MI Blueprint

for Comprehensive Student Recovery

Student Recovery Advisory Council

May 2021

Table of Contents

Foreword

Dear School Community Members,

I am so hopeful about the future of Michigan's public schools.

The past year has been difficult for so many reasons, but we have witnessed acts of heroism amid unimaginable challenges.

The teacher who kept four computers and her cell phone going at all times during the day to ensure she didn't lose a single student, and then returned home to teach her own children.

The high school student who started a free, virtual tutoring program for younger students in her district.

The community foundations who pooled money to offer young people therapy sessions – regardless of whether or not they had health insurance.

The local health department that established a vaccination clinic in a high school gym on a Saturday morning to provide the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine to every educator in the district.

The team of bilingual parent liaisons, who worked through the summer to ensure that families with students whose primary language is not English, had access to nutritious food.

Again and again, we came together for our kids, our schools, and our communities.

It is for this reason, that as we turn towards comprehensive recovery for every community, school, and student in our great state, I am so hopeful.

On February 4, 2021, I signed Executive Order 2021-02, to create the Student Recovery Advisory Council of Michigan. I tasked the Advisory Council with creating guidance that helps school leaders and educators build a comprehensive, evidence-based, and equity-driven recovery plan that their community trusts.

The most pressing challenges school communities are facing aren't new, but they have been exacerbated by the pandemic, economic hardship, and social division. That is why I am so proud of the MI Blueprint for Comprehensive Student Recovery that the Advisory Council has created.

The Blueprint won't solve every problem or mitigate every risk, but it will put us on the path to meeting the academic, mental, social-emotional, and physical needs of all students. And it will provide a framework to provide support and resources for our educators and school staff. To meet the moment, LEAs and labor units will need to work together, and as always, issues subject to collective bargaining should be addressed at the local level.

Perhaps most critically, the Blueprint will help us get back to the unique joy of teaching and learning.

The Advisory Council did its part. Now policymakers must act. There are a number of policy changes that need to be made to accelerate student recovery. We look forward to working closely over the coming weeks and months with our partners in the legislature to ensure that educators, school staff, school leaders, and district administrators have the tools, resources, and flexibility they require to support a comprehensive recovery for all students.

Thank you so much for all you have done, and all you will do as part of our collective recovery.

Governor Gretchen Whitmer

Acknowledgements

Members of the Student Recovery Advisory Council of Michigan collectively spent thousands of volunteer hours representing the diverse geographic and demographic composition of our state. Members served on behalf of parents, students, school leaders, educators, school counselors, public health officers, pediatricians, mental health experts, and community-based organizations. This Council's deep knowledge, boundless passion, and commitment to collaborate demonstrated Michigan at its best; united in the common purpose of ensuring all of Michigan's communities move forward together, on our path to recovery.

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The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Michigan's students

Districts, schools, and educators across the state have been working to provide meaningful and high-quality learning experiences for their students. They have established communities in socially distanced classrooms and through computer screens. They have provided food and hope to students and families - and so much more. They should be celebrated and thanked.

Despite their best efforts, data confirms that many Michigan preK–12 students have experienced substantial disruptions to their schooling during the 2020–21 academic year and that these disruptions have impacted some students more than others. We now know that the consequences on student well-being based on limited in-person instruction go beyond academic disruptions; this is particularly true for the students who are most traditionally under-resourced. To that end, since the onset of the pandemic, there has been an increase in reported domestic violence, child abuse, child neglect, and solitary substance use among adolescents.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also highlighted the multifaceted ability of public schools – not only to educate our students, but to keep them mentally and physically healthy. For instance, many children depend on schools for basic physical and mental health care services such as hearing and vision examinations, disability evaluations, immunizations, physical education, and food security. When students are not consistently in school buildings, many of these services fall by the wayside.

These ramifications and associated school disruptions may be particularly acute for students experiencing additional stressors derived from family, including economic hardship or the loss of a loved one, and neighborhood circumstances that contribute to disparities between high and low-income students, as well as between white students and students of color.

We now know that the Covid-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted communities of color in Michigan. African Americans represent nearly 14 percent of the state's population, yet they represent 40 percent of the deaths from coronavirus. Covid-19 disparities have also appeared by ethnicity. The cumulative Covid-19 case rate per million population among Hispanic and Latino persons in Michigan has been over 70% higher than the rate in White populations. Students bring these experiences from their daily life into the classroom--demanding a proactive response to racial disparities in Michigan schools.

Together, these data affirm that Michigan's students need comprehensive and holistic support.

Student Mental and Physical Health

COVID-19 pandemic increased reports of:

- Domestic violence
- Child abuse/child neglect
- Solitary substance use among adolescents

School disruptions may be particularly acute for racial/ethnic minorities and low-income students.

Student Achievement

Estimates suggest that students return to school in fall 2020 with roughly 63-68% of the learning gains in reading and 37-50% of the learning gains in math relative to a normal year.

Aggregate test score declines among Black students were nearly 50% larger than those of their White peers.

Impact on Higher Education

FAFSA Testing:
Overall completion rates have fallen by 7% since 2019–20, but Title I schools and schools with high proportions of minority students declined 15 to 18%.

In Michigan, fall 2020 college enrollment dropped by 4.4% - over five times the decrease in fall 2019.

Research and data compiled by the Education Policy Innovation Collaborative, Michigan State University

Michigan's students need a comprehensive recovery plan

MI Blueprint for Comprehensive Student Recovery is designed to support local education leaders in developing and implementing a comprehensive recovery plan that is multi-year, evidence-based, and equity-driven. Specifically, it will provide a foundation to support the following key activities over the next six to eighteen months:

Determine the comprehensive needs of students and key stakeholders in the school community.

Strengthen relationships and trust through authentic and inclusive planning with all stakeholders.

Implement structural changes, expand student supports, and address staffing needs to strengthen and sustain evidence-based teaching and learning, while providing the resources that all students' need to thrive socially, emotionally, physically and mentally.

MI Blueprint for Comprehensive Student Recovery also provides specific recommendations for state-level policymakers to accelerate student recovery now and lay the foundation for significant systems change in the future.

How MI Blueprint for Comprehensive Student Recovery is organized

📖	**Section**	Guidance to develop and implement a comprehensive student recovery plan	Policy recommendations to promote a comprehensive student recovery
📄	**Pages**	Pages 11–34	Pages 35–40
👥	**Who is this section for?**	• Superintendents • Educators • Labor organizations • School board members • School leaders	• State policymakers
✏️	**What topics does this section address?**	• Wellness • Academics • School Climate • Family and Community Engagement • Postsecondary	• Adequate, equitable funding • Consistent funding • Top talent • Innovation in teaching & learning • Universal Pre-K
📁	**How is this section organized?**	Each topic includes a number of challenges. Each challenge includes: • Root cause • Goal • High-leverage actions • Supporting evidence • High-leverage actions in Michigan (where available)	• Recommendation • Rationale • Next steps

How to use MI Blueprint for Comprehensive Student Recovery

MI Blueprint for Comprehensive Student Recovery is designed to be adaptable based on the needs of local communities because each community experienced the pandemic differently. Some districts and schools may choose to follow the Blueprint step by step, while others may decide which sections are most helpful. In some instances, the Blueprints calls for additional resources, including staffing, to implement with fidelity. LEAs and schools should work with their local bargaining units to ensure the current collective bargaining agreements are followed or letters of amendment or memorandum of understanding are developed and executed as appropriate, particularly relative to new or expanded job responsibilities. **Nothing in the Blueprint is mandatory.**

1.
Establish a student recovery committee that is inclusive and representative of the diverse stakeholders involved. The committee is tasked with drafting and implementing the district's or school's comprehensive student recovery plan.

2.
Review the Blueprint through the lens of local challenges, opportunities, evidence, and equitable outcomes with the committee.

3.
Prioritize the most critical challenges to address **(it is not practical to take on every challenge)**.

4.
Consider how student supports may be implemented based on a shared understanding of the Blueprint. It is critical to include a staffing plan assessment to determine the new staff that will be needed and the responsibilities that will need to be redefined and/or expanded for existing staff.

5.
Engage your stakeholders in a transparent conversation regarding the district's or school's comprehensive student recovery strategy. Be intentional in ensuring engagement is representative of your community's diversity.

6.
Finalize your district's or school's comprehensive student recovery plan.

7.
Build a comprehensive student recovery budget using American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds that accounts for a multi-year recovery. Note the Blueprint addresses all components that LEAs will have to address in their ARP ESSER plan.

8.
Share your comprehensive student recovery plan and budget with stakeholders.

9.
Hire new staff and expand responsibility of existing staff and compensate accordingly (e.g., for summer school and professional learning).

10.
Implement and begin to measure the short- and long-term effectiveness of your comprehensive student recovery plan.

Guiding Principles

The Blueprint is based on the following principles. These principles may serve as a starting point for consideration of the core elements of a comprehensive student recovery plan.

The Blueprint must be informed by student voice.

The Blueprint must safeguard the health and safety of students and staff.

The Blueprint must provide flexibility and encourage adaptation and innovation.

The Blueprint must support a multi-year approach to recovery.

The Blueprint must be embedded within an equity framework, with attention paid to specific student populations.

The Blueprint must be grounded in evidence.

The Blueprint must ensure educators and school staff have the tools, resources and support they need.

The Blueprint must prioritize family and community engagement and partnership to maximize resources.

