



The Education Trust—Midwest



# A Decade+ of **IMPACT**

For Students Who Are Underserved

Student-Centered • Data-Driven • Equity-Focused



*"ETM has been a strong advocate. The things that we believe are important in our school system, they've been a strong voice ... They're very talented in all they do, so they should continue with disseminating information, holding folks accountable and challenging where they should be challenged."*

**—Alice Thompson, CEO, BFDI Educational Services, Inc., Chair of the Detroit NAACP's Education Committee**

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## Our Impact Journey

2011–2023



Throughout this report, you can see a timeline of our Impact Journey through the years.

# Letter from the Executive Director at The Education Trust-Midwest



**Since the inception of The Education Trust-Midwest more than a decade ago, we have stayed steadfast in a belief that addressing systemic issues of opportunity gaps is the key to transforming America's and Michigan's education system.** For more than 10 years, we have built a movement in Michigan by leading and supporting efforts to ensure that all Michigan students—especially Black and Latina/o students and children from low-income backgrounds—have access to a high-quality public education.

**This mission has guided The Education Trust for more than two decades, yet it's one shared by so many Americans, regardless of background or political party.** It's an idea that had its seeds in my own childhood, when wonderful teachers provided me with great teaching and treated me with respect and kindness, grounded in a belief that I could learn at high levels. When the world around me did not encourage me or see me for what I could become, teachers such as Ms. Bonnie Dutton and Mr. Al Jewel saw great potential in me, supported my interests and encouraged me to soar.

**Today Michigan's public schools are filled with children of tremendous potential and committed educators, just as they were when I was growing up.** The conditions in which children and educators are working to succeed have changed, though—and often, not for the better. Our state's public education system has been underfunded for more than two decades. The children who have borne the brunt of this lack of investment and support are those who live in the state's lower-income communities and urban and rural communities, research shows—and children who often need additional support such as multilingual learners and students with disabilities. Michigan's K-12 schools' learning outcomes have been lagging behind leading states. While every Michigan student deserves to be truly well-prepared and supported in school to succeed in pursuing post-secondary opportunities, we are very far from making this vision a reality.

**Yet we also know that change is possible.** Working alongside a growing number of committed partners, our organization has played a pivotal role in crucial statewide policy changes and supporting equity-driven practices. Over the past three years, we have successfully advanced 76 percent of our legislative priorities, which we delve into in this Impact Report.

**Our efforts have opened doors to inspiring conversations with leaders in state government, K-12 education, business, civil rights, philanthropy, non-profit and grassroots spaces.** We've been honored to help build leaders' and advocates' knowledge about effective strategies to close opportunity gaps. We've taken bold action leading to transformational policy changes; formed effective and durable equity-centered coalitions; researched and spearheaded high-leverage strategies from top education states; and led major public engagement campaigns. We are proud to have served as a leading voice for educational equity in thousands of conversations.

**We've also evolved.** Today we are a different organization, serving as a policy, data, communications, and community engagement backbone to organizations across the Great Lakes State. The Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity (MPEO) statewide coalition reaches 28 counties, 214 local school districts and 219 charter schools. Our collective work touches more than a million students. Recently we've also launched a state-wide teacher leadership fellowship with another organization. We explore these new efforts in this report.

**We have learned by working together with diverse partners, we can truly address the structural challenges that are dragging Michigan's public education system behind leading states.** Just last year, for example, our collective efforts resulted in the most dramatic overhaul in Michigan's school funding system in more than two decades. National leaders are recognizing this work as a national bellwether for equitable school funding, including at the renowned 2024 SXSW Festival.

**We do our work every day with our mission's north star guiding us.** We believe a high-quality public education is essential for a healthy democracy and a globally competitive economy. It is a right that every child deserves. And it is the key to Michigan's future.

**Mil gracias, a thousand thanks, to the educators, leaders, partners and colleagues around the state and beyond who have made the last decade's journey brighter due to the work that you do.** And most importantly, thank you to the Michigan students who are working hard every day to learn and thrive. Your bright futures inspire this work.

Gratefully,  
Amber Arellano, Executive Director, The Education Trust-Midwest



2011

**2011** The Education Trust-Midwest (ETM) launches as a new division of The Education Trust, one of the country's leading organizations focused on closing gaps in opportunity and achievement for Black and Latino students and children from low-income backgrounds. The organization begins producing groundbreaking analyses and evidence-based policy recommendations.

January

Education Trust-Midwest conducts a statewide listening tour to hear and learn from diverse public education stakeholders in Michigan. It also releases its first report, *"Becoming a Leader in Education: An Agenda for Michigan,"* which calls for honest performance data, among other proposals to strengthen the state's education system.

February

Following ETM's advocacy for stronger transparency and public reporting about Michigan's education performance, the Michigan State Board of Education votes to raise the proficiency "cut scores" on the MEAP exam and provide more transparent and truthful information to parents and the public about achievement in Michigan schools.

June

With strong bipartisan support, the Michigan legislature votes to revamp the teacher tenure model in the state, which is later approved by Governor Rick Snyder. The new laws include a focus on performance-based tenure, more feedback and professional development for early-career teachers, and the creation of the Michigan Council for Educator Effectiveness (MCEE). Ed Trust-Midwest becomes a leading non-partisan voice in the public debate over the bills, emphasizing the importance of creating a system that supports the development of educator development and the adoption of best practices.

September

ETM advocates for Michigan to apply for a No Child Left Behind waiver and to create a plan to adopt and implement high-level college-and-career-readiness standards and assessments and improve low-performing schools, among other recommendations.

# Impact By The Numbers

**76%**

**LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES ADVANCED**

We successfully advanced 76% of our legislative priorities over the past three years to improve public education for hundreds of thousands of students, especially those who are the most underserved



**HUNDREDS OF MEETINGS WITH POLICY LEADERS ANNUALLY—50+ ALONE IN FALL 2023**



**140+**

**REPORTS, POLICY BRIEFS, AND PUBLIC TESTIMONIES**

Focused on best practices in leading states and advocating for all students, especially those who are underserved, to have equitable access to opportunities for a great public education



**\$200 Million+**

**SECURED IN FY '24**

Additional dollars secured for students from low-income backgrounds who are considered 'at risk' – for a total of \$950 million+



**THE MICHIGAN PARTNERSHIP FOR EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY REACH**

- 28 counties, in addition to statewide reach
- 214 local school districts
- 219 charter schools
- 1 million+ students



**160+**

**COALITION PARTNERS ASSEMBLED AND CONVENED**



**6 Billion+**

**ESTIMATED VIEWS**

Based on audience reach and engagement through articles, opinion pieces, and interviews



**10+**

**YEARS OF IMPACT**

For students who are underserved, with a particular focus on Black and Latino/a students and students from low-income backgrounds



**1437+**

**MENTIONS IN ARTICLES AND MEDIA**



The Opportunity Index would not be possible without many partners, including The Education Trust-Midwest and Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity, **Sen. Darrin Camilleri said.** The information from ETM and partners provided the foundation needed “to fight for a program that we know is going to make transformational differences for our students,” he said. “It’s something that our state has never attempted before, and it’s something that I’m very proud of championing.”



