



House Higher Education Committee  
March 6, 2024



# MCCA Legislative Priorities

1. Make community college affordable for all
2. Grow Michigan's talented workforce
3. Increase operations support for community colleges
4. Update community college infrastructure
5. **Improve student success outcomes in partnership with**

**MILEAP**

KW0

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@Brandy - I added this to the end for the purposes of this presentation.

Katie Witkowski, 2024-02-28T16:48:27-677



# Midwestern Higher Education Compact

- MHEC strengthens postsecondary education in member states through cost-savings initiatives and policy solutions informed by research and the expertise of regional leaders.
- MHEC's initiatives save colleges, universities, and students millions of dollars annually. Research and convenings generate ideas and policy that improve the quality, accessibility, and affordability of postsecondary education.





## Why MILEAP?

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- MILEAP is well-suited to lead statewide **student success** initiatives across all post-secondary institutions.
- MEHC membership ensures:
  - Access to a leading national research organization focused on higher education
  - Access to subject matter experts in our region and across the country
  - Access to practitioners who have learned from effective postsecondary **student success** practices



## **MCCA's Recommendations for MILEAP**

- Pursue the following recommendations to promote the value of a college education, improve access to higher education, and improve community college student outcomes.
  1. Design more equitable financial aid programs
  2. Coordinate efficient transfer between institutions
  3. Ensure equitable access to dual enrollment
  4. Expand access to labor market data
  5. Streamline reporting and activities across departments



MICHIGAN  
COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE  
ASSOCIATION



# MILEAP Recommendations

## Design More Equitable Financial Aid Programs

- Assess the effectiveness of Michigan's financial aid programs to ensure that programs are designed to meet the full cost of education for the neediest students instead of last-dollar programs that only cover tuition and fees.
- Simplify the state financial aid application process to align with federal aid requirements to increase access to higher education, especially for students historically under-served by higher education.
- Streamline guidance and marketing materials for students and families to more clearly understand eligibility for financial aid programs as well as the overall affordability of obtaining a degree.
- Provide more in-depth training and resources related to state programs for community college enrollment management offices to ensure that college personnel clearly understand Michigan's changing financial aid eligibility requirements and can communicate consistently with students and families.





# MILEAP Recommendations

## Coordinate Efficient Transfer Between Institutions

- Manage the Michigan Transfer Network at [www.mitransfer.org](http://www.mitransfer.org), build new functionality to support transfer and completion (i.e., credit for industry credentials), and ensure that participating institutions maintain up to date information.
- Develop equitable processes to ensure the transferability of associate degrees from community colleges to bachelor's degree institutions in the same program of study, promote policies and practices that ensure a smooth transition between institutions, and incentivize modern transfer practices (i.e., transfer at junior or higher status, universal acceptance of all credit offered at community colleges in bachelor's degree transfer and MiWorkforce Transfer Pathways).
- Identify opportunities to invest in equitable bachelor's degree attainment that eliminates the need for students and their families to relocate to a public university or independent institution, including offering university bachelor's degree programs on community college campuses and expanding the community college baccalaureate where appropriate.
- Evaluate Michigan's funding formula to ensure that the state recognizes the role of community colleges in bachelor's degree completion by funding community colleges for transfer student success.



# MILEAP Recommendations

## Ensure Equitable Access to Dual Enrollment

- Establish an expectation that all high school students complete college-level credit, including career training, before graduation.
- Develop strategies to align high school career and technical education with college-level programs and industry-recognized credentials.
- Provide additional support to school districts to ensure that district leaders understand the critical role of dual enrollment and early/middle college in equitable higher education access, especially for populations of students who have historically under-enrolled in higher education. Continue to provide very targeted support to school district with historically low dual enrollment participation.
- Amend the School Aid Act to incentivize participation in dual enrollment and early/middle college programs.



# MILEAP Recommendations

## Expand Access to Labor Market Data

- Simplify the currently burdensome and costly process of accessing employment and earnings data available through the Unemployment Insurance Agency for on-demand analyses of labor market outcomes, to meet federal and state reporting requirements, and to contribute to decisions to start, stop, and continue programs.
- Connect community college enrollment and completion data available at the Center for Performance and Information with earnings and employment data.



