TALENTFIRST
Vision. Insights. Solutions.

2023 Policy
Recommendations

Early Childhood Development

Evidence-based early education and development strategies provide the greatest return on investment among all the investments in talent Michigan can make.

1. Increase access to and capacity of childcare providers with **equitable and sustainable funding for the whole early childhood system**.
2. **Ensure childcare providers are protected** against an adverse impact if Pre-K is made universal in Michigan as occurred when the Great Start Readiness Program was expanded.
3. **Scale Reach Out and Read Michigan**, an evidence-based early literacy program now in 48 counties serving 100,000 children instead of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library ($4M)
4. Implement a **universal measure of kindergarten readiness** like M-STEP to know the level of readiness of children when they start school, or the impact of early childhood interventions like GSRP at a local level.

K-12 Education

Michigan ranks among the worst in the nation and the United States among the lowest of OECD countries for K-12 outcomes. Additional funding helps, but the quality of instructional practices and access requires just as much attention.

1. **Retain the parent notification** required and improve data collection in the Third Grade Reading Law.
2. **Hold school districts accountable** to rapidly implement evidence-based early literacy strategies with current and future investments.
3. **Invest in weighted K-12 funding model** that recognizes the unique factors that influence academic achievement.
4. **Expand the Mavin Grow Mainstreet program** to more elementary and middle school students to develop foundational technical and employability skills and career exposure. ($7.5M)
5. **Accelerate Competency-Based Education** (CBE) learning with a $7M pilot proposed by the Future of Learning Council.
6. Incentivize school districts to provide high-quality **Career & Technical Education** (CTE) programming in their high schools.
7. **Change K-12's governance structure** to increase accountability and alignment between the Michigan Department of Education, ISDs'/RESA's and individual districts.
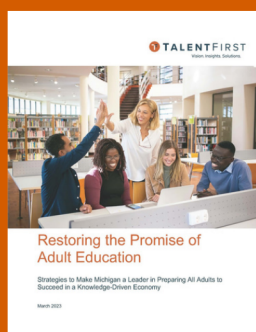
Workforce Development

Adult Education

Michigan needs to elevate adult education as a critical component of its talent strategy. TalentFirst worked with Public Policy Associates to develop a model for adult education resource deployment:

1. **System Integration:** Position adult education as part of a coordinated talent development system by raising its profile, aligning goals, working closely with employers and partners, delivering services in a human-centered manner, and connecting adult education and career pathways, and more.
2. **Funding:** Inject more resources to support adult education performance through increased state funding, redesigning the funding distribution strategy, greater flexibility through policy waivers, and investing in resources for systems change. ($15M)
3. **Educator Supports:** Build respect for the field through increased compensation and full-time positions, professional development to serve this population's unique needs, and adult educator certification, among other strategies.
4. **Learner Services:** Address the whole learner to foster strong outcomes through expanded service access, flexible delivery methods, peer support, digital literacy, technology and learning environments, and learning plans that include assessment for disabilities and career connectivity.
5. **Innovate the Model:** Today, less than 4% of adults in need are enrolled in adult education and only 50% of them complete. Create a center of innovation outside state government to prototype and scale high-quality programs and model the innovations listed above. ($5MM)

Learn More

TALENTFIRST

Restoring the Promise of
Adult Education

Strategies to Make Michigan a Leader in Preparing All Adults to
Succeed in a Knowledge-Driven Economy

March 2023

Workforce Development

Labor Force Participation

Michigan's labor force participation rate fell by 8.9 percentage points from January 2000 to December 2022, compared to the nationwide decline of 4.5 percentage points. The state's shrinking workforce has been driven by unprecedented rise in disconnected youth (16-24) and prime age workers (25-54). Policymakers can fix disincentives to work, while expanding positive incentives through targeted reforms.

1. Incentivize employers to hire **justice-involved individuals** and **those with a disability** to increase their labor force participation and provide them with greater economic opportunity.
2. Leverage the **Child Support Enforcement** (CSE) program to address the crisis of prime-age male nonwork.
3. Implement targeted reforms to the **Earned Income Tax Credit** (EITC) to incentivize work among childless workers and noncustodial parents who regularly make their child support payments.
4. Devote a larger portion of **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families** (TANF) resources to help troubled families move toward self-sufficiency, expand work participation activities to include foundational education, and expand state-specific outcomes measures to track long-term success.
5. Establish a **Recovery Friendly Workplaces** initiative to provide resources for employers to support employees in recovery and all those impacted by substance use disorder (see Colorado, Kentucky, New Hampshire, Nevada, and Ohio).
6. Reform **occupational licensing** to reduce costs, eliminate barriers, and expand reciprocity to provide more low-income workers with pathways to self-sufficiency and alleviate shortages for critical roles.
7. Ensure stricter and more uniform enforcement of work requirements among eligible **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program** (SNAP) participants and expand state-specific outcome measures to track long-term success.

Learn More

LFPR
Labor Force Participation Rate Report
NOVEMBER 2022

TALENTFIRST

Michigan's Shrinking Workforce: Examining a 20-year Problem

WHAT'S INSIDE:
With this comprehensive look at the many, complex reasons people have been leaving the labor force in Michigan, TalentFirst examines who is not working, why they are not, and how we can reverse this two-decade decline.

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