*“Ed Trust-Midwest was instrumental in helping us work on what the Opportunity Index could look like for Michigan. With their partnership, we were able to include this historic funding model in our state school budget and usher in a new era of equity-based funding for Michigan students.”*

—Darrin Camilleri, Michigan State Senator



*“Education Trust-Midwest has emerged as a beacon of educational equity in Michigan, utilizing data-driven advocacy and unwavering dedication to bridging opportunity and achievement gaps. Their efforts have championed equitable funding, expanded access to high-quality early childhood education, and fortified teacher training, propelling educational equity across the state.”*

—Wendy Lewis Jackson, Managing Director-Detroit, The Kresge Foundation

**2011**

**September** The Education Trust-Midwest is among the first organizations in the state to call for strong performance standards and a thoughtful, evidenced-based new system of charter school accountability, following the introduction of new legislation proposing to lift the cap on charter schools in Michigan.

**December** Senate Bill 618 passes the legislature and is signed into law, lifting the cap on the number of charter schools in Michigan. ETM continues advocating for charter school accountability and emphasizing the need to ensure that new schools are high quality.

**2012**

**April** The Michigan Council for Educator Effectiveness’s initial report is released with ETM support for recommendations including passing legislation to fund and support piloting educator evaluation systems across the state, creating pathways for master teacher programs, and supporting the development of an opt-in standardized evaluation model. ETM releases the report *“What our Students Deserve: The Truth about Education in the Great Lakes State.”*

**July** Michigan’s No Child Left Behind waiver is approved by the U.S. Department of Education.

**September** ETM’s *“Strengthening Michigan’s Teaching Force”* report advocates for a comprehensive state-wide teacher evaluation system in Michigan and garners significant press.

**November** ETM’s *“Good for Teachers, Good for Students: The Need for Smart Teacher Evaluation in Michigan”* builds upon the September report and analyzes current school district evaluation systems, finding that they provide limited feedback, allow tenured teachers to go unobserved, rarely take into account student performance, and do not include master teacher pathways.

# Our mission:

## Who We Are

### Student-Centered • Data-Driven • Equity-Focused

The Education Trust-Midwest is a nonpartisan, data-driven policy, research, advocacy, and technical assistance non-profit organization that works alongside many partners at the state and local levels for the high academic achievement of all Michigan students in pre-kindergarten through college. **Our mission:** to close the gaps in opportunity and achievement that disproportionately impact students who are the most underserved, with a particular focus on Black and Latino/a students and students from low-income backgrounds.

All students, pre-K through college, can learn and achieve at high levels if they are taught and supported at high levels. But many young people—disproportionate numbers of students from low-income backgrounds, students of color, English Learners, and many others—continue to be denied access to the high-quality learning opportunities they need, with a devastating impact on their life outcomes.

We work in partnership with policymakers, educators, advocates, parents, business and civic leaders, civil right leaders, community groups, and others to advance the development and implementation of policies and practices that improve the educational outcomes for all students.



*“The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation was an early funder of The Education Trust-Midwest, and we continue to support its work to inform Michigan’s education policy landscape. We consistently use their equity-focused research and data in our grantmaking and are encouraged with their commitment to understanding equity issues through data. We are also thankful for their leadership as a thought partner as we examined how to best respond to the indelible impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and how to improve academic outcomes for children in Michigan and our hometown of Flint.”*

—**Thomas Parker**, Executive in Residence/Program Officer, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation



*“The Education Trust-Midwest holds a unique position in Michigan’s K-12 ecosystem — they take a nonpartisan, data-driven approach, with a laser focus on improving outcomes for Michigan students. ALL children deserve strong schools to set them up for successful, fulfilling lives, and we appreciate The Education Trust-Midwest’s unwavering leadership in research and advocacy to build support for policy changes to close existing opportunity gaps.”*

—**Kayla Roney Smith**, Portfolio Manager, Ballmer Group—Southeast Michigan



2013

**2013** ETM centers policy conversations on the need for research-based, data-driven education investment through reports and press coverage.

April

ETM releases a case-making report for investment in education in Michigan through the *“Invest in What Works: A Roadmap for Michigan Leaders”* report. The report gathers significant press coverage.

July

Led by University of Michigan School of Education Dean Deborah Loewenberg Ball, the Michigan Council on Educator Effectiveness issues its final report, including ETM recommendations, for a new educator evaluation system in Michigan based on an opt-out model where districts may use the state system or their own approved local evaluation model. ETM guides press conversations on recommendations, including a master teacher pathway.

September

As Michigan begins implementation of new college- and career-ready standards, ETM launches the Michigan Coalition for High Student Standards in close partnership with major K-12 education organizations and business organizations. The coalition of more than 145 organizations actively works to support the Common Core standards and urge the legislature to pass funding for their implementation and an aligned assessment system. The Coalition releases survey results reporting that 71% of Michigan voters support Common Core.

October

Following strong advocacy from ETM and the Coalition for High Student Standards, the state legislature votes to restore funding to the implementation of Common Core college- and career-readiness standards.

December

ETM advocates for state leaders to invest significantly in training and support of educators as they implement new college- and career-ready standards across the state.



## What We Do

### Our Work at a Glance

Founded in 2011, The Education Trust-Midwest is the Midwest—and especially Michigan—presence of the national Education Trust based in Washington D.C.

### Ed Trust-Midwest does its work in a variety of ways.

- We serve as a center for nonpartisan data and research. We conduct research and mine national, state and local data to identify best practices across the nation and state to help build a broader understanding of opportunity gaps and how to close them.
- We conduct public reporting—and lead and support public engagement campaigns—to inform education stakeholders of key facts and data on pressing education issues. We publish regular reports, policy briefs, newsletters and blogs, providing additional opportunities for educators, policymakers, and advocates to stay up to date with research and learn new ways to leverage their voice to work toward opportunity for all students.
- We serve as a voice for students in policymaking, especially children who are the most underserved.

- We celebrate what's working in our public education system.
- We work alongside state leaders and many other stakeholders to bridge the gap between research, practitioners and policymakers.
- We provide technical expertise and assistance to a variety of leaders and stakeholders, and we serve as a trusted consultant to a variety of organizations.
- We regularly convene thought leaders and organizations from around the state and country who are working on some of America's most pressing educational challenges. Lasting and powerful movements for systems change require knowledgeable, informed leaders and organizations that can work well together to mobilize and empower others and press for an equity-centered public education system. Our work is focused on convening, building and supporting those organizations and leaders—regardless of geographic area, professional sector and political background—and empowering and supporting them to have a voice in major decisions that impact their communities.

Ed Trust-Midwest's backbone roles include serving as a source of nonpartisan data, policy expertise and research; convening and consensus-building; communications and public engagement; and advocacy efforts in a variety of ways. Most recently, Ed Trust-Midwest serves as the backbone organization of the Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity (MPEO) coalition. For more about the MPEO coalition, please go to the MPEO website [partnersformistudents.org](http://partnersformistudents.org).

To learn more about [our work and what we do](#), please go to [www.edtrustmidwest.org](http://www.edtrustmidwest.org).

2014

**2014** Ed Trust-Midwest launches a new campaign to make Michigan a top ten education state. The campaign captures the attention of many organizations who increasingly are engaged on education issues.

**February**

ETM testifies to the state legislature about a new state assessment aligned to college-and-career-readiness standards.

