MiSTEM Advisory Council

FY 27 Recommendations

MiSTEM Network

Introduction

As part of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO), MiSTEM connects educators, students and local employers to tools to develop and deploy hands-on STEM learning experiences for PK-12 STEM students. These partnerships increase student engagement, improve educational outcomes and strengthen local talent pipelines.

More than science, technology, engineering and math, MiSTEM means opportunity, investment and economic growth — building communities connection by connection and inspiring students to explore their passions, build real-world skills and link up with careers here in Michigan. From rural towns to urban centers to suburban neighborhoods, **MiSTEM gives young Michiganders a real opportunity to live, work and raise families in the places built by the generations who came before them**, while strengthening schools, economies and employers statewide.

In FY 24-25, **the state's $7.9 million MiSTEM investment led to nearly $12 million in additional investment from partners** — a 150% return on the state allocation, which led to:

- **55,213 students engaged in camps**, projects and career exploration.
- **8,187 educators trained** through professional learning.
- **135 educator externships** connecting classrooms to industry.
- **936 cross-sector partnerships** statewide.
- **412 coordinated STEM activities** across all regions.

Michigan has made a bipartisan commitment to STEM learning because it is key to a brighter future for all. We ask you, as our elected leaders, to continue championing this work at home in your district and in Lansing by **restoring the $8M state investment.**

The challenge:

Aligning Michigan's future job needs with training and education.

Michigan's workforce needs are outpacing education and training and putting our state's economic future on a collision course with our education talent development system. **High-demand STEM careers are the backbone of future economic growth, and they are expanding far faster than the state is preparing qualified workers**. The Great Lakes State is treading dangerous waters if we fail to invest now in STEM education to prepare students for the high-tech jobs that will drive our economy for generations. Michigan's economic future — whether in rural communities, small towns, villages or cities — rests on a workforce skilled in critical thinking, collaboration and innovation, all of which are cultivated through STEM education. Communities across the state can't afford to fall behind.

STEM jobs are projected to grow 7.8%

from 2025-2032, compared with 0.6% for all jobs statewide.

There are more than 23,200 openings

annually across STEM occupations, led by software developers, mechanical engineers and industrial engineers.

Student readiness lags.

Of 111,500 graduating seniors in Michigan each year, only 82.8% finish on time and just 30% meet college- and career-readiness benchmarks. If every one of Michigan's 33,450 college- and career-ready graduates in a year filled a STEM job, we could meet the 23,200 annual openings — but only if they all stayed in Michigan, all wanted STEM careers, all were trained for those exact jobs and all went straight into the workforce.

Educator shortages are at a critical juncture

STEM teacher certifications have fallen from 2,086 in 2012 to just 675 in 2025. Math, science and special education have the most persistent vacancies.

The gap threatens all communities:

Rural, suburban and urban areas risk losing talent, missing economic opportunities and weakening local job markets.

The solution:

Grow Michigan's STEM talent pipeline now.

The MiSTEM Network has the statewide infrastructure, local partnerships and proven strategies to close Michigan's skills gap — all anchored in a dynamic statewide STEM learning ecosystem. By scaling place-, project- and problem-based (3P) learning, MiSTEM connects students to real-world STEM experiences that match the state's most in-demand jobs — while strengthening local economies.

This ecosystem links PK-20 education, business, industry, community organizations and workforce development partners into a cohesive network that fosters innovation and economic growth. It ensures that every student — whether in a rural, urban or suburban district — has access to consistent, high-quality STEM learning that builds critical thinking, collaboration and problem-solving skills.

Through this integrated approach, communities become active partners in preparing the next generation for high-wage, high-demand careers, helping Michigan attract and retain talent, bolster economic resilience and secure a thriving future for every region of the state.

Call to action: To close Michigan's STEM skills gap and ensure every student has access to high-quality STEM learning, we call on lawmakers to champion the restoration of this critical state infrastructure:

- **Increase each MiSTEM Network region's base operational funding** from $200,000 to $220,000 to ensure every region — rural, urban and suburban — can meet STEM demand and build economic stability through STEM learning.
- **Playbook Grant (MCL 388.1699s (7)): $750,000**
    - Creation of demonstration communities to model and scale high-impact STEM learning statewide.

- **Advisory Council Grant (MCL 388.1699s (3), (4)): $3.05 million**
  - Alignment of all PK-12 STEM programming and partner providers with the state STEM strategy.
- **Network Region Grant (MCL 388.1699s (5), (6)): $3.8 million**
  - Connect communities and partners to PK-12 STEM programming aligned with the statewide STEM strategy and complementary agency initiatives.
  - Expand the robotics and emerging technologies focus, including building on mechatronics, AI and other innovations, to reflect the changing face of career needs.
  - Invest in educator recruitment and retention by expanding continuing education through externships to rebuild the STEM teacher pipeline.
  - Strengthen partnerships for recruitment and retention.
- **Deepen business-education partnerships** by connecting students in rural, suburban and urban areas to career pathways that offer family-sustaining wages close to home.

By acting now, Michigan can ensure its students aren't just prepared for high-demand careers but are **inspired to build their futures** here, in the communities previous generations helped shape. If we fail to act, the growing gap between available high-wage careers and the skilled workforce to fill them will widen, forcing more jobs — and young talent — out of state. Michigan's STEM ecosystem is already delivering results. The MiSTEM Network is a proven model. Other states are looking to us for leadership and investing heavily. To maintain our competitive edge, we must move beyond modeling and commit to sustaining this work at scale. **The opportunity is urgent, the path is clear and the time to invest is now**.

MiSTEM Network