school and life, they must remain healthy; feel safe and secure; feel supported and cared for; be challenged and inspired to achieve; and they must be engaged and connected in their learning, in their communities, to their future, to extracurricular activities, and at home. To change educational outcomes for young people, we must recognize the impact of all those areas.

Michigan is poised to make great strides in improving the educational success of all children. The unprecedented attention and engagement of the private sector, supporting research, innovation in Michigan and around the nation, and renewed public sector attention provide an opportunity. We must make a commitment to invest in our children and take advantage of these opportunities before we lose them to more disinvestment. It is in everyone's best interest to succeed in graduating more young people from quality high schools, and we have many models of this success around the state and nation.

BUDGET IMPACT

Costs of dropping out are far-reaching. The economic, social, and fiscal consequences of dropping out of school—unemployment, poverty, substance abuse, incarceration, poor health, to name a few—are profound and unacceptable. In addition, high school dropouts face a labor market that is becoming more and more difficult to successfully navigate. Young people without a basic education are less likely to have the maturity and skills needed to parent effectively or the resources to promote the well-being of the next generation of Michiganders. These consequences translate to communities as forgone tax revenue, and higher social costs.

Michigan has reduced its commitment to education over the past few years. Policymakers have made significant reductions in per pupil grants to all local school districts, reductions for Intermediate School Districts, and cuts in programs improving adolescent health, high school completion and college and career access.

VOTER VOICE

Polls show consistent agreement that economic development is of primary concern to Michigan residents, most recently evidenced through a June 2010 EPIC-MRA poll. Voters realize, and the research bears out that education is the most reliable path to the state's economic prosperity.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Help adolescents stay in school by supporting innovative after-school programs in middle and high schools, including credit recovery programs and apprenticeships.
- Build an atmosphere conducive to learning by supporting incentives for schools to establish effective discipline alternatives, and supporting truancy prevention and credit recovery initiatives that utilize strong out-of-school time partners, strong workforce development partners and many others.
- Support multiple pathways to graduation: better support those that we have, such as alternative and community education options, community college and workforce development partnerships; and create other pathways to consistently serve young people throughout the state.
- Commit to meaningful education reform by supporting consistent funding for schools and programs in order to see real improvement in school success for those most challenged schools, communities and young people.





AN ISSUES PRIMER FOR MICHIGAN'S 2011 LEADERS

FROM CRADLE TO CAREER:
EDUCATION

WORKING TOGETHER:
P-20 COUNCILS

ECONOMIC IMPACT:
ASTRONOMICAL

WHERE MICHIGAN STANDS

A 21st century commitment to education needs to start at birth and extend through adulthood. Research supports it, and Michigan's economy demands it. Unfortunately, our current policy priorities and revenue structure cannot assure it. Clearly, a new and bold direction is needed to build the educated and skilled workforce that can lead Michigan back down the path of prosperity.

While reforming the education system itself is critical, alone it is not enough. Schools must develop relationships with community resources that strengthen curriculum and instruction, increase parent involvement and meet children's ever-changing developmental needs. Families, students, schools and communities often face layers of challenge and will need a coordinated approach that leverages the resources within all sectors of the community.

There are successful examples of partnerships around the country. Michigan is one of only twelve states without an official task force or council devoted to aligning programming, funding and expectations from the earliest years of a child's development, through the K-12 system, and into and through postsecondary education and workforce participation. These groups identify, create, incentivize and support interagency, public/private partnerships toward an end goal of educational and workforce success for all young people.

Michigan has existing partnerships on which to build. Successful interagency efforts exist for early childhood in the Early Childhood Investment Corporation and statewide through the Great Start system based within Intermediate School Districts; and for youth services in the Michigan After-School Partnership, co-chaired by four different State Departments, and the Shared Youth Vision Partnership, staffed out of the Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth and engaging several other critical State Departments. All of these efforts successfully engage private-sector partners as well.

CAUSES & CHALLENGES

Educational success is an outgrowth of successes and failures within many systems that have been built over the course of young people's lives. For students to successfully navigate school and life, they must be born healthy and remain healthy; they must feel safe and secure; they must feel supported and cared for; they must be challenged and inspired to achieve; and they must be engaged and connected in their learning, in their

Key Stats

38 – Other states have a P-20 task force or council that aligns data, program and funding

\$17 – Saved in remedial ed., crime, welfare, etc. for every \$1 spent on high quality early care and education for low-income kids

communities, to their future, to extracurricular activities, and at home. To change educational outcomes for young people, resources addressing all of those areas must be coordinated.

Michigan lacks a cradle-to-career vision and plan for consistent investment. Without investments in young children, the state's attempt to improve schools will not succeed. Without investments in these same children once they enter the school doors, the state's attempts to improve schools and increase educational achievement will fail. And without investments in these same young people who struggle to stay engaged with school or have already become disengaged, the state's attempts to expand access to higher education and modernize its economy will not work.

BUDGET IMPACT

The failure to invest from cradle to career has a negative impact on the overall state budget. Research shows that every \$1 invested in high quality early care and education services for low-income children reaps a return to society of more than \$17—a return on investment that has convinced leading economists of the importance of starting early. A recent study shows that Michigan saved \$1.1 billion in 2009 alone due to investments made in the state's school readiness efforts over the past 25 years, with savings accruing from reduced costs related to K-12 education, child abuse and neglect, crime, public assistance, and substance abuse.

Costs of school failure are far-reaching. The economic, social, and fiscal consequences of dropping out of school—unemployment, poverty, substance abuse, incarceration, and poor health to name a few—are profound and unacceptable. In addition, high school dropouts face a labor market that is increasingly difficult to navigate successfully. Young people without a basic education are less likely to have the maturity and skills needed to parent effectively, or the resources to promote the well-being of the next generation of Michiganders. These consequences translate to communities as forgone tax revenue, and higher social costs.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Utilize current momentum for collaboration. Pushed by changing federal regulations, a small step was taken in 2010 to re-name the CEPI Advisory Council to be Michigan's P-20 Council and expanded its role to include data integration from higher education. In addition, the State Board of Education also supported the concept of a collaborative council in its recent education reform recommendations and suggested that the State Superintendent facilitate the effort. However, where these efforts have been consistent and longer-term is when they are required by law and not created solely through Administrative action.

Expand, staff and consistently support the work of a comprehensive P-20 Council. Michigan needs a birth to adulthood education system that is built on a partnership of resources from a variety of sectors. To make that kind of coordination work, Michigan needs to establish a partnership with the responsibility and authority to develop and maintain it. Michigan's P-20 Council needs to be bi-partisan and interagency; build from existing efforts; engage diverse stakeholders; identify areas for improvement; and use its authority and membership to improve how systems work for kids.

Broadly define the role of Michigan's P-20 Council. The Council's role should include support for data systems that work together to best serve children, youths and families; integration of program development and planning across state departments and private-sector interests; and review of public and private resources to maximize leveraging opportunities.

