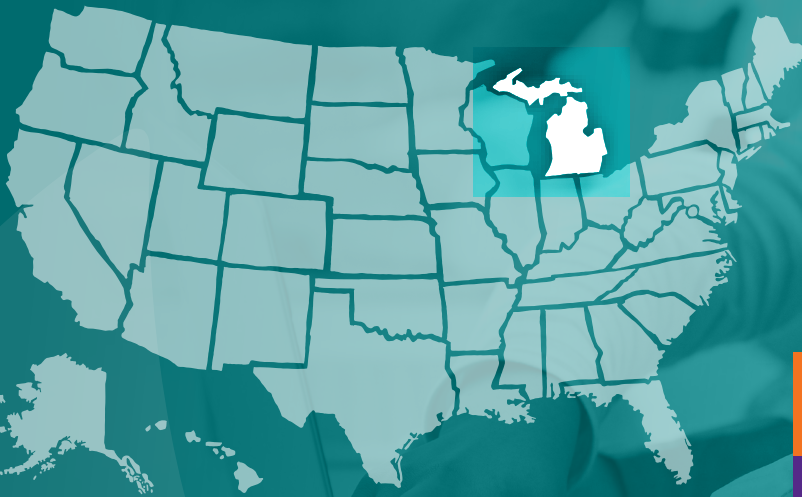


## STATE SPOTLIGHT

# MICHIGAN

## Making Summer Learning a Priority



### OVERVIEW

In 2021, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) launched a network of nine states to promote system-based strategies to transform and improve summer learning. The collaboration focused on assisting state education agencies and partners in using data for more impactful summer programs, advancing summer program quality, promoting exemplars of summer learning practices and identifying and disseminating model policies and regulatory conditions.

The participating states were Alabama, Arizona, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Utah and Virginia. This effort was coordinated with the U.S. Department of Education's Summer Learning and Enrichment Collaborative and was funded by The Wallace Foundation and MetaMetrics.

## Setting the Stage for Summer Learning

Prior to joining the network, the Michigan Department of Education's (MDE) summer learning efforts were minimal except for requiring six weeks of programming from 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) grantees. That began to change in early 2020 when State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice requested a presentation to the State Board of Education on "summer slide" and how out-of-school time (OST) and summer learning can support students, particularly those from low-income families. This presentation set the stage for Dr. Rice to prioritize OST and summer learning as key aspects of student learning. When the opportunity came to join the network, Dr. Rice immediately agreed that Michigan would be part of this work.



During the Summer Learning Network

Goal	Improve student achievement by strengthening the quality and quantity of OST and summer learning programs and supporting local districts and their partners.	
Approach	MDE established a State Summer Learning Network (SSLN) team of internal and external partners representing varied voices and perspectives, including special education experts, local and regional school districts, state department staff and technical assistance partners, philanthropy, statewide associations representing program providers, nonprofit stakeholders and local and regional program providers. In the team development process, it was important for the state to ensure representation from urban, suburban and rural communities, as well as from a diversity/equity/inclusion perspective. Throughout the process, MDE also continually reflected upon whose voices were missing from the discussion and added additional partners as necessary.	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Strengthen MDE’s ability to provide quality guidance to the OST and summer learning field.</li><li>2. Reimagine what school and community partnerships can mean and look like.</li><li>3. Strengthen OST and summer learning systems by increasing investment in quality programs through engagements with national, external and internal partners with the ultimate purpose of expanding access.</li></ol>	
Partnerships	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Battle Creek Public Schools</li><li>• Boys &amp; Girls Club Michigan Alliance</li><li>• Council of Chief State School Officers</li><li>• C.S. Mott Foundation</li><li>• Genesee Intermediate School District<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Health, Safety &amp; Nutrition Office</li></ul></li><li>• Michigan Afterschool Partnership</li><li>• Michigan Department of Education<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Office of Educational Supports</li><li>- Office of Preschool and Out-of-School Time Learning</li><li>- Office of Special Education</li></ul></li></ul></div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Michigan Library Association</li><li>• Mizzen by Mott</li><li>• National Summer Learning Association (NSLA)</li><li>• Region 8 Comprehensive Center</li><li>• State Alliance of Michigan YMCAs</li><li>• The Skillman Foundation</li><li>• Utica Public Schools</li><li>• Wilson Foundation</li><li>• W.K. Kellogg Foundation</li></ul></div>	
Products	The <b>Summer Learning Toolkit</b> , developed by the Michigan Afterschool Partnership in collaboration with NSLA, underscores the state’s efforts to create equity-driven, high-quality summer learning programs in Michigan. The best practices included a focus on the key elements of high-quality summer learning programs, standards of quality, outreach and recruitment and funding streams.	

Lessons Learned and Looking Ahead

Participation in the summer learning network has elevated OST and summer learning as a priority at MDE. With the state’s investment of \$5 million annually that began in fiscal year 2021, MDE’s OST and summer learning programs served 23,848 students in 2021 and 24,845 students in 2022. This does not include 21st CCLC grantees that served an additional 13,798 students in 2021 and 15,536 students in 2022. For fiscal year 2023, the state’s investment has increased to \$25 million. The state has learned several lessons along its summer learning journey:

Collaboration is key

The summer learning project provided the opportunity to bring together minds from in and outside of MDE and its Office of Preschool and Out-of-School Time Learning to work on key aspects of the action plan. This collaboration and creative thinking proved crucial in navigating red tape and budget processes within the state government to move forward new policy, funding and professional development opportunities for the field.

Address system-building with an equity lens

Over the last two years, MDE has attempted to model the use of an equity lens in its work through revised policies and practices on how it considers licensed and unlicensed programs during grant competitions, as well as how it allocates funding for providers. For example, smaller organizations or those with less infrastructure may need more support initially and possibly greater funding consideration than larger organizations or those with finance offices, human resource departments and other infrastructure.

MDE quickly learned that flexibility is needed with different providers when building a mixed-delivery system. Although there needs to be a certain threshold of minimum quality, there are many on-



ramps to achieving high-quality programming that allow a wider variety of providers to be part of the OST and summer learning system, with some needing additional technical assistance, coaching and resources.

Workforce capacity for the system continues to be a challenge

Both before and after the pandemic, workforce shortages have affected all aspects of education, including OST and summer learning. Hiring effective staff and then providing the ongoing professional development they need and deserve is crucial to ensuring positive student outcomes.

The MDE SSLN team was able to increase their capacity by working with the **Region 8 Comprehensive Center**, whose team members provided background research and conducted focus groups as part of the preliminary summer learning work. Capacity was also increased through support from four major foundations that support OST and summer learning. For example, the Wilson Foundation is providing initial grant funding through the Michigan Afterschool Partnership.

MDE also addressed the workforce shortage by leveraging another federal grant – the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five – to create a new high school pathways to credentials program for students interested in careers in education. Students in the program can earn a Child Development Associate credential or Michigan School-Age Youth Development Associate credential.

Looking ahead

By 2025, MDE, working with its statewide partners, aims to triple the investment in OST and summer learning to \$75 million per year. MDE is working to help districts build strong, trusting relationships with community partners. And through the MDE SSLN team, it has a committed group of community advocates to continue championing this robust support of OST and summer learning programs and systems. Meanwhile, the MDE SSLN team is continuing to think big and make strides toward the ultimate goal of expanding access to high-quality OST and summer learning opportunities for all students. ■