The Blueprint must take a whole-child/family approach.
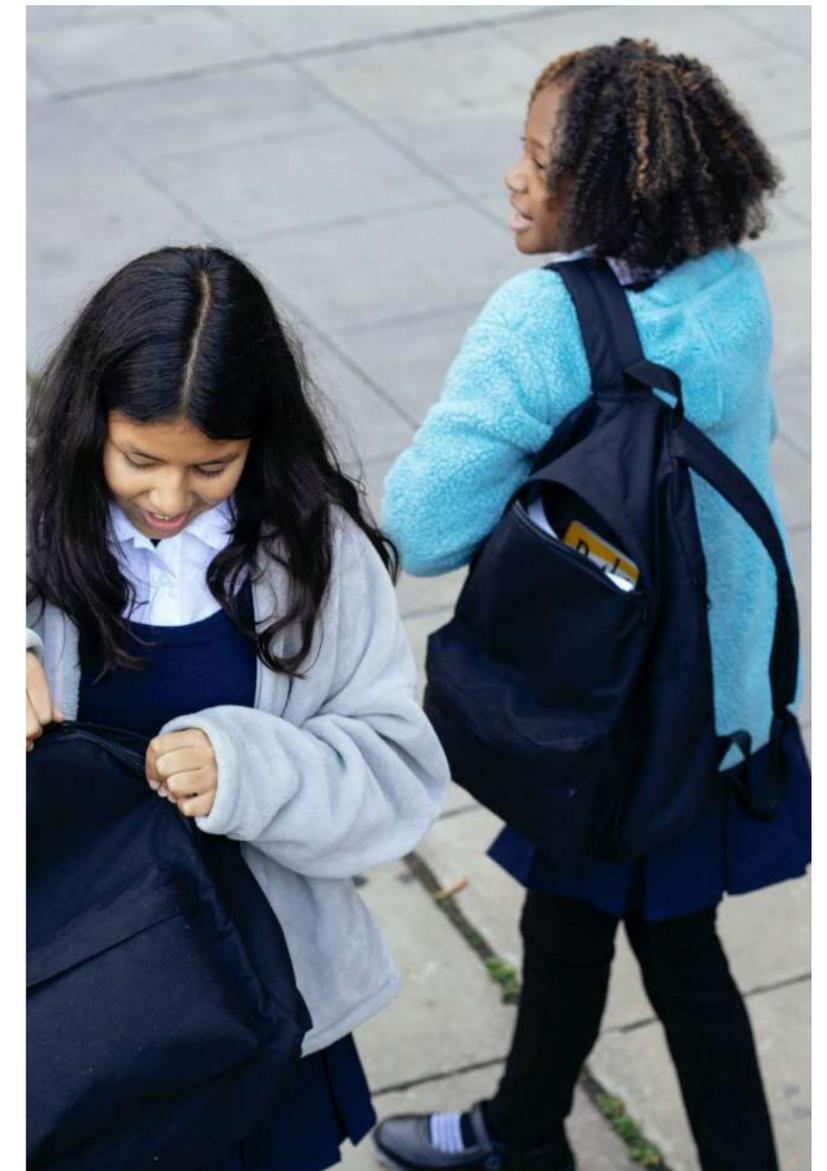
Wellness

Healthy students -- physically, mentally and social-emotionally -- are better learners. Covid-19 has accentuated and created new stressors, limitations on physical movement and social activities due to quarantine, and unexpected lifestyle changes leaving our students more vulnerable to physical and mental illness, academic failure, and suicide.

🔍 Challenge

Incomplete knowledge of the comprehensive wellness needs of students and families

◁ Root Cause

Staff capacity and wellness data

🎯 Goal

Establish comprehensive knowledge of the students' wellness needs during the first two months of the 2021–2022 school year and continue to assess wellness throughout the school year.

📋 High-Leverage Actions

1

Conduct universal mental health screenings to identify students in need of supports, targeted services, or referrals. Disaggregate data by race/ethnicity, poverty, and zip code to ensure all groups are served equitably. Comply with all federal privacy laws.

2

Create opportunities for families to access educational opportunities focused on wellness and to voice wellness needs.
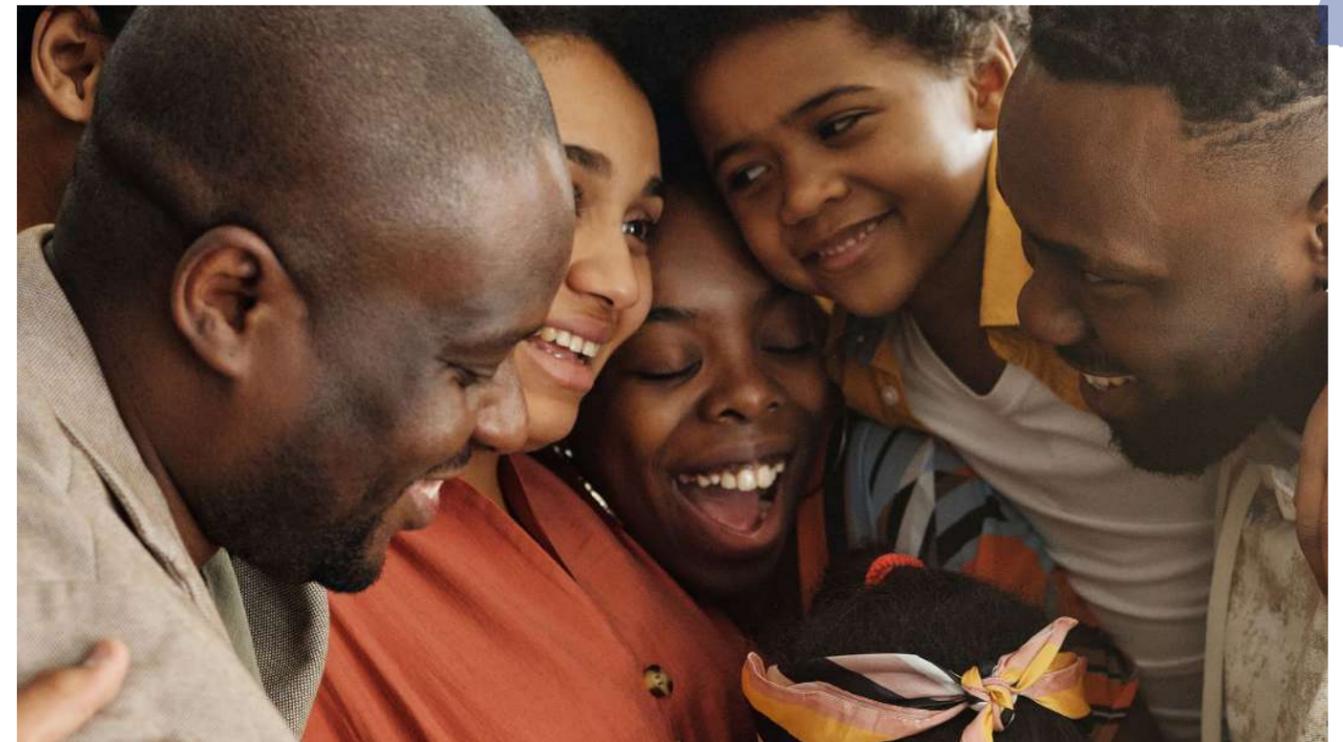
📑 Supporting Evidence

Student Screening

- School Mental Health Collaborative, Best Practices in Universal Screening

- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, SEL Screening Tools

- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Behavioral Health Screening Tools

- School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation System, SHAPE System

- FastBridge, SABERS

- PanoramaEd, Social Emotional Learning Resources

- Aperture Education, DESSA assessment

- Youth in Mind, Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire

- TRAILS, Student Mental Health Screening, A Toolkit for Schools During Covid-19

Family Wellness

- Edutopia: Family Wellness Surveys

🦫 High-Leverage Actions in Michigan

At Detroit Public Schools Community District, school leadership collaborated with TRAILS to develop a universal student mental health screener. This screening measure was made available to all students in grades 3–12 and was completed by approximately 19,000 students. Students identified as needing follow-up support were linked with student support personnel, including over 300 school social workers and counselors that had been trained to deliver the TRAILS Coping with COVID-19 curriculum. This curriculum is free and publicly available on the TRAILS Website.

🔍 Challenge

Lack of access to a school nurse means missed opportunities to identify, monitor or manage illness, particularly for children with chronic conditions

⟨ Root Cause

School budget constraints and human capital shortages

🎯 Goal

Ensure every student has access to a school nurse or nursing services (e.g., shared nurse or telehealth) during the 2021–2022 school year.
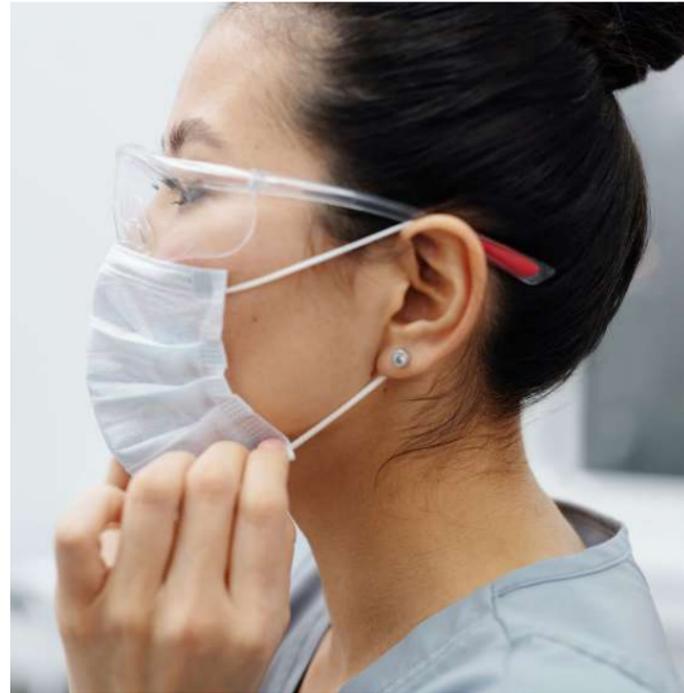

📋 High-Leverage Actions

- Leverage funds from the ARP to hire a full-time or shared nurse (for general populations, the minimum suggested ratio is 1:750 per the National Association of School Nurses).
- Include nurses in key decisions related to student health.
- Maximize and/or create common information systems to facilitate dialogue between school nurses and primary care providers.
- Set up telehealth consultations between pediatricians and in-school nursing services to assist with management in areas without ready access to pediatrician support locally.
- Partner with local Schools of Nursing to give student nurses robust clinical experiences and to recruit soon-to-be or recent graduates.

