

Where to Start

This blueprint is intended to transform education policy in Michigan over the next 30 years. The size and scope of the recommendations, however, can make it difficult to determine where to start. Commissioners prioritized strategies into four categories: short term (less than two years); medium term (three to five years); long term (six to ten years); and ongoing efforts that must start early and continue throughout this transformation process.

As Michiganders prioritize the work ahead, we must also resist efforts to veer off course. High-performing systems create a plan, and they commit to implementing that plan. We must do the same. Focusing our attention on these strategies alone is the first step in creating a cohesive, shared plan for our state and improving outcomes for our young Michiganders.

Short-Term Strategies

We urge the Governor and Legislature to discuss and make significant progress on implementation of the following items in the final two years of this administration. By doing so, our state will be demonstrating a shared commitment to dramatic change.

The strategies that follow are grounded in our work, but offer slightly more detail about how the principles ought to be executed. The Commission recognizes that as this report is implemented, policy details like those proposed below will be discussed and debated, which is a critical part of operationalizing this blueprint for Michigan.

Focus on Learning

- *As discussed in key strategies 1.1 and 1.2:* Elevate the teaching profession and raise the standards for admission to teacher preparation programs, increase rigor during preparation, and require a year-long residency for student teachers. Once educators enter the profession, offer meaningful career pathways for teachers advance in their career. The Commission suggests engaging a diverse group of stakeholders to lead this effort, including educators, school leaders, teacher preparation institutions, MDE, and others.
- *As discussed in key strategies 3.1 and 3.2:* Implement a process during the current legislative session to (a) determine the level of resources needed for K–12 students to meet performance metrics (assuming those funds are used effectively and efficiently), and (b) to make recommendations to the Legislature on the best ways to attain those resource levels. The

Commission suggests implementing the approach taken by Tennessee and Washington to construct an appropriate foundation grant.

- *As discussed in key strategy 3.3:* Adopt budgets for FY 18 and FY 19 that put Michigan on the path to providing significant additional resources for every disadvantaged student in the state that would follow the child to whichever public school he or she attends. The Commission believes this is an urgent investment and the Legislature should not wait to have a new foundation formula in place before increasing support for our neediest students.

Create a Strong Culture of Success

- *As discussed in key strategy 4.2:* Commit during the current legislative session to a K–14 education system for Michigan that offers universal access to community college and other skill training options for Michiganders. This should be a top funding priority in coming years.
- *As discussed in key strategy 4.4:* Provide incentives to districts to boost the number of high school counselors skilled in career guidance and postsecondary access. This will help students navigate their postsecondary education options. Our goal should be to quickly move Michigan to the national average of 491 students per counselor—with the longer-term goal of achieving an average ratio of 250 students to one counselor.
- *As discussed in key strategy 5.1:* Increase access to human services in schools by strengthening the link between schools and community-based human services in order to connect children, students, and their families to the right services at the right time. The short-term goal should be for every school that has a student population of over 50 percent disadvantaged students to have a caseworker on site.

Build a Coherent, Connected Education System from Prenatal to Career

- *As discussed in guiding principle 6:* Maintain our current content standards, and commit to relying on the M-STEP and SAT to measure student outcomes. High-performing states and nations set and maintain high standards for a long period of time. We must do the same by defining and protecting performance outcomes and assessments for the next decade for Michigan students. We must also work to identify additional measures for student success and specific tools to assess 21st century skills.
- *As discussed in key strategy 9.1:* Provide Michigan with the sole source of accountability a high-performing state public education system requires by placing a constitutional amendment on the 2018 ballot to determine if the people wish to (a) allow the Governor to appoint members of the State Board of Education and then allow the SBE to hire the state superintendent, (b) allow the Governor to appoint the state superintendent and abolish the SBE altogether, or (c) expand the SBE to include gubernatorial appointments and change how SBE members are elected.
- *As discussed in key strategy 2.2 and 9.2:* Establish a professionally staffed office in MDE to serve as a focal point for collecting the latest evidence-based knowledge about teaching and learning from local districts, ISDs, and universities and deploying these practices at scale.

Timetable

Exhibit 4. Implementation Schedule

#	Key Strategy
Short-term	
1.1	Enhance teacher preparation
1.2	Create multiple career pathways
2.2	Support implementation of evidence-based practices
3.1	Identify efficiencies
3.2	Determine the base funding amounts for K–12
4.2	Support universal access to community college for all Michigan students
4.4	Support all students with counselors skilled in career guidance and postsecondary access
5.1	Connect human services to schools.
6.1	Enhance student achievement measures
9.1	Reform state board of education governance
9.2	Enhance the function and capacity of MDE
Medium-term	
1.4	Strengthen building-level and organizational leadership
3.3	Determine the additional resources needed for disadvantaged students
3.4	Develop funding formulas to support the system
4.1	Determine the proper funding level for higher education
4.3	Make four-year degrees more affordable for students who demonstrate merit
5.3	Create user-friendly tools to navigate educational options
6.3	Improve data reporting
7.1	Assist poorer communities with funding for school facilities
7.2	Support public school academies with funding for school facilities
8.1	Support universal preschool for all four-year-olds
8.2	Develop and retain a quality early childhood workforce

#	Key Strategy
9.3	Reconceptualize the structure and function of ISDs
Long-term	
6.4	Move toward a competency-based learning model
9.4	Support local efforts to consolidate
Ongoing	
1.3	Improve educator professional development
2.1	Support state priorities with the necessary resources and tools
5.2	Nurture parent and educator collaboration
6.2	Hold the right people accountable
8.3	Increase access to quality services through improved coordination
8.4	Enhance early learning outcome measurement and tracking
9.5	Ensure access to high-quality educational options for all

Together We Can Improve Education in our State

Our existing education system is not built to produce the outcomes we want and need, but evidence from high-performing systems across the United States and internationally is promising. There are strategies we can pursue as a state that will move us into the forefront of public education systems in the nation. From parents and students to educators and administrators. From local residents to elected officials and business leaders to government officials. We all have a role to play. However, unless we resolve to take action quickly to transform our current public education system into one that gives our children an edge, the prognosis for our state and its citizens' future prosperity is bleak. There is no time to waste.