



MAKING MICHIGAN A TOP TEN STATE FOR EDUCATION OUTCOMES A PRESENTATION TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION APRIL 11, 2015

While Michigan is a top ten state when it comes to our investment in K-12 education and teacher salaries, we are sorely lacking in results with less than 50% of K-8 students proficient in math and reading and less than 20% of our high school graduates are considered college-and-career-ready.

Lack of Vision

- A considerable roadblock to becoming a top ten state is the lack of consensus and a common vision as to what we expect from K-12 education in the state.
- We have too many “leaders” advocating a variety of conflicting goals and priorities when you consider the various members of the State Board of Education, Superintendent, Governor, Legislature, 800 school districts, ISDs, teachers unions and the alphabet soup of stakeholder groups. Our recommendation is to have the Governor appoint the State Superintendent.

Expand Choice

- Because a zip code shouldn’t determine the educational outcomes for children, GLEP believes expanding parental choice should be a higher priority, and we support an “any time, any place, any way, at any pace” approach to education.
- Full school choice includes: inter-district choice, charter public schools, virtual schools, home schooling, Education Savings Accounts, scholarship tax credit programs, and school vouchers. 22 states, including every other Great Lakes state except Michigan, has some form of publicly-funding private school choice.

Improve Quality

- Michigan must maintain high standards and rigorous expectations for all students, with a focus on early literacy and college-and-career readiness. Improved academic performance should be our #1 priority.
- Quality schools should be expanded and given added flexibility while chronically-failing schools should improve or be closed.
- Accountability and transparency measures should be applied uniformly to all public schools, and not used as a political sledgehammer against a small number of schools based solely on governance.
- We must improve teacher quality through an evaluation system that recognizes student academic growth; put the best and brightest teachers in the classroom; reward high-performing teachers; require ineffective teachers to improve or leave the profession; and by addressing teacher prep programs.

Increase Accountability

- Michigan should adopt a parent-friendly school accountability system that provides A-F letter grades to individual schools based on student proficiency and growth.
- We must pass reforms necessary to ensure the future sustainability of MPSERS while, to the degree possible, honor retirement commitments to existing education professionals.
- Delivering on the promise of Proposal A requires an equitable and uniform foundation grant for all students to cover basic, operational costs – along with additional targeted funding for special needs. Further, this uniform foundation grant should follow students to the school of their choice.

If you would like additional information about issues impacting public education in Michigan, please contact Gary Naeyaert, Executive Director, at gnaeyaert@glep.org or 517-281-2690.

Supporting choice, quality and accountability in education.