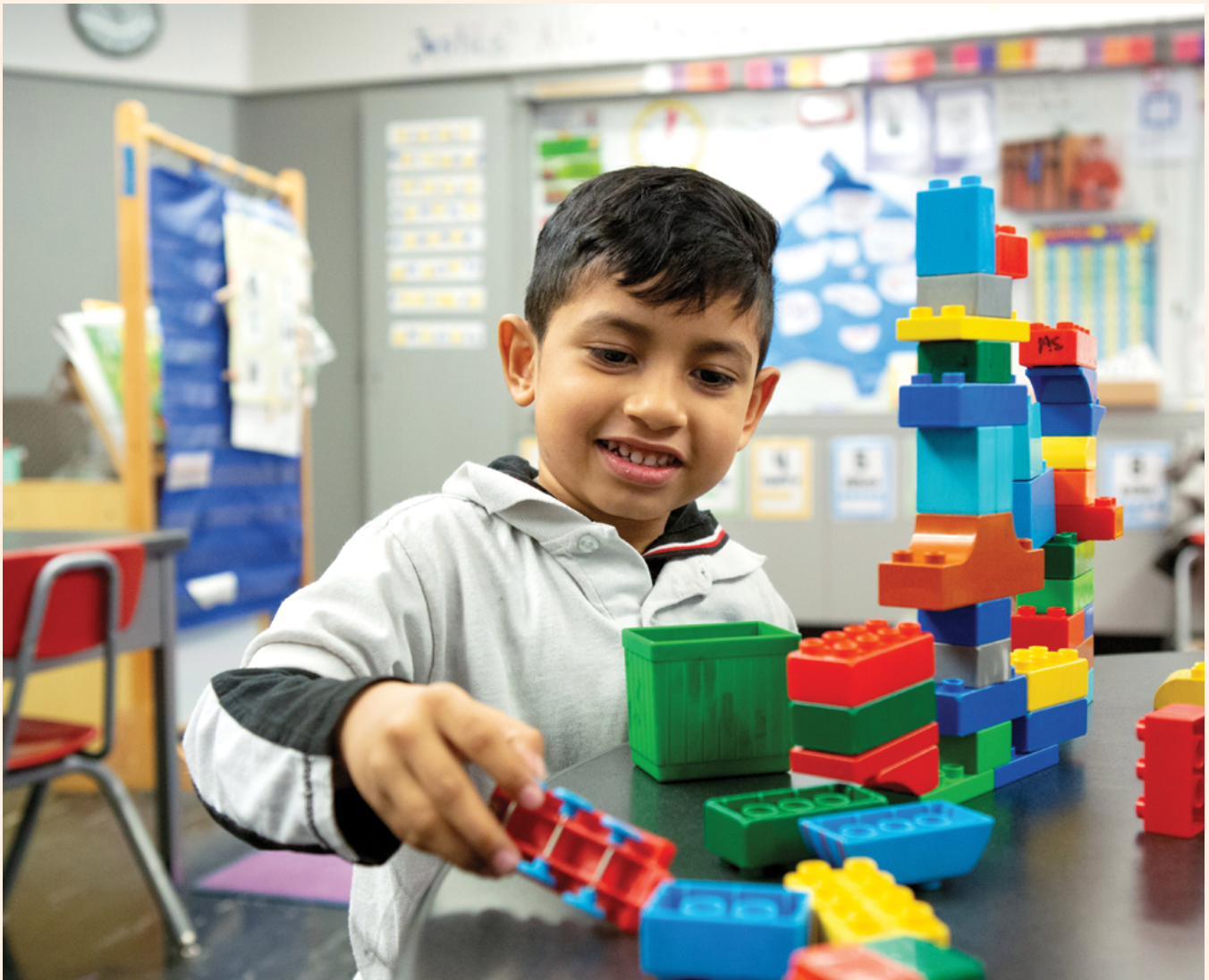


May 2025

EDTRUST-MIDWEST

2024 Impact Report

Opportunity for All





Dear partners and friends,

As we face uncertain times, I would like to take a moment to celebrate the work and wins of our team at EdTrust-Midwest and our partners during a very impactful 2024.

The past year was filled with opportunities to make a difference for students most in need. Throughout the year, our small team again worked tirelessly and strategically both to tackle challenges and embrace windows of opportunity.

EdTrust-Midwest successfully drove important policy changes to improve educational outcomes for Michigan’s students. We shaped the statewide narrative and engaged in strong advocacy to close opportunity gaps, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds and Black and Latino students. We launched a new campaign to drive more investment for students with the greatest needs in our public schools, driven by years of data, policy, research, and best practices. Through a multi-pronged advocacy effort with partners, we again scored significant fair funding wins for students from low-income backgrounds, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities. We scored a major policy victory to improve early reading outcomes for Michigan’s students through bipartisan legislation that took more than six years of collaboration with advocates and policymakers.

We invite you to read more about these wins and many more in the pages to come. While there is far more to do to ensure every Michigan child has the opportunity and access to reach their full academic potential, these wins provide hope.