**April**

ETM's annual State of Michigan Education report, *"Stalled to Soaring: Michigan's Path to Educational Recovery,"* highlights the trajectories and strategies of leading education states such as Massachusetts and fast-improving states such as Tennessee. It also introduces the concept of a "grand bargain" for Michigan public education: much greater public investment in the system for greater accountability and transparency.

**May**

Education Trust National President Kati Haycock joins ETM at the Mackinac Policy Conference.

**October**

State lawmakers introduce legislation aligned with ETM's policy priorities including HB 5111 and 5114, which would provide support for early literacy interventions and screening.

**November**

The M-STEP is officially adopted to replace the MEAP exam after strong ETM advocacy. The assessment is taken in the spring rather than fall and requires additional demonstration of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

# Our Impact: 10 Stories of Policy Wins and Change



As we celebrate our work over the last decade, we know that data isn't the only way to show impact. The stories behind the work are just as important. The following pages highlight 10 stories that celebrate our 10+ years of impact.

## Building Coalitions, Convening Partners, and Building a Movement for Educational Equity

Knowing that our work is stronger and better when it is done in partnership, ETM has built impactful coalitions centered around the need for an educational system that meets the needs of historically underserved student groups, with a deep focus on Black and Latino/a students and students from low-income backgrounds—and more recently, English Learners and students with disabilities and those living in rural and geographically isolated communities.

Most recently, as the pandemic commenced, Ed Trust-Midwest began building a strong coalition of diverse leaders and organizations from many sectors: civil rights, business, grassroots, philanthropic and civic, all of whom began working to promote educational equity for all Michigan students. Our bipartisan table—the [Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity \(MPEO\) coalition](#)—is comprised of more than 30 organizations—and growing. The MPEO has led pandemic educational recovery issues and has served as the state's leading champion in the transformational legal reforms that were made to Michigan's school funding system in 2023.

Serving as the tri-chairs of MPEO are: **Alice Thompson**, chair of the Detroit Branch NAACP education committee, CEO of BFDI Educational Services, Inc., and former CEO of Black Family Development; **Mike Jandernoa**, founder and Chairman of 42 North Partners and Chairman of the West Michigan Policy Forum Policy Committee who is a corporate and philanthropic leader; and **Amber Arellano**, executive director of The Education Trust-Midwest.

In 2023, **Arellano** and **Thompson** served on **Gov. Whitmer's PreK-12 Workgroup of the Growing Michigan Together Council**. The workgroup was charged with making recommendations to the Council which will develop a statewide strategy to grow Michigan's population and economy, including through education systems improvement.

Ed Trust-Midwest through the past ten years has served as a convener to build knowledge among partners, allies, and advocates about equity-centered policy and best practices for students who are most underserved. ETM has successfully hosted summits drawing hundreds of people, webinars, press conferences, action days in Lansing, and much more.



*"They are comrades, thought leaders, super facilitators and friends who work for and beside a diverse array of stakeholders to discuss difficult issues and build solutions that as a Coalition, we are all excited to be a part of! Working with ETM over the past several years is both a highlight and blessing that fuels me in the work I do to educate, equip and empower parents and all of us towards a better world."*

— **Jametta Lilly**, Chief Executive Officer, Detroit Parent Network

- 2014**  
**December** ETM continues to advocate for charter accountability after a report from the National Association of Charter Authorizers ranks Michigan last in the country for charter regulation and performance.
- 2015**  
**2015** Ed Trust-Midwest launches a new campaign to make Michigan a top ten education state. The campaign captures the attention of many organizations who increasingly are engaged on education issues.
- January** In partnership with the Steelcase Foundation, ETM launches the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning to foster high-quality instruction and new systems of teacher leadership and school improvement in high-poverty public schools in West Michigan. The new center is led by a team of veteran Michigan urban educators.
- February** ETM publishes *"Accountability for All: The Need for Real Charter Authorizer Accountability"* advocating for strong charter school oversight and regulations to hold authorizers to high performance standards.
- March** ETM presents to the House Education Committee on strategies for boosting third-grade literacy based on evidence from top education states.
- May** Launching a new campaign, Ed Trust-Midwest begins benchmarking Michigan's educational improvement and progress compared to leading and fast-improving education states around the country in the report *"Michigan Achieves: Becoming a Top Ten Education State."*

# 2

## Fair Funding: Shaping Policy and Scoring Historic Funding Wins for Students who are Most Underserved

Michigan has long been among the worst in the nation for school funding gaps between wealthy and low-income school districts. Ed Trust-Midwest’s seminal report, [Michigan’s School Funding: Crisis and Opportunity](#), showed that, for far too long, the state’s K-12 funding system has been neither adequate nor equitable—with the harshest burden falling on students from low-income backgrounds, English Learners, students in isolated, rural schools, and students with disabilities.



Providing a fair funding system for all Michigan students has been a longstanding priority for The Education Trust-Midwest and its partners. Following a multi-year campaign—including convenings, multiple reports highlighting best practices from leading states, coalition and knowledge-building, advocacy, and more—Ed Trust-Midwest and the Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity (MPEO) coalition scored a [historic systemic school funding win](#) for students who are the most underserved.

In 2023, Michigan joined the nation’s first ten states with state school funding formulas that include an index—the Opportunity Index—for concentrations of poverty, among states with similar funding systems. These changes also include historic progress for school funding for English Learners and students with disabilities.

Learn more about these important changes on page 29.

# 3

## Pandemic Advocacy and Students’ Educational Recovery

Together, Ed Trust-Midwest and its many partners in the Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity (MPEO) coalition advanced an equity-centered policy and investment agenda starting in the first weeks of the pandemic. The collective efforts scored major policy change and wins for students who are the most underserved. Those include [increased food security amid the pandemic](#), [quality instruction during school closures](#), [transparency in continued learning plans and school finances](#), and [equitable school funding](#).

Michigan students fell behind by an alarming rate during the pandemic. To address this unfinished learning, ETM strongly supported **Governor Whitmer’s MI Kids Back on Track** initiative which provides \$150 million in grants to districts for high dosage tutoring. Research has shown that when done well, this is one of the most effective tools to accelerate students’ learning.

In addition to advocating to the legislature to include that funding in the most recent budget, we partnered with other advocates in drafting language to provide guardrails that ensure the money will be invested in effective, high-quality tutoring based on research. Specifically, the tutoring must be conducted by a trained tutor and be provided to groups no larger than four students at least three times a week. In addition, schools must use a reliable assessment tool to set goals and monitor progress and report that progress to the state.

Working with our MPEO colleagues, we successfully secured this language in the final budget that was passed in June 2023. ETM also led the way to protect that program in the fall after an attempt was made to water down and weaken the language before the grants were even awarded.

- 2015**
  - August** The U.S. Department of Education provides a grant to Michigan schools to fund AP courses and exams. ETM calls for rigorous course offerings for all students in the Michigan Achieves report.
  - August** HB 4822, new early literacy intervention legislation, is introduced in the state legislature following ETM advocacy for early literacy support.
  - October** ETM hosts the Michigan Achieves! State leadership retreat with education, business, and community leaders and hosts sessions to learn from education leaders in top states such as Massachusetts and Tennessee.
  - November** Following approval by the state legislature, Governor Snyder signs SB 103, Michigan’s first comprehensive statewide educator evaluation and support requirements into law, following ETM’s multi-year advocacy.
- 2016**
  - 2016** Along with watershed reports and analyses on charter school accountability and Michigan’s talent crisis, ETM brings together leaders from across sectors to chart a path for Michigan to become a leading education state.
  - February** “Accountability for All: 2016 the Broken Promise of Michigan’s Charter Sector” and “Charter Authorizer Report Cards” are published with emphasis on charter accountability, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds and students who are underserved. The report gathers much attention.
  - April** ETM and partners oppose SB 826 which would eliminate Michigan’s college-and-career-readiness standards; the bill was later defeated.