📄 Supporting Evidence

- CDC, Health Schools School Health Index
- National Association of School Nurses, Framework for 21st Century School Nursing Practice
- Michigan Department of Community Health, Healthy Tools for Schools
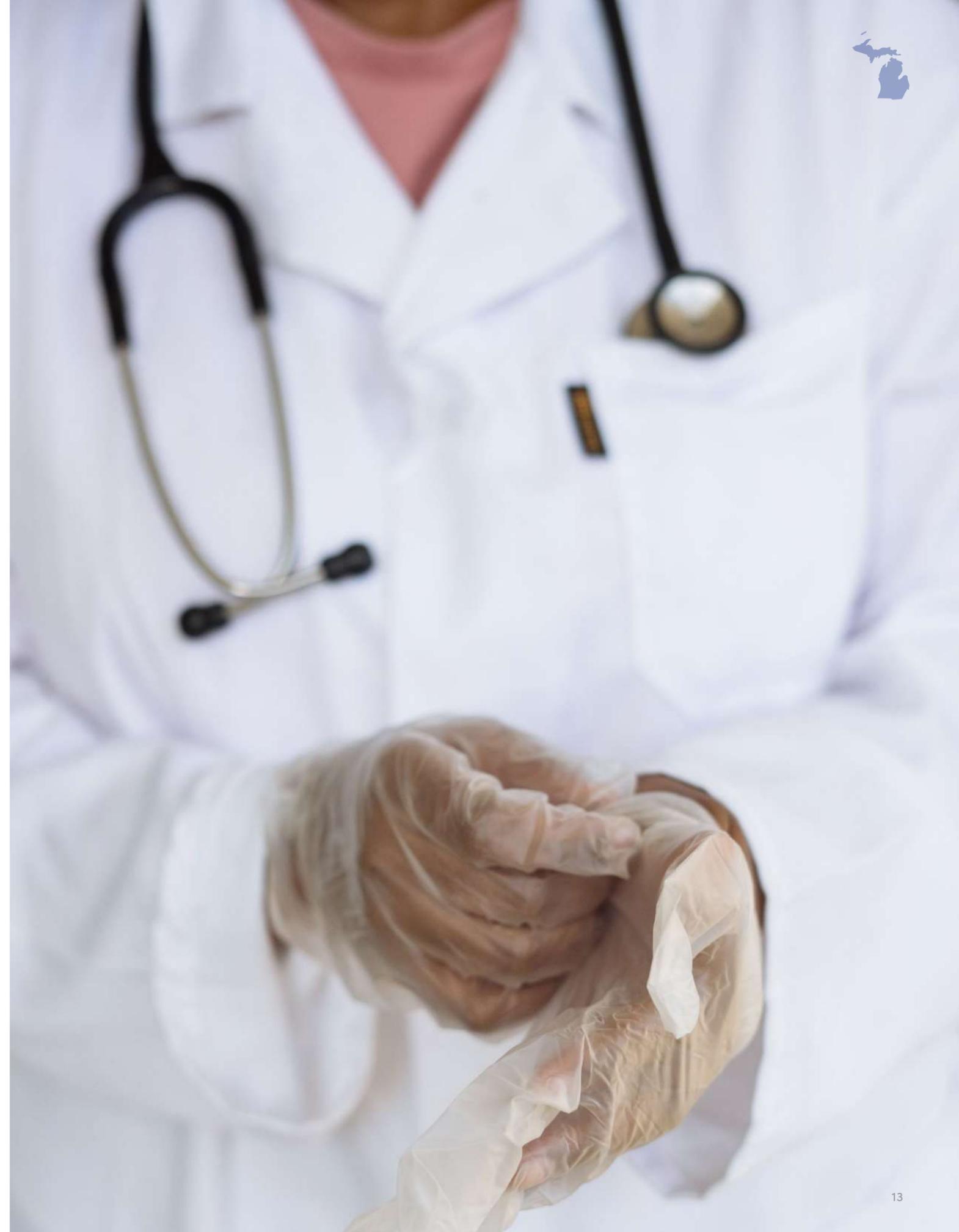
🔍 Challenge

High rates of unmitigated student mental health challenges, including symptoms of depression, anxiety, traumatic stress, racial trauma, and grief

◁ Root Cause

Mental health challenges exacerbated by Covid-19

◎ Goal

Student mental health recovery and social-emotional wellness is promoted through evidence-based professional learning and prioritization of the "whole child" and districtwide delivery of evidence-based, multi-tiered, culturally-affirming systems of support.
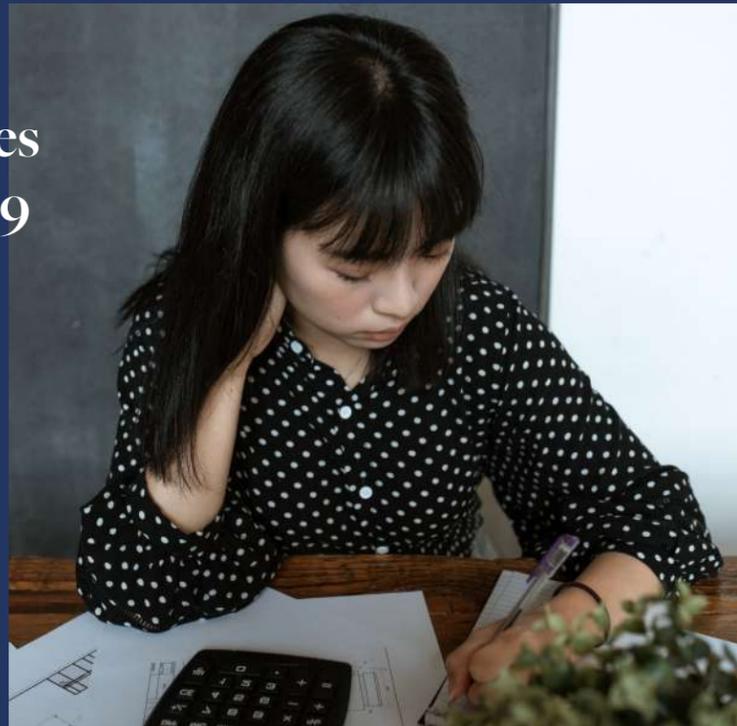
📋 High-Leverage Actions

- Ensure all staff have access to high-quality professional development opportunities that equip them to support student wellness at multiple tiers.
- Implement coaching and consultation models to increase the impact of educator professional development and learning.
- Use disaggregated data to inform student referrals to appropriate wellness services.
- Implement evidence-based, culturally-affirming and aligned social and emotional learning programs in all grade levels.
- Implement evidence-based and culturally affirming multi-tiered interventions to support students impacted by symptoms of a mental health concern.
- Ensure school staff have access to a library of trauma-informed best practices, including racial trauma.
- Create non-threatening mechanisms for students to seek mental health support or refer a classmate to support services.

📜 Supporting Evidence

Referrals
- SSIS CoLab

Social and Emotional Learning Programs
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction SEL Programs List
- CASEL, Programs guide
- CASEL, Implementation guide
- Michigan Department of Education, SEL programs and funding
- Michigan, Model Tier 1 Curriculum
- Harmony SEL

Multi-tiered Interventions
- TRAILS, Tier 2 CBT & Mindfulness Model
- MHTTC, School Resources
- CDC, Resources for teens

Trauma-Informed Best Practices
- University of Michigan, TIPPS Guide for Schools & One-Pager
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network
- Western Michigan University, Children's Trauma Assessment Center
- MDHHS, Trauma Resources
- CBITS
- Starr Commonwealth
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, Addressing Race and Trauma in the Classroom

🔍 Challenge

Diminished wellness visits and missing immunizations among children

◁ Root Cause

Disruptions in regular well-child care due to the pandemic
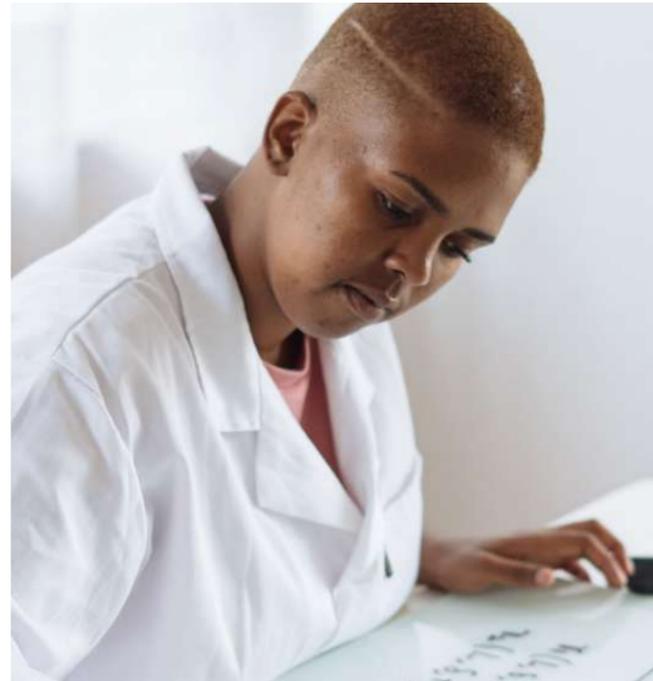
🎯 Goal

Require or request documentation of immunization status for 2020–2021 and 2021–2022 Kindergarteners by December 31, 2021. Require or request documentation of regular well care for all K–12 students by fall 2022.

📋 High-Leverage Actions

- Develop clarifying guidance regarding up-to-date immunization status prior to students starting school with the local health department.
- Identify students who don't have access to a pediatrician, and partner with local entities to provide access.
- Ensure all children are up-to-date with all CDC–recommended immunizations.
- Partner with the local health department and community pharmacists to disseminate information and make vaccination opportunities available for students who are eligible.
- Collaborate with local health departments and pediatricians to establish and share a list of providers who are accepting new patients. This could include pediatricians willing to travel from other communities.
- Engage local pediatricians regularly to offer educational presentations and activities for the broader community.
- Collaborate with local health departments and pediatricians to offer mobile health clinics to offer immunizations; well and acute care evaluations; and vision, hearing and dental screenings. Engage telehealth services where pediatrician access is not readily available.
- For students who are eligible, provide education about the Covid-19 vaccination. Update based on CDC guidance.

📑 Supporting Evidence

- AAP, Well-Child/Immunization Schedule
- Michigan Care Improvement Registry

🔍 Challenge

Decrease in physical activity

◄ Root Cause

Increased need for remote learning, likely displacing opportunities for physical activity (e.g. physical education and recess) and inconsistent access to athletics

🎯 Goal

Ensure all students have access to daily opportunities for physical activity as well as the ability to safely participate in their sport or physical activity of choice, regardless of school operating status.