# MILEAP Recommendations

## Streamline Reporting and Activities Across

### Departments

- Ensure that public benefit initiatives (such as SNAP, TANF, cash assistance, childcare, and transportation) are designed to align seamlessly with community college enrollment and avoid any unintentional barriers or bias against students pursuing higher education.
- Review all state reporting requirements across all departments and agencies and eliminate unnecessary reports, consolidate duplicate reports, and coordinate efforts within state government to ensure that data are accessible and actionable by all stakeholders.
- Ensure that data collected by the state through various reporting mechanisms is accessible and actionable for state and college-decision making.
- Develop processes and systems and adopt best practices to quickly implement state policy changes that impact community colleges to ensure that new state policy can be implemented as soon as possible (i.e., academic catch-up program, student success grants, implementing Reconnect age reduction or making available the Skills scholarship to community college students).



**Michigan Community College Association  
Recommendations to the Michigan-Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP)  
on Matters of Student Success**

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In 2022, the Michigan Community College Association and its 31 member institutions engaged in a [comprehensive strategic planning process](#) which resulted in a new mission statement, vision, strategies, and tactics. Notably, the mission includes an explicit focus on equitable student success.

#### MCCA Mission

The Michigan Community College Association is the unified voice for Michigan's community colleges, empowering members to lead in the areas of student success, talent development, and community vitality.

#### MCCA Vision

We will be a nationally recognized state association providing effective leadership in talent, community, and economic development. MCCA will:

- Be the state's leading advocate for postsecondary education and talent development.
- Strengthen public awareness and recognition of the role of community colleges.
- Support members in delivering education and training that is responsive to changing labor-market needs.
- Champion the strategies necessary to achieve equitable student success, emphasizing linkages between policy, practice, and research.
- Foster collaboration, connection, and partnerships among community colleges and stakeholders.

#### Michigan Center for Student Success

In 2011, the Michigan Center for Student Success was created by the MCCA with a generous grant from the Kresge Foundation. In more than a decade, the Center has led numerous statewide initiatives to **improve equitable student outcomes** focused on complicated barriers to student success including initiatives focused on developmental education, transfer, data and analytics, student basic needs, credit for prior learning, completion, guided pathways, advising redesign, and several other initiatives. The Center, one of the nation's leading organizations in the Student Success Center Network, relies heavily on our deep partnerships with national research organizations, subject matter experts, and practitioners who have learned from effective student success practices.

#### **Student Success Recommendations**

The trustees and presidents of Michigan's community colleges, community college personnel, and the staff of the MCCA have extensive experience working with state-level department and agencies that support community colleges, staffing, funding, and leading student success initiatives, and designing supports that will improve student outcomes at community colleges. With this experience in Michigan and in states throughout the country, the MCCA presents a number of recommendations that MiLEAP should consider pursuing as the state designs a department to promote the value of a college education, improve access to higher education, and improve community college student outcomes.



Although we rely heavily on our collective experiences in other states, we recognize that MiLEAP may not have the personnel or budget necessary to effectively engage in all our recommendations. According to the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), there are, on average, 60 employees in state coordinating or governing boards with an average annual budget of nearly \$10 million. As MiLEAP considers its role in providing support to community colleges, the MCCA is eager to help the department prioritize activities that will support student success.

Our recommendations are organized into five areas of focus with several specific recommendations or policy considerations in each area. The MCCA prioritized recommendations that are well-suited to state-level engagement as opposed to activities that are primarily institution-level decisions or practices that, while extremely important, are not state-level priorities.