*“The Education Trust-Midwest has only been around for a little over 10 years. Yet in that relatively short period of time, it has brought a shining new light to the education situation in Michigan. If it weren’t for Ed Trust-Midwest, for example, we wouldn’t be aware that Michigan’s relative performance in K-12 education has deteriorated sharply in the last 20 years. Ed Trust-Midwest’s meticulous analysis of the situation here, compared with the situation in other states, has permitted both discussion and action to make things better. In addition, Ed Trust-Midwest’s analytical pieces on charter school performance, third-grade reading, eighth-grade math and many other individual education subjects, have been invaluable in making our leaders and citizens specifically aware of our situation. Without this perceptive analysis, effective improvement would just not be possible.”*

—Ken Whipple, Michigan Achieves Leadership Council, Retired Chairman & CEO CMS Energy Corp.

#### 4 Top Ten Education State Campaign: Changing Narratives, Building Urgency

In 2015, The Education Trust-Midwest launched the [Michigan Achieves](#) campaign to make Michigan a top ten education state by 2030. Before the campaign, many public education stakeholders had been unaware of how much Michigan’s educational performance had declined compared to the nation’s leading states in terms of performance and improvement since 2001, according to the national assessment. The new campaign not only changed common narratives about how the state’s education system was doing just fine, but also emphasized reasons for hope, pointing to the lessons to be learned of the country’s fastest-improving states and highest performers such as Massachusetts.



Before the campaign, Michigan education stakeholders also often had lacked a common “North Star” goal and common benchmarking by which to measure success and the state’s educational progress. In the years that have followed, organizations across the state—including the Michigan Department of Education, major business organizations, and many others—have set a goal of becoming a top ten state for public education. The common goal now helps guide some of the most critical leaders in the space.

The campaign also called for a “grand bargain” in Michigan: dramatically more investment in the education system in return for significantly more accountability and transparency, and systems change that will lead to major improvement in student outcomes. Over time, that concept has become an active goal among some important leaders in the state.

In many ways, the campaign continues as Ed Trust-Midwest reports annually on how Michigan is making progress toward that top ten goal based on both student outcome performance metrics and “opportunity to learn” equity-centered metrics that signal the health of the conditions that Michigan is creating that help support—or stagnate—teaching and learning in Michigan public schools.

2016

May

*“Michigan’s Talent Crisis: The Economic Case for Rebuilding Michigan’s Broken Public Education System”* report describes the economic implications of the state’s low academic performance. ETM advocates for investment in early literacy, equitable school funding, and availability of rigorous coursework.

May

ETM brings Michigan’s school funding inequities to the forefront of the Mackinac Policy Conference with Education Trust National President Kati Haycock.

September

HB 4822, the Read by Grade Three law, passes the Michigan state legislature.

September

ETM’s Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning expands.

2017

2017

ETM brings Michigan’s longstanding education inequities to the forefront of policy discussions through analyses, policy recommendations, reports, and convenings.

January

Through strong media relationships, media coverage stands at 426.6 million potential readers.



*"The Education Trust-Midwest's connection to many communities made me want to engage further and dive deeper into the "how" of community change and educational achievement. As we have come together under the umbrella of the Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity, we have further pushed and gained ground for educational gains. This work is something that I look forward to with every meeting every month. We are making a difference, and it is changing the lives of the communities we serve. This is why I do what I do, what we do, for our students. So that regardless of status, education level of parents, situatedness, culture, or language, our students can see themselves in someone that was and is them."*

—Adnoris "Bo" Torres, Project Supervisor, [Strong Beginnings-Healthy Start](#)

### Third-Grade Reading Success for All Students

Reading is the foundation upon which all other learning takes place. Unfortunately, too many of Michigan's students are struggling to read. Ed Trust-Midwest's work on this issue goes back many years, as it was one of the first organizations in the state to call for research-based systemic changes to ensure schools and educators have the supports, training, and evidence-based practices they need to support young children's reading mastery.

Ed Trust-Midwest also has long advocated for research-based policies to address Michigan's reading crisis, including working to advance legislation to address one of the most common barriers to reading: dyslexia.

Over the previous two legislative sessions—and building upon years of research—we have worked with policymakers and early literacy advocates to create a better system to identify and support students with dyslexia. In 2023 and 2024, Senate Bills 567 and 568, advancing in the legislature, are a continuation of this ongoing hard work.

In addition to simply screening and identifying students with dyslexia, the legislation spells out specific supports that must be used that have been shown to be effective in teaching students with dyslexia. These supports are grounded in structured literacy and the science of reading.

One key piece of this legislation is the focus on educating and equipping both current and new teachers with knowledge about effective literacy instruction based on the science of reading. All teachers should be empowered with the knowledge of how the reading brain works, effective instructional strategies, and how to support students with dyslexia. This change in practice has the potential to create systemic change and help ensure that all students become proficient readers and writers.



*"Partnering with Education Trust-Midwest has enhanced the Community Foundation for Muskegon County's ability to engage and work with organizations statewide to increase equity for all of Michigan's children. Through ETM's leadership in the Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity Coalition, we can lend Muskegon's voice to important issues impacting students and families. We appreciate Education Trust-Midwest's ... presence at the table for hard conversations, as well as the opportunity to work collaboratively to reach solutions that will benefit all Michigan residents."*

—Todd Jacobs, President and CEO, Community Foundation for Muskegon County

2017

**March** The "Opportunities in Michigan's State Budget: Advancing Equity in Public Education" report by ETM praises the Governor's proposed increased education funding in the budget.

**March** ETM Executive Director Amber Arellano participates in the Detroit Drives Degrees event of the Detroit Regional Chamber and advocates for access to post-secondary education.

**March** ETM opposes legislation watering down the Michigan Merit Curriculum. The measure does not pass the legislature this session.

**March** ETM leads opposition to legislation abandoning the Common Core college-and-career-readiness standards. None of these pieces of legislation made it past committee.

**June** State budget passes with increased funding for at-risk students and English Learners, as well as an increased minimum per-pupil foundation allowance and increases in funding for early literacy programs, in line with ETM priorities.

**December** The U.S. Department of Education approves Michigan's ESSA plan.



*"They 'walk their talk.' And they are evidence-based and data-driven. There are so few organizations in Michigan that lead with those in defensible ways. ETM does. I may not always agree (I usually do); but at least they defend positions with evidence. ETM is a group I can be a part of where I know evidence and data lead the conversation – and matter."*

—**Holly Windram PhD**, Executive Director, Michigan Education Corps (MEC)

# 6

## Empowering Parents and Families Most Impacted by Policy Decisions

As Michigan began to implement a new third-grade reading and retention law after its passage by the state legislature in 2016, organizations across the state saw a need to provide greater information and support to parents and families who would soon be faced with the challenge of navigating a new, high-stakes education landscape. In close partnership with Detroit Parent Network, The Education Trust-Midwest launched a new effort, aimed at supporting and empowering parents and families in the city of Detroit.