We would like to acknowledge the many funders, educators, leaders, partners, advocates, and colleagues around the state and beyond who support our efforts to advocate on behalf of Michigan students, especially those with the greatest needs. Through your collective support, we will redouble our efforts. Together, we can ensure that all students have the opportunity for success in school and a bright future ahead.

Gratefully,
Amber Arellano, Executive Director, EdTrust-Midwest

Table of Contents

Who We Are..... 1

Snapshot: Wins by the Numbers..... 1

Our Impact..... 2

Testimonials..... 7

Acknowledgments..... 8



Who We Are

Bridging Education Policy and Community

EdTrust-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 prekindergarten through college.

Our mission: to make Michigan a top ten education state for all groups of students, no matter their background, socioeconomic status, or race.

Snapshot: Wins by the Numbers

- 73%
of our priorities advanced in 2024
- 6 new
groups joined our new advocacy table centered on multilingual learners
- 100+
meetings with policy leaders to shape narrative around research, data, and policy to close opportunity gaps
- 26
speaking engagements with 660+ attendees

- 3.4 million
estimated views based on audience reach and engagement through 60+ media mentions in articles, opinion pieces, and interviews
- 100%
of the Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity (MPEO) coalition members shared that they felt that they were very much part of an equity movement in 2024
- \$83 million+
additional dollars secured for students from low-income backgrounds who are considered 'at risk' — for a total of more than \$1 billion

➡ Read more about these and other key wins on the pages ahead! ➡

Our Impact

EdTrust-Midwest had a year filled with significant wins for students from low-income backgrounds, Black and Latino students, and multilingual learners.

1. Bipartisan legislators overwhelmingly support ‘Reading for All’ legislation to improve Michigan’s early reading outcomes

With bipartisan support, the Michigan legislature in September overwhelmingly supported the [Reading for All law](#) — a package of bills that will provide desperately needed support for students who struggle with one of the common barriers to learning to read well: dyslexia. Before then, there was no legal mechanism nor system of identification or support for students with dyslexia. **The legislation to improve reading outcomes has been a focus of EdTrust-Midwest for more than six years through research, policy, coalition-building, and legislative work**, as well as through advocacy campaigns with partners in the statewide [Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity](#) coalition and many others.

 [Read More](#)

“The passage of this legislation is a real testament to what our state leaders and advocates can accomplish when we work together to focus on the needs of Michigan students.”

Amber Arellano, Executive Director, EdTrust-Midwest

2. Securing more school funding for students with the greatest needs

EdTrust-Midwest and partners in the Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity (MPEO) again scored significant school funding wins through strong partnerships, multi-pronged advocacy, and a legislative campaign. Through our collective efforts, the School Aid Budget invests:

- An additional \$83 million for students from low-income backgrounds — bringing the total to over \$1 billion dollars
- More funding for multilingual learners for a total increase of almost 90% — or \$24 million — since fiscal year 2023
- More funding for students with disabilities. The budget also included funding for a crucial study of Michigan’s special education system that would include recommendations to improve outcomes for students with disabilities — a recommendation of EdTrust-Midwest and partners in the MPEO

 [Read More](#)

“A highlight of ETM’s efforts are their backbone government affairs and advocacy capacity. As a nonprofit independent of any school group ... This team has a uniquely strong relationship with key leaders in the legislature and administration and brings community into that relationship through the MPEO coalition. ETM has a vision for sharing power among and across MPEO member organizations in a way that is nonpartisan and yet wholly focused on a north star that members advocate for in unison. EdTrust-Midwest and the MPEO coalition provide critical advocacy, data, media, and relationship-building opportunities that inform us and our partners in Kalamazoo.”

Beth Berglin, Director, Policy and Strategy, Michigan Transformation Collective

“ETM serves as a trusted source for nonpartisan data and modeling not only to the MPEO coalition but also to policymakers, media organizations, philanthropy, business, and many other organizations. It trains leaders and organizations on data interpretation and communication and empowers us to use data to inform both state and local advocacy efforts. It conducts and publicly shares many analyses including M-STEP assessment data and the national assessment (NAEP). It also analyzes the state budget annually and shares these findings with partners and others.”

Erika VanDyke, Education Justice Coordinator, Urban Core Collective

3. ETM reaches national heights

EdTrust-Midwest also took the national stage at the 2024 SXSW EDU conference, sharing what the nation can learn from Michigan’s new school funding formula’s impact on students from low-income backgrounds and multilingual

SXSW EDU 

Bellwether Education Partners, a nationally respected consulting education company, [highlighted the work](#) of EdTrust-Midwest and the Michigan Partnership for Equity and Opportunity (MPEO) statewide [coalition](#), for which Ed Trust-Midwest serves as a backbone organization.



learners. As national recognition grows of ETM’s work, our 10-year [Impact Report](#) highlighted recent wins and celebrated a decade of movement-building to ensure that all Michigan students have access to a high-quality public education.