### **1. Design More Equitable Financial Aid Programs**

*Michigan has invested in several financial aid programs including Reconnect, the Skills Scholarship, and the Michigan Achievement Scholarship, with the hope of reducing the financial barrier to higher education access.*

- 1.1. Assess the effectiveness of Michigan's financial aid programs to ensure that programs are designed to meet the full cost of education for the neediest students instead of last-dollar programs that only cover tuition and fees.
- 1.2. Simplify the state financial aid application process to align with federal aid requirements to increase access to higher education, especially for students historically under-served by higher education.
- 1.3. Streamline guidance and marketing materials for students and families to more clearly understand eligibility for financial aid programs as well as the overall affordability of obtaining a degree.
- 1.4. Provide more in-depth training and resources related to state programs for community college enrollment management offices to ensure that college personnel clearly understand Michigan's changing financial aid eligibility requirements and can communicate consistently with students and families.

### **2. Coordinate Efficient Transfer Between Institutions**

*Michigan is a "high transfer" state ranking in the top 5 in transfer student outcomes but too few of those students earn an associate degree before transfer or do not complete a bachelor's degree after transfer.*

- 2.1. Manage the Michigan Transfer Network at [www.mitransfer.org](http://www.mitransfer.org), build new functionality to support transfer and completion (i.e., credit for industry credentials), and ensure that participating institutions maintain up to date information.
- 2.2. Develop equitable processes to ensure the transferability of associate degrees from community colleges to bachelor's degree institutions in the same program of study, promote policies and practices that ensure a smooth transition between institutions, and incentivize modern transfer practices (i.e., transfer at junior or higher status, universal acceptance of all credit offered at community colleges in bachelor's degree transfer and MiWorkforce Transfer Pathways).
- 2.3. Identify opportunities to invest in equitable bachelor's degree attainment that eliminates the need for students and their families to relocate to a public university or independent institution, including offering university bachelor's degree programs on community college campuses and expanding the community college baccalaureate where appropriate.
- 2.4. Evaluate Michigan's funding formula to ensure that the state recognizes the role of community colleges in bachelor's degree completion by funding community colleges for transfer student success.





### **3. Ensure Equitable Access to Dual Enrollment**

*Dual enrollment (and early middle college) should be a gateway to higher education particularly for students who have historically not enrolled in college. While Michigan has a well-designed dual enrollment policy, too few high school students are accessing dual enrollment.*

- 3.1. Establish an expectation that all high school students complete college-level credit, including career training, before graduation.
- 3.2. Develop strategies to align high school career and technical education with college-level programs and industry-recognized credentials.
- 3.3. Provide additional support to school districts to ensure that district leaders understand the critical role of dual enrollment and early/middle college in equitable higher education access, especially for populations of students who have historically under-enrolled in higher education. Continue to provide very targeted support to school district with historically low dual enrollment participation.
- 3.4. Amend the School Aid Act to incentivize participation in dual enrollment and early/middle college programs.

### **4. Expand Access to Labor Market Data**

*Community colleges need access to high quality labor market data (earning and employment) to ensure that the college is offering programs that lead to family sustaining wages in growth industries that will support Michigan's future economy.*

- 4.1. Simplify the currently burdensome and costly process of accessing employment and earnings data available through the Unemployment Insurance Agency for on-demand analyses of labor market outcomes, to meet federal and state reporting requirements, and to contribute to decisions to start, stop, and continue programs.
- 4.2. Connect community college enrollment and completion data available at the Center for Performance and Information with earnings and employment data.

### **5. Streamline Reporting and Activities Across Departments**

*Michigan community colleges engage with agencies and departments across state government that provide essential services and supports to community colleges and their students.*

- 5.1. Ensure that public benefit initiatives (such as SNAP, TANF, cash assistance, childcare, and transportation) are designed to align seamlessly with community college enrollment and avoid any unintentional barriers or bias against students pursuing higher education.
- 5.2. Review all state reporting requirements across all departments and agencies and eliminate unnecessary reports, consolidate duplicate reports, and coordinate efforts within state government to ensure that data are accessible and actionable by all stakeholders.
- 5.3. Ensure that data collected by the state through various reporting mechanisms is accessible and actionable for state and college-decision making.
- 5.4. Develop processes and systems and adopt best practices to quickly implement state policy changes that impact community colleges to ensure that new state policy can be implemented as soon as possible (i.e., academic catch-up program, student success grants, implementing Reconnect age reduction or making available the Skills scholarship to community college students).