Ed Trust-Midwest and Detroit Parent Network co-developed a new curriculum and toolkits, and trained parent organizers and coaches who then in turn, trained dozens of parents about the new law across the city of Detroit. Many parents wanted to better understand the law and how to better support their children's reading improvement—and also how to engage their child's teachers and principals as schools faced decisions about which students should be retained under the new law. The new initiative was designed to help parents ensure that the needs of their students were being met, and to provide productive ways that they could engage with schools and districts to support student learning and identify existing community resources to help students learn to read.

Ed Trust-Midwest's and Detroit Parent Network's staff and volunteers also launched a web portal developed by parents, for parents, making early literacy tools available to any parent with internet access. Feedback from parents remained consistently strong, and many families reported the work helped them help their children improve their early reading acquisition.

# 7

## Advancing Equitable Outcomes and Improvement in High-Poverty Schools: The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Partnering with the Steelcase Foundation, the Bosch Community Foundation, the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, Grand Rapids Public Schools, and many other partners across West Michigan, Ed Trust-Midwest launched a new center to apply some of the practices and strategies proven to work in leading states across the country and explore whether they could raise student achievement in Michigan's highest-poverty public schools.



*"The Education Trust-Midwest's advocacy has been appealing to me and is one of the reasons I was drawn to work alongside the organization's advocacy efforts. If we do not have a place at the decision-making table, our voice cannot be heard, and Ed Trust-Midwest has been the loudest voice for my community these past couple of years."*

—**Jose Luis Orozco, Jr.**, Executive Director at Voces, a space where the LatinX community of greater Battle Creek and Southwest Michigan join together and receive empowering support.

Our Impact Journey

**2018**

- 2018** Education Trust welcomes a new president, John King Jr., former U.S. Secretary of Education for the Obama administration. Ed Trust-Midwest launches new strands of work to advance greater investment in raising reading levels and to address barriers to young children's reading success.
- March** "Top Ten for Education: Not by Chance" report focuses on third-grade literacy in Michigan and recommends stronger systems of evaluation and transparency for early literacy spending and interventions, and quality professional development in teaching literacy for educators.
- March** ETM's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning schools show significant improvement in math and reading.
- March** Amber Arellano, Executive Director of ETM, is a featured panelist at the Center for Michigan Solutions Summit.
- March** ETM guides policy conversations on achievement gaps in Michigan at the Mackinac Policy Conference with keynote delivered by Ed Trust National's President, John King Jr.
- November** ETM files an amicus brief in support of Detroit Public School students in the Right to Read lawsuit.

**2019**

- 2019** ETM leads a new effort to address barriers to young children's reading success in partnership with other organizations. It also leads statewide convenings and issues research-based reports on the need for equity-based investments. Advocacy efforts continue to focus on strong graduation requirements and the accessibility of post-secondary education opportunities. The organization also launches a new partnership aimed at supporting Detroit families after the state passes a new "Read by Grade Three" law.

Led by veteran urban educators from its start in 2015, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) went on to partner with many elementary and middle school leaders and teacher leaders to develop an innovative new approach to improving student outcomes and building distributed management and teacher leadership models. By building the capacity and support for teachers and principals in high-poverty schools—in close partnership with district and school leaders—CETL provided instructional support, coaching, consulting, data analysis, and other technical assistance to P-12 schools and educators.



CETL showed that it is possible for schools to see clear gains in student learning. Its impact included supporting some schools to become among Michigan’s fastest-improving, high-poverty elementary schools for certain subject areas. The work of The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning proved more applicable and relevant than ever when schools shut down amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The CETL team quickly pivoted to meet the needs of each unique school, supporting schools to center equity and accelerate student learning, whether they were in-person, hybrid, or remote. However, over time, the center’s work was greatly slowed down by



the pandemic, and ultimately could not continue to be implemented well due to the pandemic’s massive disruption in teaching and learning.

Thankfully, the leaders and coaches of the CETL team continue to serve in influential leadership and coaching positions in schools and districts across West Michigan—and the lessons that they learned carry on in many schools.



*“I think that ETM is very highly regarded by different stakeholders. They do the work they say they’re going to do, and they do it really well in terms of the data and the major reports and the policy analysis and the advocacy that they do. I think the business community relies on ETM for data and reports and to develop analysis.”*

—Mary Kovari, Veteran Urban Teacher and Principal

# 8

## Ensuring High College- and Career-Ready Standards and Aligned Information

Top-performing and high-growth states began their educational transformation with higher performance standards for teaching and learning in schools. The Education Trust-Midwest was among the many organizations across Michigan that understood the importance of the implementation of new national college- and career-ready standards and Michigan’s leadership in the development of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, which allowed Michigan to adopt an assessment system that could tell Michigan parents how their schools are performing compared to national standards—and to more than 20 other states who participate in the same assessment system. When a small minority of state lawmakers raised concerns about Michigan’s adoption of new higher standards and an aligned assessment system, Ed Trust-Midwest—in partnership with major business and K-12 organizations in 2013 convened a statewide coalition of more than 146 organizations to work together for full implementation of the new standards and aligned systems.

Indeed, organizations across the spectrum worked closely and productively—and ultimately, successfully—for more than three years to ensure the Great Lakes State stayed on course.

2019

**January** ETM hosts the “Opportunity for All” summit bringing leading education experts and diverse stakeholders together from across the state for an equity-focused convening.

**March** ETM’s “Advancing Equity and Opportunity: Prioritizing Public Education in Michigan’s State Budget” report analyzes the Governor’s budget proposal and supports provisions for equitable funding to support at-risk students, early literacy initiatives, and increasing post-secondary access.

**March** ETM launches a new partnership with the Detroit Parent Network to help Detroit parents understand the Read by Grade Three legislation and requirements and support their efforts to ensure their young children are reading on grade level by third grade.

**April** ETM advocates for Governor Gretchen Whitmer’s proposed Michigan Reconnect and Michigan Opportunity programs, providing increased access to post-secondary education for Michiganders.

**May** “2019 State of Michigan Education Report: Opportunity for All” report calls for equitable investments in education including early literacy support, equitable funding, master teacher pathways, high-quality professional development, and increased access to post-secondary education.



*"I have a dream that all schools would be created equal: Schools that are not flourishing will receive special attention, so that all schools and all children are given the same opportunity to be who they want to be – and to see the American dream and feel like they are part of the global system. This dream will create equitable learning for all our children, making us a better nation."*

—**Monique Marks**, President & CEO, Franklin-Wright Settlements, Inc.



*"I have relied on the work of The Education Trust-Midwest for many years. They are simply the most knowledgeable and respected voice on the status and results of Michigan's education system and policy today. Because they are data and fact-driven, their vision and recommendations for the future carry great weight with policymakers. I trust their work implicitly."*

—**Ken Sikkema**, Former Senate Majority Leader and Senior Policy Consultant with Public Sector Consultants

### Advancing Efforts on Educator Effectiveness

Teaching quality is one of the most powerful levers to improve student learning. Of all the variables that schools can control—including class size, curriculum, and textbooks—the quality of teaching that a child receives is the strongest determinant of student achievement. For years, Michigan has lacked a coherent strategy to improve and support our state's teaching quality and school leadership. We believe that the roles and responsibilities in which many teachers serve—such as mentor, coach, master teacher and others—should be formally recognized and given opportunities for higher pay and greater recognition.