📋 High-Leverage Actions

- Districts should follow guidance from MDHHS and work with their local public health departments including all standard safety protocols related to youth sports using current best practices such as the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) and Michigan State Youth Soccer Association protocols.

- Ensure recess is accessible to all students.
  - Avoid withholding recess as a disciplinary consequence. Stagger recess times, or partition playgrounds, so distancing is possible if needed during recess or physical education class.

- Choose outdoor activities during school time whenever possible.

- Ensure the needs of children with disabilities are being considered and met.

- Create engaging physical activity "homework" opportunities for students/families.

- Rethink the norms around time at school, incorporating opportunities for movement.
  - Engage multiple perspectives in planning free time (i.e. robotics advisors, lunch personnel, academic staff from multiple grade levels, parents and students from different cultural backgrounds).
  - Incorporate movement in music, theatre/art and other appropriate courses, as appropriate.

- Cultivate a culture of health at school that is fun and bold.
  - Use colorful signs that share reminders about the importance of good health with parents, students, and staff.

📜 Supporting Evidence

- TRAILS, Behavioral Activation
- University of Michigan, inPACT
- Harvard School of Public Health, Schools for Health: Risk Reduction Strategies for Reopening Schools

🪶 High-Leverage Actions in Michigan

- Battle Creek Public Schools offers "Operation Fit" which includes morning movement and lunchtime programs led by community volunteers to help students increase physical activity, improve nutrition, and create healthy habits.

🔍 Challenge

Uneven distribution of work across school staff and caseload volumes that make delivery of timely, effective mental health and wellness services impossible

◁ Root Cause

Insufficient and inequitable distribution of school mental health professionals across districts and limited collaboration with and access to allied community partners.

🎯 Goal

Establishment of a school-based, multi-tiered system of support that is adequately equipped and resourced to provide equitable, effective student services and engage in meaningful care coordination with community-based partners.

📋 High-Leverage Actions

• Implement districtwide multi-tiered systems of support, informed by established state or national models.

• Establish a full-time school- or district-level student wellness leader.

• Learn about and access diverse funding streams to meet recommended staff ratios:
   - Counselors (1:250)
   - Social workers (1:250)
   - School psychologists (1:600)

• Partner with local mental healthcare providers and allied resources to maximize student and family access to effective services, and allow students to attend virtual healthcare appointments from an appropriate location in school (e.g., private office with a laptop/ipad).

📄 Supporting Evidence

• ECS, State funding for school mental health
• School Mental Health, Foundations of School Mental Health
• MI School Finance Report
• Michigan Department of Education, Health Resources & Funding

17

🔍 Challenge

Educator burnout, low job satisfaction, and high staff turnover

◄ Root Cause

Educator, staff, and administrator mental health concerns, including stress, anxiety, depression, grief, vicarious trauma, and burnout exacerbated by the pandemic

🎯 Goal

Establish districtwide policies and professional development offerings that acknowledge and are responsive to stressors for staff, build knowledge and skills that promote resilience and wellness, and design systems of support within the school that address educator, staff, and administrators' mental health and wellbeing.

📋 High-Leverage Actions

- Provide all staff with materials to support their own self-care and wellness, including to complete wellness and burnout assessments.
- Schedule professional development events focused on staff wellness and healthy school climates.
- Engage with staff to find opportunities to promote and practice wellness and self-care.

🔍 Supporting Evidence

- Opportunity Thrive
- Professional Quality of Life Scale
- Educator Burnout Assessment
- Brian Bride, Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale

- Trauma Sensitive Schools, Self-Care Assessment and Care
- Stanford Medicine, Depression Screener
- ADAA, Anxiety Screener

🗺 High-Leverage Actions in Michigan

The MESSA Wellness program helps public education employees reduce risk factors for chronic disease, minimize depression and anxiety, and pursue a greater sense of overall health and well-being. There are a number of free wellness tools in addition to the opportunity for school employees to work directly with MESSA to create local worksite wellness committees, providing resources and one-on-one support focusing on mindfulness, movement and nutrition.

Wyoming Public Schools partnered with Pine Rest, a local behavioral health provider, to offer staff free and confidential short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services for personal or work related issues.

Academics

The pandemic's impact on student learning varies widely. For some students, the impact has been minor compared to their peers statewide. For others, barriers to learning created significant academic challenges and for some, resulted in complete disengagement from school. The recommendations below are organized based on a system of support to equitably address student's learning needs, commonly known as the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

🔍 Challenge

Students who receive core instruction (those in Tier 1), but may have gaps due to unfinished academic learning

◁ Root Cause

Students' varying experiences due to the disruption of in-person instruction and associated trauma from the pandemic

🎯 Goal

By January 2022, engaged, connected, supported students achieving academic growth as measured by benchmark and formative assessments, and qualitative data collected by stakeholders (including students and families). Other goals recommended to include:

- An increase in student engagement, along with equitable access to educational opportunities that build student agency, emphasize critical thinking and problem solving, and allow students to exercise their creativity and curiosity.

- All students experience at least a year's worth of growth as measured by where they are academically when they start and end the 2021-2022 school year. Students with identified needs should have a comprehensive academic plan and robust support.

📋 High-Leverage Actions

- Focus on intentionally cultivating high-trust classroom environments and making authentic connections with students in support of their academic wellbeing and access to learning.
    - Dedicate time at the very beginning of the school year to recognize students' unique strengths and understand their lives to foster a sense of belonging and build trusting relationships.
    - Support students in building strong social bonds with their peers to increase student engagement.

- Engage all students in grade-level content, high-quality, integrated curriculum, and culturally responsive instruction.
    - Ensure all students have access to standards-aligned curriculum and instructional materials.
    - Focus on acceleration strategies that help students gain the knowledge and skills necessary to engage with grade-level material.
    - Balance the need for students to learn essential skills with growing their motivation and their agency to drive their own learning long-term.
    - Integrate social and emotional learning (SEL) into instruction that helps students develop their identities, build self efficacy, show empathy for others, and forge supportive relationships.
    - Incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy that builds on the rich assets of students' lives to build relevancy and increase depth of understanding, and focus instruction on meaningful issues that impact students, families, and communities.
    - Include the diversity of languages, identities, cultures, and family practices represented to increase engagement and cross-cultural learning.
    - Maintain structures and systems necessary to ensure continuity of instruction in case there's a need for any students to learn remotely or resume remote learning.

- Assess every student's strengths and needs using benchmark and formative assessments paired with teacher observations, to establish a baseline and continually monitor progress.
    - Develop a suite of balanced assessments at the classroom and district level that foster growth mindset, meaningful feedback, exploration, and demonstration of students' strengths.
    - Use formative assessments including screeners, diagnostics, and embedded assessments, to identify students' ongoing and evolving needs.

- Build student ownership over their own learning through one-on-one conferences, reflections and goal-setting sessions about their academic growth.

• Focus instruction on priority standards, emphasizing skills over content and depth over breadth.
  - Leverage existing resources to identify priority standards for each grade level.
  - Create dedicated time for teachers to learn and share knowledge about priority standards for their own and other grade levels.
  - Reorient instruction to students' learning levels by using formative assessment results.

• Create opportunities to integrate student voice and decision making into learning. Sample student engagement strategies may include, but are not limited to:
  - Democratic classroom decision making
  - Student-designed surveys, student-perception surveys and focus groups
  - Student-led journalism, and
  - Co-created personalized learning plans

• Provide targeted supports, strategies, and resources for families, such as take-home books to support academic wellbeing at home.
  - For students in high-poverty schools, providing access to culturally-relevant take-home books is particularly beneficial (note: increasing digital access for all students is a high-leverage action).
  - Prioritize earlier grades for additional supports.
  - Offer enrichment activities for students to do at home.
  - Cultivating trusting relationships between educators and immigrant-origin students can significantly improve their school engagement and outcomes.

• Consider teachers looping from one grade level to the next to keep cohorts of students with the same teacher as they progress between grades.
  - Looping creates a sense of certainty and consistency, particularly for vulnerable students who have experienced trauma and insecurity.
  - Looping is most effective when students are placed with more experienced teachers and when parents opt into the decision.

Supporting Evidence

- Wayne RESA, Fostering Recovery
- Hanover Research, Planning for Post-Covid-19 Student Engagement
- Annenberg Institute, Broad Based Academic Supports for all Students
- Center for Reinventing Public Education, Learning As We Go
- Learning Policy Institute, Assess What Students Need
- CCSSO, Restart & Recovery - Academics
- TNTP, Learning Acceleration Guide
- Achieve the Core, 2020-21 Priority Instructional Content in English Language Arts and Math - Achieve the Core