 [Read More](#)

4. Leading statewide conversations on the needs of Michigan’s students

EdTrust-Midwest led statewide conversations that drove policy change through impactful research, data, and reports. Those included EdTrust-Midwest’s timely State of Education Report, [Brown’s Hope: Fulfilling the Promise in Michigan](#). The report found that seven decades after the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case *Brown vs. Board of Education*, Michigan students of color continue to face devastating educational inequities in deeply under-resourced public schools. Today, they are far more likely to be enrolled in Michigan public schools with the highest concentrations of poverty, where they are more likely, on average, to face vastly different opportunities than students in the state’s wealthiest school districts. The report, which gained widespread attention from media and policymakers, underscored the critical need for fair funding and investment in Michigan’s schools. The findings prompted advocates to call upon leaders from across the state to join together to address the needs of Michigan’s students.

5. EdTrust-Midwest launched the *Opportunity for All* fair funding campaign

EdTrust-Midwest’s call-to-action for fair school funding included the release of a unique and publicly accessible [website](#), where Michiganders can compare how much more their local school district would

receive if the state invested in students from low-income backgrounds at the same level as Massachusetts, the nation’s leading education state. The website, built after years of research and data analysis by EdTrust-Midwest, also offered new tools to allow Michiganders to envision the difference it would make in their own local school districts if Michigan invested in students from low-income backgrounds at the goal levels that are currently in state law.

 [Read More](#)

6. Advancing the needs of multilingual learners through new partnerships

EdTrust-Midwest convened a new table of education advocates and organizations to urge state leaders to prioritize the needs of multilingual learners — a group of students who have been overlooked for far too long. The convenings include a robust group of advocates from across the state. Based on research and data, their advocacy included calls to legislators, letters, knowledge-building, and recommendations to double the funding for multilingual learners. The collective advocacy helped shape the narrative around the needs of multilingual learners and helped secure significant funding increases for these students.

 [Read More](#)

7. Advocacy in action and uplifting diverse voices in Lansing

EdTrust-Midwest uplifted diverse voices across the state that shaped narrative and spurred policy changes through advocacy opportunities at the Capitol and public testimony to the Legislature. In April, ETM organized and led an Advocacy Day for more than 30 MPEO members in Lansing to discuss the urgency to build upon recent school funding wins. After meetings with dozens of legislative members and staff and a broad campaign, EdTrust-Midwest and our partners secured significantly more funding for students from low-income backgrounds and multilingual learners. Advocates shared that the experience was uplifting, and the conversations throughout the day left them inspired to continue these efforts on behalf of students with the greatest needs.

More to do!

Our recommendations: Michigan should commit to fully fund the Opportunity Index, which is the new funding mechanism to account for concentrated poverty in school districts — and increase funding for the needs of students from low-income backgrounds, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities.

 [Read More](#)

“As I reflect on how far we’ve come in just over a year, I am pleased by the tremendous progress we have made on behalf of Michigan’s children. Our work has led to not only historic policy changes and funding but has also shifted the conversation from not if but when we will achieve equitable funding for all Michigan’s students. The level of understanding and commitment among legislators and their staff is so much deeper than a year ago. This no doubt can be attributed to our coalition’s relentless advocacy for all students, and particularly our most underserved students.”

Alice Thompson, CEO, BFDI Educational Services, Inc., Chair of the Detroit NAACP’s Education Committee, and MPEO Tri-Chair



Testimonials

“With their pivotal role in advocating for equitable education for children from marginalized communities, including Arab American students, EdTrust-Midwest has been a strong ally of ACCESS throughout many years of partnership. In their push for fair access to resources and opportunities, they ensure that English language learners and students with disabilities receive much-needed support and recognition. ACCESS is proud of our collaboration, as EdTrust-Midwest continues to challenge disparities and champion the right to quality education for all.”

Maha Freij, President and CEO, ACCESS

“EdTrust-Midwest has emerged as a staunch advocate and strategic partner in the education justice space. The work of EdTrust-Midwest has already, in such a short period of time, made a profound impact on heading down the road to achieving equitable outcomes for students’ districts that have been left behind. This is so important since the first step to self-sufficiency is access to quality education.”

Eric D. Brown, President and CEO, Urban League of West Michigan



Many thanks, muchas gracias to our philanthropic partners

EdTrust-Midwest is grateful to the many partners and supporters who are committed to lifting up public education as a top priority for Michigan to make Michigan a top ten education state for all groups of students, no matter their background, socioeconomic status, or race. A special thank you goes to the following for their support and partnership.





About EdTrust-Midwest

At EdTrust-Midwest, we work to improve opportunity in education from preschool through college. Partnering with communities, we provide in-depth analysis, evidence-based research and policy solutions, and expert guidance to shape policies and practices that expand opportunity, access, and success for all learners. Together, we are driving change and creating the conditions where every student thrives.

We can't do this work without generous support. You can make a difference! Please consider a donation, which you can make [here!](#)

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