Since ETM's inception, supporting and improving the teaching profession—and developing innovative new ways to ensure all Michigan students have access to highly effective teachers—has been a priority for the organization. Today, Ed Trust-Midwest is particularly focused on how access to strong educators can be improved for Black, Latino/a students, and students from low-income backgrounds, as well as English Learners.

# 10

### Advancing Policies to Ensure Educational Transparency and Equity-Centered Accountability Systems

All parents deserve to know how their child's school is performing and receive the information that they need to make the best choices for their child's education. To best support our students' success, we first have to be honest about student performance. That starts with reliable data.

The Education Trust-Midwest long has been committed to working to ensure honest, transparent, and reliable data is available to Michigan parents and families. Through the years, we have worked closely with the Michigan Department of Education in thought partnership and technical support roles, including while the MDE and many other states worked to update their ESSA plans and later, when new ESSA plans were developed with input from stakeholders across the state.



2019

**June** With ETM support, the State Board of Education votes to adopt new state social studies standards that promote a complete education in the history of civil rights and civil liberties.

**November** ETM testifies in opposition to SB 600 and 601, proposed changes to water down the Michigan Merit Curriculum graduation requirements. Neither bill moves forward in the legislature this session.

**December** ETM supports the "Governor's FAFSA Challenge," an initiative encouraging high school students to complete the FAFSA application for financial aid to increase access to post-secondary education.

2020

**2020** ETM releases its first report on school funding, making the case for greater investments for students who are underserved, coupled with accountability for spending. As the COVID-19 pandemic begins, ETM's work shifts dramatically to focus on the needs of Michigan's students with the greatest needs amid the COVID-19 crisis.

**January** ETM's "Michigan's School Funding: Crisis and Opportunity" report advocates for an equitable funding model for public education in Michigan, including increases in weighted funding for students from low-income backgrounds, English language learners, and districts with high concentrations of poverty.

**February** ETM launches the fair funding pledge public advocacy campaign.



*"ETM has been a champion for students of color and in poverty within the K-12 and higher education sectors. The organization has demonstrated a commitment to identifying and dismantling systemic barriers that prevent students from accessing highly effective educators and an equitable and constructive education system. Through its research, convenings of thought leaders and influencers, and its policy recommendations it has provided the necessary leadership to move the needle for all students in the State of Michigan."*

**—Nicole Wells Stallworth, Chief Executive Officer of The Children's Center, Board Chair at MacDowell Preparatory Academy**



*"Ed Trust-Midwest has invested in a high-quality staff. They also have built strong and dependable relationships with numerous organizations across the state, especially in underserved communities, east and west."*

**—Mike Jandernoa, Founder and Chairman of 42 North Partners and Chairman of the West Michigan Policy Forum Policy Committee. He has also served on a number of boards, both public and private companies, and a number of nonprofit boards, including the Business Leaders for Michigan. Jandernoa is a tri-chair of the Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity.**



# 10+ Years of Impact

2020

**March** ETM gathers a new coalition of equity advocates, who later become the Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity, to support all children at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**April** ETM publishes fact sheets on supporting at-risk groups during COVID, including students with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, and English Learners.

**April** ETM leads equity partners in advocating for Michigan to be the first state in the country to provide Pandemic EBT funding to families with children who receive free-or-reduced-price lunch at an amount equal to the cost of meals for the rest of the school year.

**April** ETM leads partners in letter to Governor Whitmer calling for the use of CARES funding to support equity in education and care for students who are the most vulnerable.

**May** ETM and equity advocates continue advocating for equitable distribution of CARES funding focused on long-term improvement for students who are the most underserved by writing a letter to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

**May** ETM writes letter to the Michigan Congressional delegation advocating for additional emergency funding for states for public education, addressing food insecurity, and investing in technology equity for students in distance learning.



## Years-Long Advocacy Leads to Historic School Funding Wins & Systemic Changes for Students who are Underserved

It did not happen overnight. Indeed, this was an effort years in the making by committed leaders and advocates working across sectors, geographic regions, and on both sides of the aisle.

Following a multi-year campaign by Ed Trust-Midwest and most recently with partners in the Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity (MPEO) coalition, in June 2023 Michigan joined the nation's first ten states with state school funding formulas that include an index for concentrations of poverty, among states with similar funding systems.

The moment represented a historic and major systemic change in Michigan's school funding system.

# Historic Wins

The new "Opportunity Index" will drive much greater state investment in students who qualify for at-risk funding based on a school district's concentration of poverty, regardless of region.

Along with ETM, MPEO—a diverse statewide coalition of leaders and organizations ranging from civil rights, business, research, parent, direct service, and other sectors—has made the Opportunity Index and historic investments in students who qualify for at-risk funding, English Learners, and students with disabilities a top priority in their collective efforts over the last three years.

"This is a moment of both great progress and sober celebration," Amber Arellano, executive director of the Education Trust-Midwest and also a tri-chair of MPEO, said at the time. "We celebrate the tremendous progress made this year for students from low-income backgrounds, as well as English Learners and students with disabilities. This is the beginning of a real conversation about what fair funding should look like in Michigan."



2020

**May** Right to Read settlement is reached providing \$2.7 million to Detroit Public Schools for literacy programs and \$40,000 to each student after a circuit court judge declares that the students were denied the right to basic education.

○

**June** ETM's "2020 State of Michigan Education Report—A Marshall Plan: Reimagining Michigan Public Education" and "Digital Divide" analysis emphasize prioritizing equity in Michigan's pandemic recovery. ETM recommends equitable funding, transparent data, socio-emotional supports, access to post-secondary opportunities, and addressing inequitable learning loss through quality virtual instruction, after school programs, and tutoring.

○

**July** "The Time is Now: COVID-19 and Fair Funding" policy brief further carries ETM's advocacy for equitable funding in the wake of the pandemic and beyond.

○

**August** Michigan approves Benchmark Assessments requirement as part of school reopening deal to assess learning during the pandemic following ETM calls for data transparency.

○

**August** ETM's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning deepens its efforts to support classroom teachers and school leaders through the pandemic. It also leads training for educators in literacy instruction in partnership with Leading Educators and West Michigan Leadership Academy.

2021

**2021** During the COVID-19 pandemic, ETM launches new initiatives in collaboration with partners across Michigan and the U.S.: the Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity (MPEO) coalition, for which ETM serves as a backbone organization; and the Michigan Teacher Leadership Collaborative (MTLC), which ETM creates in collaboration with the national organization, Teach Plus; and with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, a new public campaign that celebrates high-improving, high-poverty schools.

# Systemic Wins Will Bring Billions of Dollars to Students Who are Underserved

In the immediate term, the Opportunity Index will drive more than \$950 million to the public education of students who qualify for “at-risk” funding in the FY24 state school budget, or more than \$200 million above the FY23 state budget. The new state funding mechanism, which is set in state statute for the first time, also sets new long-term goals for investing in Michigan’s students who qualify for at-risk funding that, upon full implementation, will invest more than \$2.9 billion annually in these students. The Opportunity Index and historic investment in students who qualify for at-risk funding are just two of the major systemic funding developments. Among the others supported by ETM and the MPEO:



- Lawmakers voted to support fully funding the foundation allowance for students with disabilities for the first time in Michigan. FY24 will be the first time districts receive 100% of the foundation allowance for students with disabilities in addition to 28.6% of the cost of delivering special education services. Last year, districts received only 75% of the foundation allowance for these students in addition to the required reimbursements. ETM has long worked with partners to increase funding for students with disabilities.
- State policymakers supported an investment of the greatest level of funding ever for English Learners, or \$39.8 million dollars in the FY24 school aid budget—an increase of 50 percent over FY23. This was a funding change priority for ETM and MPEO.