- Annenberg Institute, Engaging Parents and Families to Support the Recovery of School Districts
- CRE Hub (NYU Metro Center), Culturally Responsive Education
- Edutopia, Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Zaretta Hammond, Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain
- Elena Aguilar, Coaching for Equity
- CASEL, Social and Emotional Roadmap for Reopening Schools
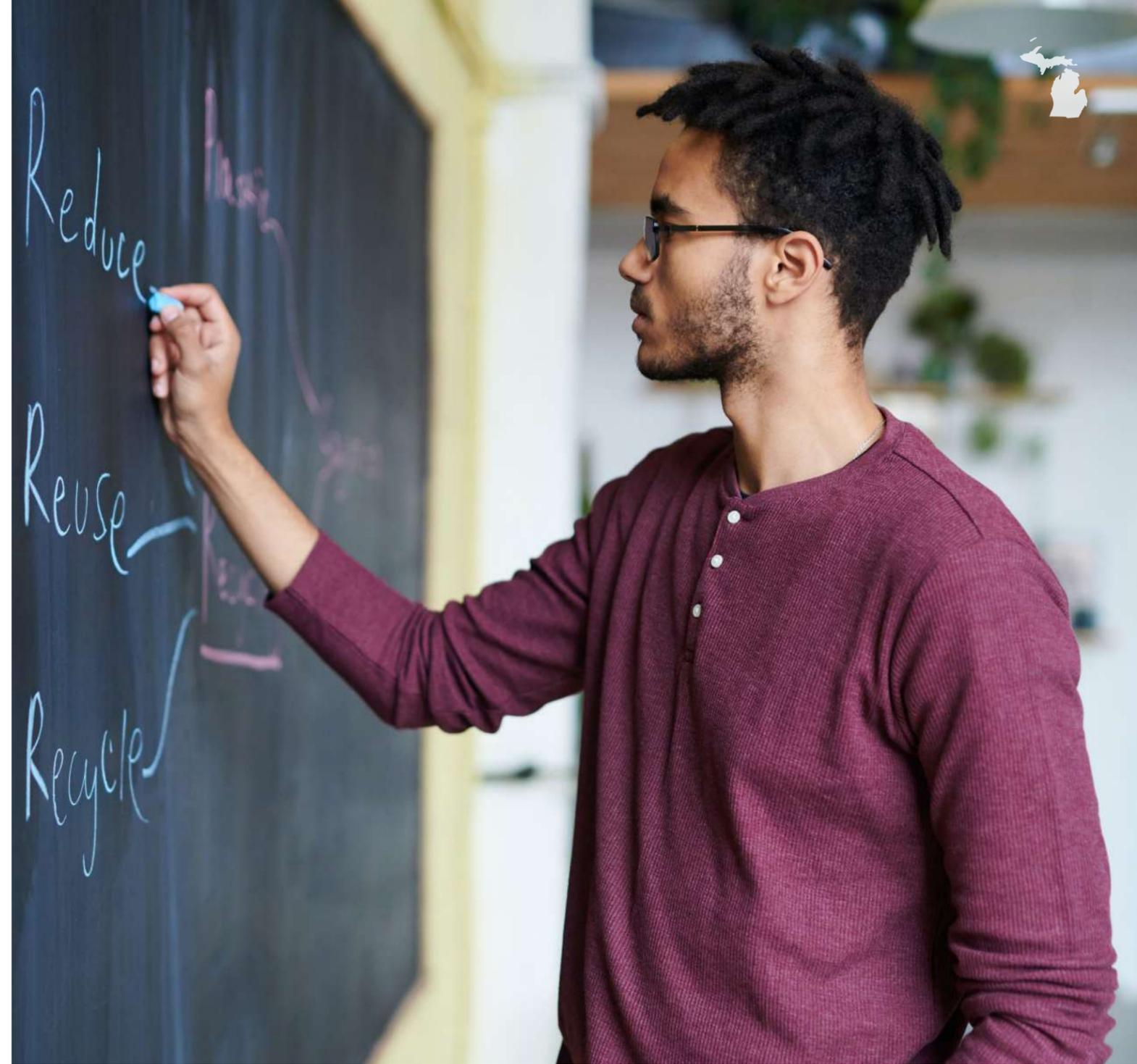
High-Leverage Actions in Michigan

During the 2020-2021 school year, the Copper Country Intermediate School District Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) team facilitated school-level data reviews using a Return To School Worksheet. After working through this data-based problem solving model as an ISD team, each district MTSS team then updated and worked off of their District MTSS Implementation Plan on a monthly basis, keeping track of their goals, action items, communication, and identifying supports they may need from the ISD or state. In addition, each school MTSS team works off of a similar School MTSS Implementation Plan.

Students with significant unfinished academic learning (students in Tiers 2 and 3)

⟨ Root Cause

The disruption of in-person instruction exacerbated inequities and/or created new barriers to learning

◎ Goal

By September 2022, engaged, connected, supported students are making academic growth as measured by benchmark and formative assessments, and qualitative data collected by stakeholders (including students). Other goals recommended include:

- An increase in student engagement, along with equitable access to educational opportunities that build student agency, emphasize critical thinking and problem solving, and allow them to exercise their creativity and curiosity.

- All students experience at least a year's worth of growth as measured by where they are academically when they start and end the 2021-2022 school year. Students with identified needs should have a comprehensive academic plan and robust supports.

📋 High-Leverage Actions

- Identify students who are most in need of interventions to be able to access and engage with grade-level content, by using benchmark and formative assessments.
    - Implement a tiered approach to student learning. A tiered approach prioritizes interventions and supports based on the intensity of need.

- For students in need of additional support, offer double dose academic courses and acceleration academies focusing on priority standards.
    - Double dose academic courses require students to receive supplementary coursework in a specified subject area (i.e., mathematics), typically from the same teachers.

- This intervention is not simply about doubling instructional time. Teachers need professional development in how to best utilize extra instructional time.

- Consider other ways to give students access to enrichment opportunities.
    - Acceleration academies provide students with targeted, small group instruction in a single subject, delivered by select teachers over week-long vacation breaks.

- Students work in homogenous ability groups of around 10-12 students and receive about 25 hours of extra instruction.

- For students who need more individualized support, provide high-dosage tutoring. High dosage tutoring requires weekly tutoring sessions provided by volunteers, teachers, or paraprofessionals. High-dosage tutoring should be reserved for those students who are farthest behind, with attention to students with disabilities, English Learners, students who are homeless, and other vulnerable groups at-risk of failing. One-to-one tutoring has proven to be highly effective, however tutors could work with small groups of up to four students.
    - Ideally high-dosage tutoring should be provided three times a week for a total of 30-50 hours per semester (approximately 10 weeks). Research shows that tutoring can be effective face-to-face or virtually.
    - To ensure high participation, it is strongly recommended that tutoring sessions occur during the school day, rather than after school.

- Assess and update grading policies to be more equitable. High failure rates will not support student engagement, particularly for students who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

- Offer an extended-day option to provide adequate time for interventions.
  - Extended-day options could provide students with whole-child enrichment opportunities. Opportunities must be accessible to all students, particularly the most vulnerable. Note that the students most in need likely come from working families whose options may be limited to normal working hours (i.e. 9am-5pm). Coordinated meal planning, and access to childcare and transportation could lessen this burden for families.
  - Consider partnerships with high-quality community, faith or civic organizations that support extended-day opportunities.

- Consider adopting a balanced calendar that includes opportunities to extend the school year. A balanced calendar has the same number of school days as a normal calendar, but replaces summer vacation with shorter breaks during the school year. Michigan districts have the option to extend the school year. Short breaks allow districts to provide additional targeted instruction to students.
  - A balanced calendar can provide additional days during short-breaks for the most at-risk students. However, research suggests that simply adding days - especially ones that are focused on remediation - do not necessarily result in a positive impact on learning.
  - Consider shortening the summer with a pre-Labor day start to the school year to reduce the summer slide.

- Select co-teaching models to address student needs, such as station teaching, which is when co-teachers divide instructional content into segments to be delivered at two or more stations in the classroom, particularly for students with disabilities.
  - Another effective research-based co-teaching model is alternative teaching, in which one teacher teaches a lesson to the majority of the class, while a second teacher pulls a small group for a different lesson.
  - Note that research does not support the common model of co-teaching with one teacher and one assistant. Paraprofessionals should be maintained in teaching assistant roles if co-teaching is not implemented.
  - Note that co-teaching alone may be insufficient in meeting the needs of students with disabilities.
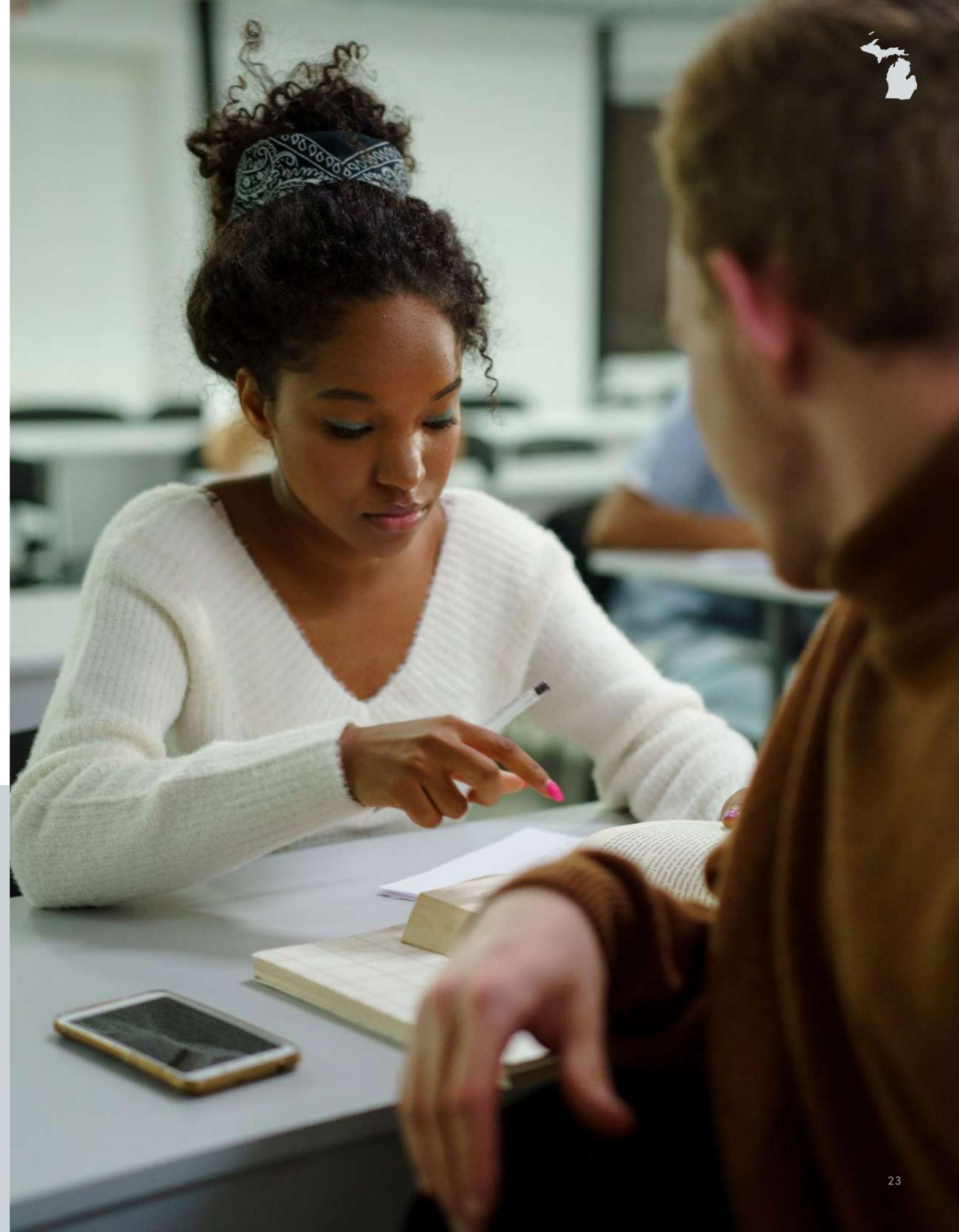
Supporting Evidence

- Annenberg Institute, Accelerating Student Learning with High Dosage Tutoring
- Annenberg Institute, Academic Supports for Students with Disabilities
- Annenberg Institute, Supports for English Learners
- Annenberg Institute, Broad Based Academic Supports for all Students
- The 74, Analysis: High-Quality, High-Dosage Tutoring Can Reduce Learning Loss.
- Annenberg Institute, School Practices to Address Student Learning Loss
- Joe Feldman, Grading for Equity
- National Bureau of Economic Research: Not Too Late: Improving Academic Outcomes Among Adolescents
- John Hattie, Influences on Student Achievement

🔍 Challenge

Students who are fully disengaged from school

◁ Root Cause

Barriers to attendance caused or exacerbated by disruptions to in-person instruction (i.e., connectivity issues, homelessness, job loss, mental health, trauma, and multiple educational modalities)

◎ Goal

Re-engage disengaged students, with particular attention to the most vulnerable students (e.g., homeless students, students with disabilities, English Learners, etc.) At the minimum, reestablish pre-pandemic attendance policies and measures for enrolled students during the 2021-2022 school year.

