COUNCIL FOR A
STRONG AMERICA

BRIEF



Michigan's Rigorous Education Standards Will Bolster Its Future Success

High standards and relevant assessments will help make young Michiganders workforce-ready, military-eligible and crime-free

What happens in our classrooms today will determine Michigan's future success. But some signs are troubling: Only 29 percent of Michigan 8th graders are proficient in math and 32 percent are proficient in reading.[1] Further, 20 percent of Michigan high school students do not graduate within four years.[2] If our young people are not well-educated, they will not be ready for college or careers, including careers in the military. There is also a link between inadequate education and crime.[3]

Michigan's strong academic standards and aligned assessments can help ensure that students are receiving a high-quality education, so all students are prepared for success in postsecondary education, the civilian workforce, or the military, if they choose to serve.

> "Today's military may be high-tech, but the most powerful tool is still our people. Just as in the civilian workforce, the military increasingly needs better-educated young men and women to run modern systems."
>
> **Brigadier General (Ret.) Ronald Seely, U. S. Air Force, East Lansing, MI**



Michigan needs well-educated youth

By 2020, 70 percent of jobs in Michigan will require some postsecondary education, yet only 60 percent of Michigan's working age population currently has this level of education.[4] If this situation persists, our state could face a pressing skills gap in the years to come, with an insufficient number of qualified applicants to fill open jobs. The U.S. military faces a similar problem: Poor educational achievement is one of the biggest reasons why an estimated 71 percent of young Michiganders are unable to join the military.[5] One-fifth of young Michiganders do not graduate high school on time and even among those who graduate from high school, one-fifth of those seeking to enlist in the Army cannot join because of low scores on the military's entrance exam for math, literacy and problem solving.[6]

Inadequate education also has implications for crime and law enforcement: Key research shows that long-term changes in wages and employment opportunities among non-college educated men may explain as much as half of property and violent crime rates.[7] And there is no disputing that less educated individuals are more likely to be incarcerated: A national analysis showed that almost 7 in 10 inmates in state prisons failed to graduate from high school, compared to fewer than 3 in 10 of the general population.[8]

High education standards and relevant assessments will help Michigan develop the well-prepared youth we need

Michigan's Academic Standards and aligned assessments (the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress; M-STEP) can help ensure that students are receiving a high-quality education, so all students are prepared for success in postsecondary education, the civilian workforce, or the military, if they choose to serve.

Michigan's Academic Standards establish the skills that children must achieve at each grade level, but they do not tell teachers how to teach, nor do they specify a curriculum; these important decisions

In the second year of M-STEP, Michigan schools saw increases in student performance in 5th and 8th grade English language arts, as well as 4th and 7th grade math.



remain under local control.[9] The Michigan Academic Standards were developed by teachers, researchers and other experts, adopted by the State Board of Education in 2010 and implemented starting in the 2011-2012 school year.[10] They are based on the Common Core State Standards, which were developed and led by the nation's governors and chief state school officers, and have been voluntarily adopted by 42 states.[11]

To have an impact on student outcomes, there must also be accountability. Standards must be accompanied by assessments aligned to the standards, and a system for reporting results so everyone will know how students are really faring across schools, districts, and states and what approaches are delivering the best results. Recognizing this, the Michigan legislature directed the Michigan Department of Education to develop a new assessment system, the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) in 2014.[12]

Since the adoption of the Michigan Academic Standards and the implementation of M-STEP, there have been reports of student progress in Michigan schools. In the second year of M-STEP, there were increases in student performance in English language arts in fifth and eighth grades, and in math in fourth and seventh grades.[13]

Conclusion

Michigan's Academic Standards, along with aligned assessments, are the clearest way to demonstrate our state's commitment to a world-class education and show measurable results.

We will be well-served by staying on this path to preparing the next generation of workforce-ready, military-eligible and crime-free Michiganders to contribute to the future success of our state.

Endnotes

1 Nation's Report Card (2015). Michigan profile. https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile/overview/MI?cti=PgTab_OT&chort=1&sub=MAT&sj=MI&fs=Grade&st=MN&year=2015R3&sg=Gender%3A+Male+vs.+Female&sgv=Difference&ts=Single+Year&sfj=NP

2 National Center for Education Statistics (2017). The condition of education 2017. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_coi.pdf

3 Harlow, C.W. (2003, January). Education and correctional populations. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report. NCJ 195670. Washington, DC: Department of Justice. https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf

4 Carnevale, A.P., Smith, N. & Strohl, J. (2013, June). RECOVERY: Job growth and education requirements through 2020. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/recovery-job-growth-and-education-requirements-through-2020/; U.S. Census Bureau (2015). Educational attainment. https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_S1501&prodType=table

5 Department of Defense. 2013 Qualified Military Available (QMA). Acquired through personal communication with the Accession Policy and Joint Advertising, Market Research and Studies teams at DoD in July 2014.

6 National Center for Education Statistics (2017). The condition of education 2017. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_coi.pdf ; Theokas, C. (2010). Shut out of the military: Today's high school education doesn't mean you're ready for today's Army. Washington, DC: The Education Trust. https://edtrust.org/resource/shut-out-of-the-military-todays-high-school-education-doesnt-mean-youre-ready-for-todays-army/

7 See, for example: http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/abs/10.1162/003465302317331919

8 Harlow, C.W. (2003, January). Education and correctional populations. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report. NCJ 195670. Washington, DC: Department of Justice. https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf

9 Michigan Department of Education (n.d.). Standards. http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-28753_64839_65510---,00.html

10 Michigan Department of Education (n.d.) Common Core Standards Questions and answers. https://www.mictm.org/attachments/article/171/Common_Core_QandA_311926_7_12092010.pdf

11 Common Core State Standard Initiative. http://www.corestandards.org

12 Michigan Department of Education (n.d.). Assessment and accountability grades K-12. http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-22709---,00.html

13 Cowen, J. (2016, October 5). Scores on the rise: Majority of states with high standards in place see improvement. http://forstudentsuccess.org/test-scores-rise-majority-of-states-with-high-standards-in-place-see-improvement-memo/

Council for a Strong America is a national, bipartisan nonprofit that unites five organizations comprised of law enforcement leaders, retired admirals and generals, business executives, pastors, and prominent coaches and athletes who promote solutions that ensure our next generation of Americans will be citizen-ready.

1212 New York Avenue NW / Suite 300 / Washington, DC 20005 / 202.464.7005

COUNCIL FOR A
STRONG AMERICA

StrongNation.org