Lawmakers also supported these priorities, which were championed by Ed Trust-Midwest and the statewide MPEO coalition:

- \$150 million for MI Kids Back on Track. Policy leaders included high-quality parameters for the tutoring investment to ensure students receive effective, evidence-based, high dosage tutoring—a priority for the MPEO coalition.
- The budget included an additional \$50 million for the Michigan Achievement Scholarship and \$10 million in new funding to assist students in filling out their FAFSA applications.



*“The unprecedented funding for students with the greatest needs, particularly those living in concentrated poverty, will be tremendously important to address the wide and unfair opportunity gaps that exist for students who are most underserved, especially Michigan’s Black and Latino students. We congratulate the many policymakers who are committed to ensuring that all Michigan students have the opportunity to soar.”*

—Alice Thompson, Chair of the Education Committee for the NAACP Detroit branch and one of three Chairs of the MPEO Coalition



In spring of 2023, nearly 20 MPEO members banded together for an impactful day of advocacy in Lansing. A kickoff networking breakfast provided space for coalition members to meet with state representatives, discuss the urgency of fairly funding schools so that all students have the resources they need to be successful, and speak on behalf of the communities and organizations they represent.

2021

**2021** ETM also leads statewide advocacy around inequities faced by underserved students, including students with disabilities, English Learners, Black and Latino students, and students from low-income backgrounds. And it becomes a leading voice on equitable school funding and the need for honest data on student learning in the pandemic.

**January** ETM’s “2021 State of Michigan Education Report: The Urgency of Now” emphasized the need to address inequitable learning loss and resource gaps during the pandemic through investments in digital access, extended learning programs, and fair funding.

**February** ETM and equity partners send a letter to the Michigan Department of Education in opposition to a full testing waiver for the state and advocating for summative assessments to understand the effects of the pandemic.

**February** Governor Whitmer launches the Michigan Reconnect program, expanding access to an associate’s degree or skills certificate for Michiganders over 25 following ETM’s previous support for the program.

**March** ETM joins the Detroit Free Press and Chalkbeat Detroit to launch webinars for the public on Michigan’s educational recovery.

**March** ETM testifies to the state legislature in support of HB 4055 and 4056, which pass later in the session, extending the time period that students have to use state tuition grants by two additional semesters to address delayed graduation caused by the pandemic.





## Building Hope about What's Possible for Students Who are Underserved!

The Education Trust-Midwest launched the Building the Hope Schools Awards in 2021 to shine a bright spotlight on schools that consistently demonstrate exceptional academic progress or growth for students who are underserved.

The first four Michigan schools that were recognized served as models for educational recovery as schools across Michigan and the nation sought strategies for the unfinished learning amid and following the COVID-19 pandemic.



The schools—all public schools—served predominantly students of color and students from low-income backgrounds and were in the top 25 percent for academic proficiency or above average student growth for all Michigan students.



Ed Trust-Midwest conducted a comprehensive quantitative analysis to identify the schools, including a statewide analysis of Michigan public school data. Analysts and team members also conducted qualitative analyses through visits and dozens of interviews.

**Ten other schools have since been honored for their extraordinary work to close opportunity gaps.**



In the schools, subgroups of students—Black, Latino, low-income, and English Learner students, in particular, were performing in the top 30% among Michigan's high-growth public schools. In addition, they demonstrated culturally and linguistically responsive school-wide practices—including instructional practices—that facilitated students' outstanding academic progress and growth, making them true outliers in the state of Michigan. Ed Trust-Midwest has continued to honor schools each year since, using a new methodology for the 2023 awards to review post-pandemic data. Read more at [buildingthehopeschools.org](https://buildingthehopeschools.org).



*"At a time of global efforts to ensure all children catch up from their pandemic educational losses — especially students who are underserved — these Michigan public schools are modeling the way for all schools on how to strive to ensure all children are supported to learn at high levels."*

—**Amber Arellano**, Executive Director of The Education Trust-Midwest, said of the first cohort of schools

2021

**May** ETM's "Talent Matters: Supporting Equity and Michigan's Educators for Pandemic Recovery and Beyond" report assesses barriers to teacher quality, including pay gaps between the wealthiest and poorest districts in Michigan.

**June** ETM testifies in support of SB 380-383, a package of legislation providing dyslexia screening and training for educators to recognize and meet the needs of students with dyslexia.

**June** ETM launches the new Michigan Teacher Leadership Collaborative, providing equity-focused teachers with the opportunity to share their instructional expertise, host a conference for Michigan educators, and engage in policy discussions and advocacy. Teach Plus is a co-lead in the effort.

**August** Governor Whitmer launches the Sixty by 30 campaign and initiatives to support 60% of Michiganders in acquiring a post-secondary degree or certificate by 2030.

**September** ETM spearheads the formal launch of the Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity (MPEO), a coalition of equity advocates. Among its first areas of focus: working to ensure that Michigan distributes federal stimulus dollars in an equitable manner to support students who are underserved.

**September** ETM advocates for intensive tutoring and expanded learning time as strategies to combat learning loss.



*"The ETM is a valued and critical part of the fabric of education in our state. The team's thought leadership, knowledge base and motivation to improve education for the children of our state is undeniable. They use data to connect to action and have been highly successful for more than 10 years shining a light on the needs of Michigan's students, particularly those who are often ignored because of their backgrounds, social economic position or lack of voice in this noisy education arena. Congratulations on 10+ years of making equitable education a priority in our state."*

—Deidre Bounds, President, Ignite Social Media

## Forging Powerful Partnerships

In 2021, The Education Trust-Midwest approached Teach Plus Michigan to forge a partnership for a teacher leadership collaborative centered on equity. The Education Trust-Midwest and Teach Plus launched the first Michigan Teacher Leadership Collaborative (MTLC) cohort in the 2021-22 school year. During the inaugural year of the program, MTLC members advocated for policy solutions related to equitable school funding, student mental health, the transition to post-secondary education and career, and the educator workforce.

Their accomplishments include successfully advocating to increase funding for students from low-income backgrounds. They have also advocated for teacher retention efforts, an expansion of early childhood education to all three and four-year-olds throughout the state, increasing state-level investment for Grow Your Own programs, a strategy for addressing the shortage of educators and increasing workforce diversity, and more. Cohort members were selected through a rigorous application process that required them to demonstrate effectiveness, commitment to equity, and pursuit of excellence and innovation in their teaching.



Throughout the program—now in its third year—teachers have had the opportunity to network and share expertise with each other, while building skills in policy, advocacy, research, and communications, and collaborating to advocate for equity-minded changes for Michigan's students.

Co-convened by The Education Trust-Midwest and Teach Plus Michigan, The Michigan Teacher Leadership Collaborative (MTLC) is a highly selective leadership opportunity for outstanding Michigan teachers looking to share their expertise around equity-focused instructional practices, deepen their knowledge of education policy, and gain a voice in decisions that affect students who are historically underserved and the teaching profession. As part of the program, MTLC members join working groups where they collaborate to advance systems change on key policy topics.