📋 High-Leverage Actions

- Deploy real-time, comprehensive attendance tracking systems to identify disengaged students.
  - Provide clear, consistent definitions for recording absenteeism and attendance by educational modality (e.g., in-person, hybrid, remote).
  - Pay careful attention to students at-risk of being chronically absent (missing at least ten percent of school days per year, roughly two absences per month) through early warning systems. Tracking of chronic absences should occur on a rolling basis throughout the school year. Data should be real-time and disaggregated by student subgroups.

- Engage in intentional outreach to families and students via text messages, phone calls, and home visits.
  - Strategy should be coordinated, consistent, and planned, using district staff and volunteers. Be mindful of reaching families whose first language is not English.
  - Create written scripts to engage in a consistent and intentional strategy. Be mindful that families may feel shame or discomfort when being asked about their student's absence. Messaging should be asset-based, not deficit-based.
- Collaborate with community agencies to meet the basic needs of students. Needs may range from financial or housing insecurity to mental wellbeing and physical health.
  - Assess the availability of evidence-based, wrap-around supports and map resources. Two-way data sharing for identifying resources is critical for coordination.
  - Partner with faith-based organizations, community groups and community partners, social-service agencies, civic groups, neighborhood groups, and cultural associations, to ascertain the status of families that have fallen off the radar.
- Provide personalized support to help students to re-engage academically and socially and emotionally.
  - Secure the support of a trusting, caring adult.
  - Connect instruction and schoolwork to topics that are meaningful and relevant to students' lives and interests.
  - Continually monitor growth and adjust interventions as needed.

🔎 Supporting Evidence

- Attendance Works, Attendance Policy During the Covid-19 Pandemic
- Bellwether Education Partners, Missing in the Margins: Estimating the Scale of the Covid-19 Attendance Crisis
- EdWeek, Where are they? Students go Missing in Shift to Remote Classes
- Wayne RESA, Fostering Recovery
- Attendance Works, Attendance Playbook
- EdWeek, Schools Find Creative Ways to Update Contact Info for Missing Students
- The 74, Families Face Steep Truancy Fines, Contentious Court Battles As Pandemic Creates School Attendance Barriers
- National League of Cities, Addressing Student Reengagement in the Time of Covid-19

🔍 Challenge

Providing educators with professional knowledge and training that empowers them to address students' unfinished learning and disengagement

◁ Root Cause

Students returning to school with a wider range of academic needs compared to "normal" school years, with a larger percentage experiencing unfinished learning

🎯 Goal

By the beginning of the 2021–2022 school year, teachers are equipped with high-quality professional learning and resources to address students' academic needs.

📋 High-Leverage Actions

• Survey teachers to gather input about their professional learning needs.

• Create conditions for teachers to communicate within and across grade-level and content teams.
  – Create time and space for teachers to communicate across grade levels and content areas about missed content and students who are struggling.

– Cultivate collaborative working conditions that include opportunities for teachers to troubleshoot, problem solve, and share knowledge.

• Provide on-going professional learning opportunities in various forms, such as Professional Learning Communities, that address areas including:
  – Culturally responsive instruction and equity-based coaching
  – Priority standards and acceleration strategies
  – Effective small group and individualized instruction practices
  – Formative assessment best practices
  – Disciplinary/Interdisciplinary literacy, particularly for secondary teachers
  – Co-teaching and strategies that accelerate learning

📑🔍 Supporting Evidence

• CCSSO Restart and Recovery

• CRE Hub (NYU Metro Center), Culturally Responsive Education

• NCPMI Pyramid Model Equity Coaching

School Climate

School climate encompasses the social, emotional, and physical characteristics of a school community. Research shows that school climate and culture have a measurable impact on students' sense of belonging, access to opportunities, and academic achievement. Students cannot learn where they do not feel safe. The racial disparities seen throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and the systemic cycle of discrimination and injustice must be accounted for in our schools.

🔍 Challenge

Perpetuation and exacerbation of inequities and disproportionalities, reinforcing barriers to educational opportunity for students of color and other marginalized populations

〈 Root Cause

Systemic racism, classism, sexism, and discrimination based on religion

🎯 Goal

Sustained, meaningful inquiry should begin before the start of and continue throughout the 2021-2022 school year that leads to the development and implementation of explicit, districtwide practices and policies to create a climate of inclusivity, belonging, and safety for all staff and students.

📋 High-Leverage Actions

• Conduct districtwide surveys, -- e.g., School Climate Survey (MiMTSS) School Climate Survey (PBIS) -- on school culture and climate, and solicit input from staff, students, and families.
  - Include items to assess for perceived racism and racial discrimination.

• Conduct a comprehensive equity audit of local policies and practices with broad participation of local stakeholders.
  - Employ intentional strategies to gather input from marginalized community populations.

- Look at data to intentionally understand differences in perspective by socio-demographic.
- The audit should be accompanied by equity-based and culturally-relevant professional development for staff.

• Develop an equity and anti-racism board to lead equity work, organize training events, and establish a district DEI policy statement.

• Provide all staff with high-quality professional development related to implicit bias, systemic racism, and white privilege.

• Implement district wide Restorative Justice practices for staff, students, and community members.

• Provide all staff with high-quality professional development related to implicit bias, systemic racism, and white privilege.

📊 Supporting Evidence

School Climate
• School Climate Survey (MiMTSS)
• School Climate Survey (PBIS)
• Increasing Student voice

Assessing Equity
• Equity Audit Tools & Resources
• Equity Rubric
• Guidebook: Building Educational Equity Indicator Systems
• The Leadership Academy, Equity Audit

Implicit Bias and Systemic Racism
• Center for Racial Justice, Anti-racist Training for Educators
• Committee for Children, Racial Equity Through Pedagogy & SEL
• New York Times, Podcast: Nice White Parents
• Kappa Online, Toward Racial Equity in Schools

Restorative Justice
• NEA, Restorative Practices
• WestEd, Restorative Justice in U.S. Schools
• MDE Restorative Justice
• IIRP, Restorative Practices

Family and Community Engagement

Research gathered over the past 40 years suggests family engagement is one of the strongest predictors of children's success in school. Family and community engagement should be a strategy that's embraced as a critical component of whole-school recovery.

Challenge

Strained school-district-community relationships as a result of Covid-19

Root Cause

Ineffective family engagement, increased stress levels, diminished social capital

Goal

Prior to the start of the 2021 school year, begin to restore and/or build relational trust

High-Leverage Actions

• Build the capacity of families to become more engaged as partners in their children's education.

- Establish guidelines for regular communications between school and home, such as monthly calls from teachers, home visits, weekly newsletters, etc. and track communications.

- Ensure communications offer actionable information or specific guidance for supporting their child's education.

- Quality of interactions has been shown to more positively affect outcomes than frequency of interactions. Fewer communications that provide more detail are likely better.

- Encourage families to focus on time management and work habits.

- Ensure all local parent communities are represented in decision making.

• Build the capacity of school staff to understand the benefits of family engagement and build school-wide and individual practice.
   - Assemble a cross-district team responsible for family and community engagement.
   - Collaborate with teachers and staff to update or develop a parent handbook that establishes clear expectations.
   - Establish and publicize parent visiting hours and guidelines for contacting teachers and encourage teachers to focus on shared experiences.
   - Offer professional learning to help school staff build skills to effectively implement student voice strategies.
   - Develop a common understanding around the indicators of trust.

• Prioritize inclusion of student voice and build the capacity of students to be actively engaged in school decision

Supporting Evidence

Engagement
• Digital Promise, Innovative Examples of Community Involvement in Schools
• Hanover Research, Benefits of Family and Community Engagement
• National Association of State Boards of Education, Promoting Student Governance
• Harvard GSE, Effective Family Engagement Starts with Trust
• Learning Policy Institute, Educating the Whole Child

Inclusive School Climate
• National Association of Secondary Principals, Culturally Responsive Schools
• GLSEN, Inclusivity for LGBTQIA+ Students

Exclusionary Discipline Practices
• ACLU, School to Prison Pipeline
• APA, Exclusionary Discipline
• Restorative Justice Partnership

High-Leverage Actions in Michigan

• The Kent School Service Network uses the Community Schools Standards as an evidence-based strategy to promote equity and educational excellence while strengthening families and community. The associated logic model is particularly helpful in documenting activities, outputs, short-term outcomes and long-term outcomes.

• Saint Clair County RESA's Great Start Home Visiting program, works with parents to enhance their child's intellectual, language, social, emotional, and physical development from birth to age 5.

🔍 Challenge

Lack of high-quality, accessible community-based afterschool and summer programming, and community schools

◁ Root Cause

Lack of time, resources, and funding to build and coordinate external partnerships that deliver out-of-school-time programs

🎯 Goal

Increase the number of students who participate in comprehensive community-based afterschool, enriching summer programming, out-of-school time, community schools with evidence-based wrap-around services, and more extensive school-community-family partnerships.

📋 High-Leverage Actions

- Conduct a scan of existing needs of students and families that could be addressed by summer enrichment, comprehensive afterschool, and more expansive community collaboration.
  - Determine the urgent needs of families and students in the district and school.
  - Identify gaps in the school's current offerings and map them to student needs.

- Identify potential resources.
  - Utilize ARP to expand and improve summer enrichment and comprehensive afterschool; determine which neighborhoods, and rural communities most need the funds and how they could be leveraged to double the amount of available programs.
  - Identify existing community partners, and if few or none exist, conduct outreach to recruit partner services from neighboring schools, organizations, intermediaries or statewide organizations. Consider contracting programming needs out to lead evidence-informed community-based providers to provide services in schools and in nearby neighborhoods.

- Establish indicators and metrics to ensure a high-quality portfolio of opportunities and partnerships for students and communities that need them most.

- Track student participation, levels of engagement, and utilization rates in comprehensive afterschool, enriching summer, afterschool and out-of-school time, community schools.

- Consider deploying a full-time Family, Community Engagement and Summer and Afterschool Learning Leader to coordinate all out-of-school time programs on the school level. This will help support the initial and ongoing coordination of partnerships to benefit students and the school community.

- Establish regular check-ins with partners during the year to identify what is working, and needs to be improved or enhanced to meet the needs of young people.

📑 Supporting Evidence

- Afterschool Alliance, Research
- National Summer Learning Association
- Expanding Minds and Opportunities, The Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success
- National League of Cities, How Cities Can Support Afterschool Learning Programs During Covid-19 and Beyond
- Expanded Learning, Evidence of Impact
- Community Schools, Community school standards and guidelines
- Children's Aid Society, resources on how to support and develop a community school
- Mizzen by Mott, vetted afterschool and summer content

High-Leverage Actions in Michigan

- Communities In Schools of Michigan is an evidenced-based model that provides Wrap-Around Services/Integrated Student Supports and believes that transformative relationships are the key to unlocking a student's potential. As a result of this work, CIS breaks down immediate and systemic barriers to create and sustain equitable outcomes.

Post-Secondary

Research suggests that access to jobs that provide economic security also demands attainment of postsecondary credentials. Despite this research, enrollment at postsecondary institutions has decreased significantly since the beginning of the pandemic. High school students from the classes of 2020-2024 may be less likely to pursue postsecondary education.

Access to high-quality postsecondary pathways (e.g., a two-year or four-year college, trade school, career, and/or national service)

◁ **Root Cause**

Inadequate, individualized postsecondary advising to navigate the complex postsecondary admissions, financial aid, and enrollment processes. This may be particularly true for students whose parents don't have a postsecondary education.

🎯 **Goal**

By the 2022–2023 school year, ensure all high school students have access to comprehensive postsecondary advising beginning in 9th grade and beyond.

📋 **High-Leverage Actions**

• Leverage ARP funds to hire additional school counselors.

• Place college advisors into high schools under the supervision of school counselors.

• Ensure all high school seniors have support to complete the FAFSA, preferably by the state's priority deadline so that students are eligible for financial aid.
  – Launch a FAFSA completion campaign within the school building and during the school day.
  – Provide opportunities for students and families to complete the FAFSA in the community and on local college campuses.

• Require FAFSA completion as a high school graduation requirement, with opt-out provisions for students with special circumstances.

📑 **Supporting Evidence**

• College Board Research, A Review of the Role of College Counseling, Coaching, and Mentoring on Students' Postsecondary Outcomes.

• University of Pennsylvania, The Role of College Counseling in Shaping College Opportunity: Variations Across High Schools

• Preparing for College: Nine Elements of Effective Outreach

• MI College Access, School Counselor Training: Foundations of Equity in College and Career Counseling

• MI College Access, Webinar Series – Roadmap to Opportunity

• AdviseMI

🏵 **High-Leverage Actions in Michigan**

• Eaton Rapids Public Schools hired a college and career advisor who supports college planning, career exploration, financial aid & scholarships.

Challenge

Progress toward a certificate or degree on track and on time

Root Cause

Unfinished learning, structure of remedial courses, costs.

Goal

Create high school to college pathways that ensure students access to credit-bearing coursework immediately, including early college credit, better utilizing their financial aid and putting them on track to on-time graduation.

High-Leverage Actions

- Create and support online opportunities for students to participate in early college credit activities, expanding the geographic reach of these programs.

- Hire dedicated staffing to support early college credit programs including advising and other success strategies for the students participating.

- End the use of remedial and developmental education where students often get stuck in their postsecondary progression.

  - Replace remedial/developmental courses with corequisite education and other strategies to ensure students enter college enrolled in credit-bearing coursework

  - Increase dual enrollment opportunities and create early middle college programs that allow students to earn college credits while in high school.

- Increase dual enrollment opportunities and create early middle college programs that allow students to earn college credits while in high school.

- Design and implement intervention programming with postsecondary institutions, such as summer bridge programs, learning academies, or supplemental instruction sessions that are accessible to all students.

- Engage all students in experiences that inspire postsecondary pursuits.

  - Identify essential experiences for high school students and families that lead to connections with postsecondary institutions that inspire postsecondary pursuits, including college visits, open house events, and information sessions.

  - Identify and implement incentives for high school students to engage with postsecondary institutions, including tuition benefits, scholarship information, and connections with employers (internships, apprenticeships, etc.).

- Communicate the need for postsecondary institutions to make adjustments and accommodations, and provide needed resources and support to address the additional and diverse needs of students entering college and universities post-pandemic, especially for students in vulnerable populations.

Supporting Evidence

- Kinexus Group
- Wayne RESA, Workforce
- American Institutes of Research, The Lasting Benefits of Early College High Schools Considerations and Recommendations for Policymakers
- American Institute of Research, Evaluating the Impact of Early College High Schools
- GBPI, Dual Enrollment Requires Sustainable Funding to Promote High School and College Success

- ECS, Rethinking Dual Enrollment to Reach More Students
- Brian An, The Impact of Dual Enrollment on College Degree Attainment: Do Low-SES Students Benefit?
- Career Ladders Project, Dual Enrollment Toolkit: A Resource for Community Colleges and School District Partners

High-Leverage Actions in Michigan

- Escanaba Area Public Schools offers a five-year course of study that coordinates high school classes with college classes. The goal is to earn an associate degree, industry certificate, Michigan Early Middle College Association certificate or 60 transferable college credits by the end of the 5th year along with the high school diploma.

🔍 Challenge

Incomplete or inaccessible information about the variety of postsecondary opportunities and career pathways available

‹ Root Cause

Students from families that lack postsecondary experience may be unfamiliar and intimidated by the college-going process. Families may overestimate the cost of college while underestimating the return on investment.

🎯 Goal

Provide students and families with information about postsecondary opportunities and pathways to foster career identity

📋 High-Leverage Actions

- Create partnerships between higher education institutions and high schools, Local College Access Networks, and community-based organizations to coordinate and plan postsecondary exposure activities.
- Disseminate information about Michigan's Hot Jobs and postsecondary pathways that lead to local employment opportunities to students and families.
- Engage Local College Access Networks as centers for information distribution to education, community and business leaders with the goal to create opportunities for students to learn about high demand careers and pathways.
- In partnership with local community college, build automatic and guaranteed community college admission processes for all high school graduates within a community college district. Send all high school seniors an acceptance letter in the spring stating upon graduation they are eligible for enrollment at their local community college.

🔍 Supporting Evidence

- Urban Institute, The Return on Investment for Higher Education
- Noel-Levitz, Inc., The Communication Expectations of College-Bound High School Students
- American College Application Campaign, 2017 Pre-College and Career Readiness Curriculum for Students and their Families (revised July 2017)
- Michigan Colleges Access Network, Roadmap to Opportunity

🗺️ High-Leverage Actions in Michigan

- Cornerstone Schools creates unique learning experiences for its students with top companies from Detroit and around the world.

Policy Recommendations to Promote a Comprehensive Student Recovery

We know that we should not return to the same exact system that existed prior to the pandemic. It is naive to think that the entire P-16 system, with hundreds of years of rich history, can be reimagined in five months; we recognize that comprehensive recovery will be a multi-year process. However, in order to be successful, comprehensive recovery planning at the local level must be met with policy action by the state government. As such, we recommend policy actions that, if taken immediately, will accelerate student recovery now and lay the foundation for significant systems change in the future.

We suggest four high-priority policy actions that the state government can act on immediately to enable school districts to implement comprehensive student recovery plans--now and in the years ahead.

Recommendation One:

Adequate, Equitable Funding

Appropriate all federal relief funds identified to support children and schools and by 2025, enact an education budget that is equitable, adequate and sustainable by establishing a trajectory of funding to implement a weighted foundation allowance and accomplish the staffing recommendations of the School Finance Research Collaborative.

1

Funding should establish a base amount for each student, with weights for students with additional needs (e.g., English learners, special education, low-income).

2

The funding formula would support critical staff like social workers, school counselors, interventionists, teachers, and other staff.

💬 Rationale

School finance systems include numerous components that need to be considered. A base level of funding to support appropriate staffing levels is the foundation of the finance system.

• Despite major strides in Covid-mitigation strategies, there are still families who will want their children to continue learning remotely for the foreseeable future. Traditional pupil accounting rules do not provide adequate permission for districts to provide a fully-remote learning option.

• Current and anticipated enrollment serve as the primary basis for future staffing decisions.

• Because student programming is established prior to the start of the school year based on prior year and/or anticipated enrollment, it is difficult to alter the scheduling when a decline in enrollment occurs without causing significant disruption.

• It is critical to match staffing with enrollment as closely as possible in an effort to maximize/equalize appropriate student/teacher ratios.

• Allowing a school to receive funding based on the higher of current or prior year(s) enrollment, provides for the transition/reduction to occur in a planned/less disruptive manner without financial penalty.

• The necessity for predictability and stability has taken on greater importance with the decline in education school graduates and the competitive hiring environment for graduates. This supply and demand situation is creating shortages in many school districts and especially in specific disciplines such as special education. This supply and demand disequilibrium may be further exacerbated by: a district's geographic location and size.