### Highlights of the working groups include:

- Efforts calling for state leaders to prioritize funding targeted for students from low-income backgrounds and encouraging legislators to remove a budget loophole that, during a budget shortfall, could trigger cutting funding first for students who underserved. The budget loophole was ultimately removed in the state education budget passed in June 2022.
- Building awareness around why equitable, not just equal, funding was important and calling for increased investments in funding targeted towards students from low-income backgrounds, English Learners and students with disabilities. The group's efforts supported policies like the Opportunity Index, ultimately passed in June 2023.
- Focusing on increasing access to financial aid and career planning for students of all backgrounds, building on the findings of the prior MTLC cohort's work group, who published a policy brief demonstrating access to career development supports varies widely across Michigan public schools.
- Efforts to improve recruitment and retention of diverse educators and addressing educator talent shortages faced in high-poverty districts. In addition to meeting with legislators, the group met with the Governor's office to advocate for including the funding proposed for Grow Your Own programs that had been proposed in the final budget. Additionally, the working group recommended that some of the funding be targeted specifically to high-poverty communities, a recommendation that was ultimately included in the final version of the budget in June 2022.

2021

**November** ETM hosts Building a Movement, Building Hope summit, bringing leaders and national experts to discuss equitable school funding practices with teachers, school leaders, and state policymakers.

○

**November** ETM selects four of the first-ever Building the Hope Schools after ETM analyzes schools from across the state, identifying those that have consistently demonstrated exceptional academic progress and growth for students who are underserved.

2022

**2022** Through reports and advocacy efforts, ETM continues to prioritize equitable funding in education and efforts to improve early reading interventions. The state school aid budget passes with the largest per-pupil funding in history and unprecedented increases in funding for students who qualify for at-risk funding.

○

**February** ETM engages in advocacy and writes media pieces in support of Governor Whitmer's budget proposal and advocates for a full 11.5% funding for students who qualify for at-risk funding students and removal of the clause that cuts school funding to balance the budget.

○

**May** ETM's "Still Stalled: 2022 State of Michigan Education Report" calls for equitable use of federal stimulus funds, transparency in M-STEP data, feedback and support for educators, and fair funding in the state budget.

○

**May** The Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity (MPEO) issues companion report entitled "We Imagine" proposing a vision for Michigan's students if the education system were fairly funded.



*"I've always viewed ETM as a reliable source of trusted information. If Ed Trust-Midwest says something, I believe it ... I trust what they have to say. They say it in a way that seems thought out and factual."*

—**Lizabeth Ardisana**, Co-Founder, Principal Owner, and Chief Executive Officer of ASG Renaissance, a technical and communication services firm. An active business and civic leader in Michigan and Hispanic Communities, she has held numerous leadership positions in a variety of nonprofit organizations, including The Skillman Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Kettering University, Metropolitan Affairs Coalition, Focus: HOPE, and NextEnergy.



## Join us in the movement for educational equity and opportunity for all students

The Education Trust-Midwest works for the high academic achievement of all Michigan students in pre-kindergarten through college. Our mission is to close the gaps in opportunity and achievement that disproportionately impact students who are the most underserved, with a particular focus on Black, Latino/a and students from low-income backgrounds.

As a nonpartisan, data-driven policy, research, advocacy, and technical assistance non-profit organization, we are focused first and foremost on doing what is right for Michigan children, working alongside partners to raise the quality of teaching and learning in our public schools.

Help us do even more—become a donor today.

[Donate](#)



### 2022

**May** SB 380-383, a package of legislation that would provide screening and intervention services for students showing characteristics of dyslexia, passes the state Senate after strong advocacy from ETM and its early literacy partners.

**June** MPEO continues sustained advocacy, including a letter to the state legislature and budget director, calling for investment in special education, English language learners, and full weighted funding for students who qualify for at-risk funding.

**July** Following consistent advocacy by ETM and coalition partners, the state budget passes with unprecedented increases in funding for at-risk students, special education programs, and English language learning. The budget provides the full 11.5% weighted funding for students who qualify for at-risk funding, or an additional \$1,052 per student.

### 2023

**2023** ETM and the Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity (MPEO) coalition continue to prioritize equitable funding in education and efforts to improve early literacy interventions. The coalition's efforts culminate with a historic victory when Michigan makes history by joining the nation's first ten states with state school funding formulas that include an index for concentrations of poverty, among states with similar funding systems.

**January** ETM's "2023 State of Michigan Education Report: Beyond the Pandemic" report emphasized the state's longstanding inequalities and how they were compounded further over the last three years as students, families, educators, and communities faced unprecedented educational challenges amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

**January** ETM Executive Director Amber Arellano testifies alongside Alice Thompson, chair of the education committee for the NAACP Detroit branch—and one of the three tri-chairs of the MPEO statewide coalition—before the state Senate PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee on the need for a fair and equitable school funding system.



2023

March

Teachers from the Michigan Teacher Leadership Collaborative, a partnership between ETM and Teach Plus, engage in a day of advocacy hosted by the Michigan College Access Network (MCAN) in Lansing.

April

Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity (MPEO) members join forces in Lansing for a day of advocacy. Their efforts opened doors to inspiring conversations with policymakers, while helping to build their knowledge about strategies that leading states practice to close opportunity gaps for students, including students of color, English Learners, students with disabilities, students living in concentrated poverty and rural areas, and students from low-income backgrounds.

May

Michigan Senate joined the State House in unveiling historic budget proposals. For the first time in Michigan's history, state Senate leaders proposed to create a much fairer school funding formula while making significant investments in public education.

June

Michigan Makes History as it Joins Nation's Leaders in Investing More in Districts Facing Concentrated Poverty.

August

Amber Arellano and Alice Thompson appointed to PK-12 Workgroup of Gov. Whitmer's Growing Michigan Together Council.

September

For Hispanic Heritage Month, ETM featured members from the Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity and the incredible work they do for students and education equity.

October

At the Opportunity for All breakfast event, entitled "A Celebration of a Historic Win and Next Steps for Fair Funding for All," more than 60 education equity advocates—including local elected leaders, state officials, educators, civil rights leaders, civic and business leaders, supporters and partners—joined together to celebrate a historic school funding win at Detroit's historic Fellowship Chapel.

# Many thanks, muchas gracias to our philanthropic partners

As The Education Trust-Midwest commemorates our 10+ years of impact, it is only through the support of a generous community that we have been able to call for educational equity and excellence for Michigan's most underserved students.

As we reflect on more than a decade of advocacy work for students who are most underserved, especially Black and Latina/o students and children from low-income backgrounds, and more recently, English Learners, students with disabilities, and students from rural and geographically isolated areas, we can't help but to think ahead and prepare for the work that is yet to be done.

And as we continue to strive toward a system of education that truly provides opportunity for all, ETM is grateful for your support and ongoing partnership.

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**Ballmer Group**

**Charles Stewart Mott Foundation**

**Community Foundation for Muskegon County**

**DTE Energy Foundation**

**Grand Rapids Community Foundation**

**Jandernoa Foundation**

**The Joyce Foundation**

**The Kresge Foundation**

**The Skillman Foundation**

**W.K. Kellogg Foundation**



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**The Education Trust—Midwest**