🪜 Next Steps

Make every effort to incorporate and apply a funding formula similar to the SFRC methodology to the total amount of funding available. Increases for a given year for each school district should be based on the differential between the district's prior year funding from all sources and the total allocation that would be generated by the SFRC methodology when fully funded. For the years that SFRC is not yet fully funded, the entire difference would be prorated based on available funds. Increases for a given year for each school district should be based on the difference between the district's prior year funding from all sources and the total allocation that would be generated by the SFRC methodology when fully funded.. Like with the 2X formula, districts further away from their targeted allocation would receive larger increases, but all districts should receive no less than an inflationary increase.

Recommendation Two:

Consistent Funding

Adopt a pupil accounting model which allows for seat-time flexibility for families that want to continue learning remotely and counts the highest enrollment of the past three years based on the October audited count. (e.g., use the highest enrollment of the current year or multiple prior years as the basis for funding schools).

🗨 Rationale

Appropriate all federal relief funds identified to support children and schools and by 2025, enact an education budget that is equitable, adequate and sustainable by establishing a trajectory of funding to implement a weighted foundation allowance and accomplish the staffing recommendations of the School Finance Research Collaborative.

- Despite major strides in Covid-mitigation strategies, there are still families who will want their children to continue learning remotely for the foreseeable future. Traditional pupil accounting rules do not provide adequate permission for districts to provide a fully-remote learning option.

- It is critical to match staffing with enrollment as closely as possible in an effort to maximize/equalize appropriate student/teacher ratios.

- Because student programming is established prior to the start of the school year based on prior year and/ or anticipated enrollment, it is difficult to alter the scheduling when a decline in enrollment occurs without causing significant disruption.

- Current and anticipated enrollment serve as the primary basis for future staffing decisions.

- Allowing a school to receive funding based on the higher of current or prior year(s) enrollment, provides for the transition/ reduction to occur in a planned/less disruptive manner without financial penalty.

- The necessity for predictability and stability has taken on greater importance with the decline in education school graduates and the competitive hiring environment for graduates. This supply and demand situation is creating shortages in many school districts and especially in specific disciplines such as special education. This supply and demand disequilibrium may be further exacerbated by: a district's geographic location and size.

🪜 Next Steps

Enact legislation that provides seat-time waivers for districts to have flexibility in delivery options to meet student needs.

Recommendation Three:

Top Talent

Adopt a statewide strategy to attract and retain educators, with intentional focus on educators of color.

Rationale

There is no better in-school strategy to support students' learning than to place them with a high-quality educator. Those most harmed by the teacher shortage are our students. For students of color, evidence suggests that having diverse teachers can make a significant difference in these students' lives. At a time when additional support is needed academically, socially, emotionally, and physically, schools and the state must critically think about how to recruit and retain educators. Research confirms that teachers of color can make a significant difference in the lives of all students.

1

Teachers of color boost the academic performance of students of color.

2

Increasing teacher diversity may improve satisfaction for teachers of color and decrease turnover.

3

Students of color can experience social-emotional and nonacademic benefits from having teachers of color, including fewer unexcused absences and lower likelihood of chronic absenteeism and suspension.

4

All demographics of students report having positive perceptions of their teachers of color, including feeling cared for and academically challenged.
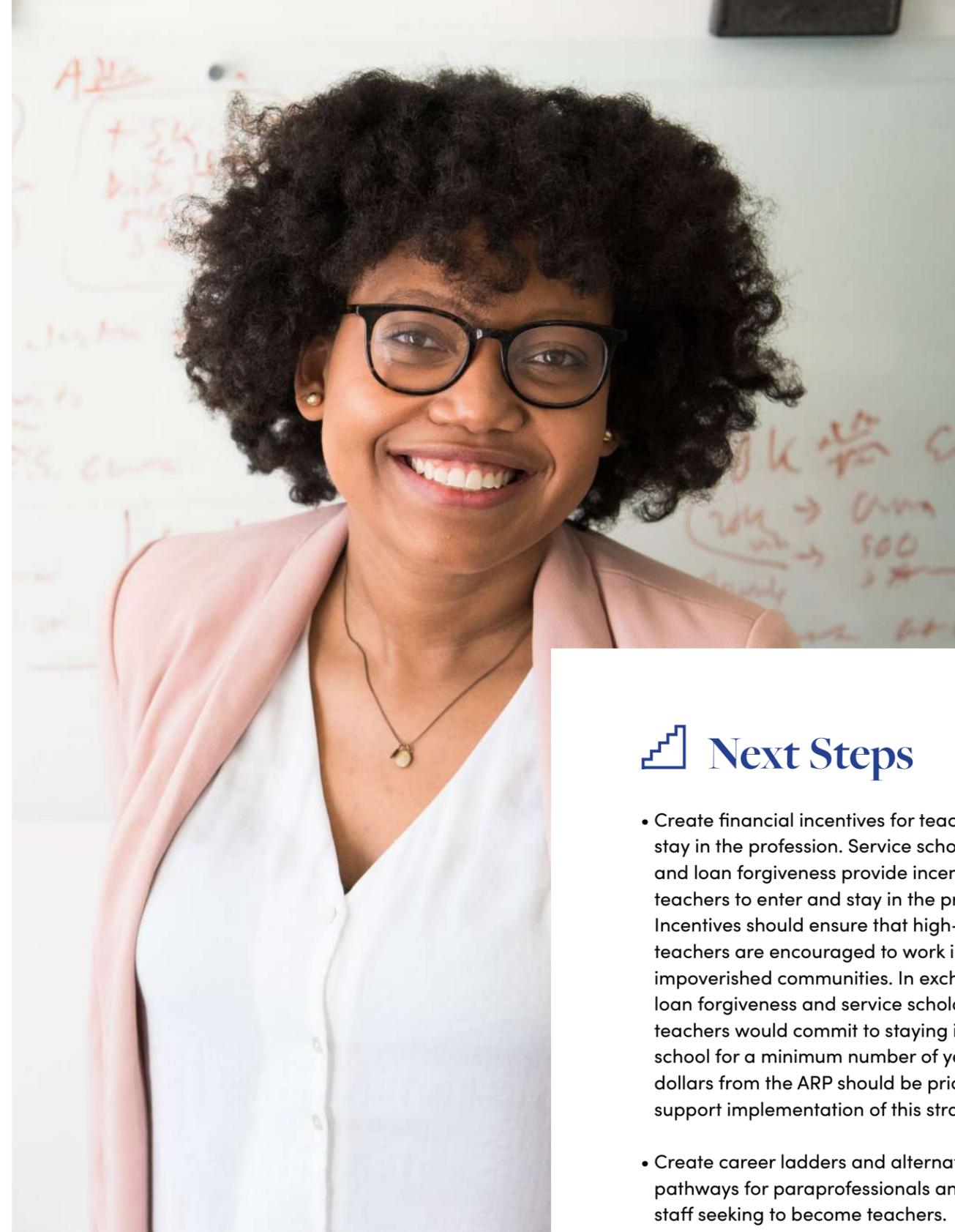
Next Steps

- Create financial incentives for teachers to stay in the profession. Service scholarships and loan forgiveness provide incentives for teachers to enter and stay in the profession. Incentives should ensure that high-flying teachers are encouraged to work in the most impoverished communities. In exchange for loan forgiveness and service scholarships, teachers would commit to staying in their school for a minimum number of years. New dollars from the ARP should be prioritized to support implementation of this strategy.

- Create career ladders and alternative pathways for paraprofessionals and other staff seeking to become teachers.

- Provide resources and technical assistance to local districts, particularly in hard-to-staff communities, to establish a grow your own teacher cadet pipelines with current K–12 school students.

Recommendation Four:

Innovation in Teaching and Learning

Create the conditions for innovation by expanding Innovation Zones.

🗨️ Rationale

Each community has experienced the pandemic differently and thus requires a different approach to recovery. Innovation zones will provide increased flexibility to waive certain regulations and requirements for schools and systems beginning to plan, design and implement personalized, competency-based models that will be critical to comprehensive student recovery. We know that we can't go back to the system that pre-existed the pandemic. Innovation Zones are a proven method to empower practitioners to develop and implement new learning models. In a moment to reimagine, we need less compliance enforcement and more support that enable innovative, student-centered learning programs in schools and systems.

📶 Next Steps

• Design an application process for local districts, a collaboration of local districts, a collaboration between local districts and ISD, or a collaboration of a local district and college or university to receive flexibility and support for developing evidence-based, innovative practices.

• The application will include a waiver for accountability measures that restrict innovative practices that promote student mastery of a competency of skills.

• Innovation zone applications should be developed by a district stakeholder committee composed of at least fifty percent by district educators, students and members of the community. Innovation zones are designed to be in place as long as they are progressing towards, or accomplishing, the stated goals in the application. Innovation zone programs are not to be considered pilot programs.

• Create or identify a mechanism for oversight and technical and financial support of innovation zones.

Recommendation Five:

Universal Preschool

Expand access to high-quality preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds.

🗩 Rationale

Learning does not begin at age five – and neither should public education. For our children and state to thrive, a K-12 education is no longer enough. Early childhood education, especially preschool, is a foundational experience for young children. Children who participate in preschool are better prepared for kindergarten, more likely to read by third grade, and more likely to graduate from high school. High-quality pre-k is particularly important for those children who were toddlers during the pandemic – and may have had less access to enriching, in-person learning opportunities or social interactions (structured child care environments, Head Start, playdates, Early On, etc).

Michigan is fortunate to have the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) – a homegrown, evidence-based preschool program that leads the nation in quality. Together with federal investments in Head Start, Michigan's existing GSRP should be the foundation of a universal preschool experience for all 3- and 4-year-olds, regardless of their family's income.

🔼 Next Steps

• Maintain the quality of Michigan's proven GSRP by increasing the funding per child.

• Steadily increase access to GSRP until all 4-year-olds are eligible, regardless of income.

• Expand Michigan's homegrown, evidence-based 3-year-old preschool pilot program to reach all 56 ISDs. Once the program is scaled statewide, steadily increase access until all 3-year-olds are eligible, regardless of income.

• During the state's move to universal preschool:

– Prioritize equitable access,

– Ensure the lowest income families are served first, and

– Locate programs in community-based child care and school-based settings.