

October 15, 2013

Chairmen Pscholka and Muxlow:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the joint committee meeting of the House Higher Education and Community Colleges Appropriations Subcommittee. I also want to thank you for your interest in the topic of remedial education. Attached you will find my testimony and supporting data.

As you can see by my testimony, Oakland Schools has also examined this topic. Yet, many inquiries remain unanswered. It is my hope that this committee will be able to provide answers to some of the most pressing concerns. Respectfully, I have included some of questions that I feel are critical and most in need of exploration on this topic.

1. What are the criteria for determining whether a student needs remediation?
2. Are these criteria publicly available for students prior to applying to universities and colleges?
3. What percentage of those students in remedial education come immediately from successful completion of high school and which are adults returning to college to update and upgrade credentials or former high school dropouts returning to continue their education?
4. Have public colleges articulated to the state a uniform measure of college-ready on which the K-12 system can build?
5. What about setting a uniform cut score on the MME/ACT over which students are fully exempt from costly remedial education?
6. Are results on placement exams used to specifically identify which skills a student is lacking or generally used to lump students into remedial classes covering vast skill sets? In other words, are they accurately diagnosing the problem?
7. What is the cost of remedial courses and what is the tuition paid for the courses?
8. Does remediation improve academic performance?
9. Does remediation increase the likelihood that a student will gain a career certificate or degree?

Sincerely,

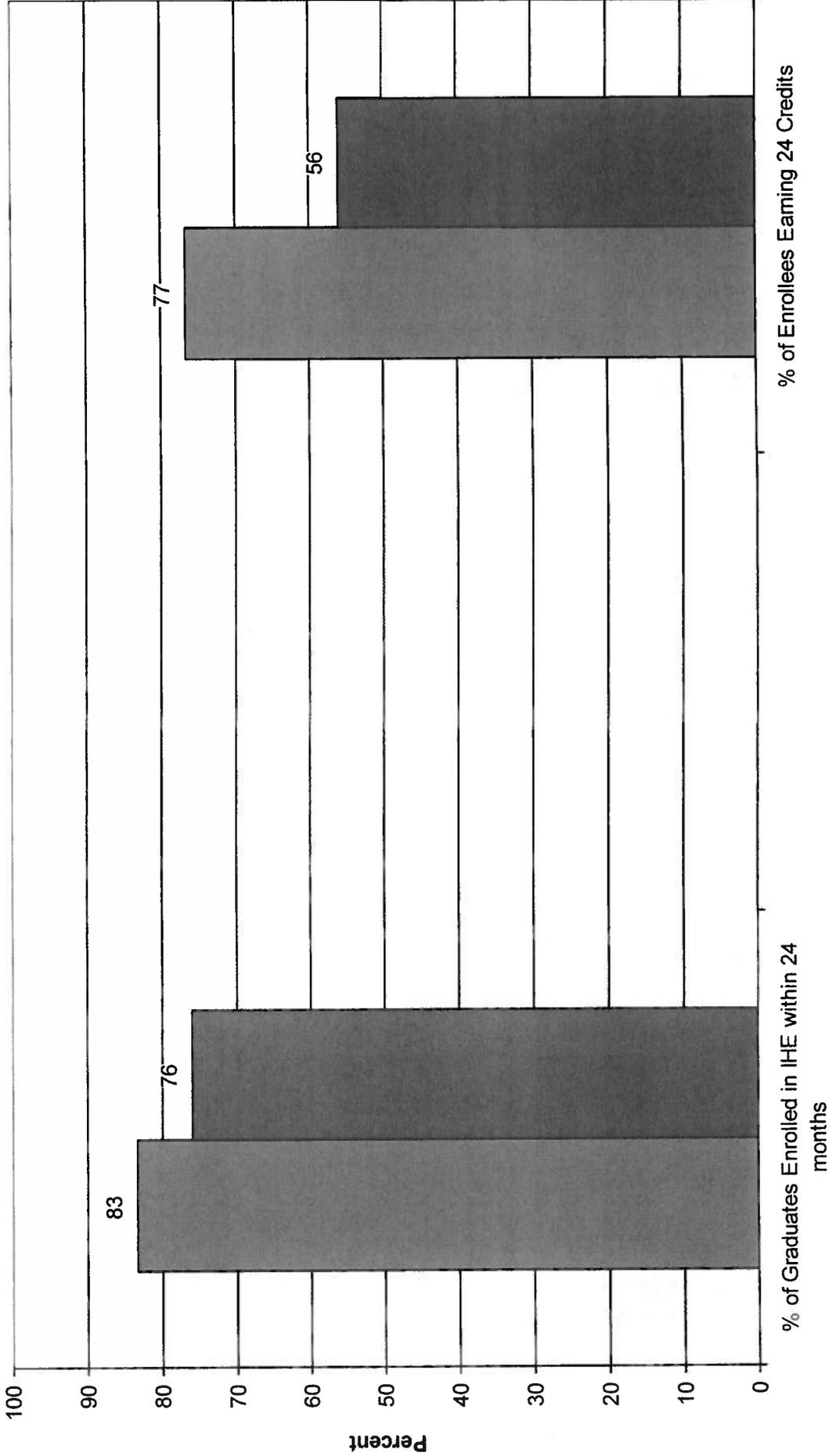
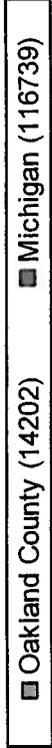


Dr. Vickie L. Markavitch

What percent of Oakland County graduates enrolled in an IHE within 24 months?

What percent of Oakland County enrollees in an IHE earned 24 credits within 24 months?

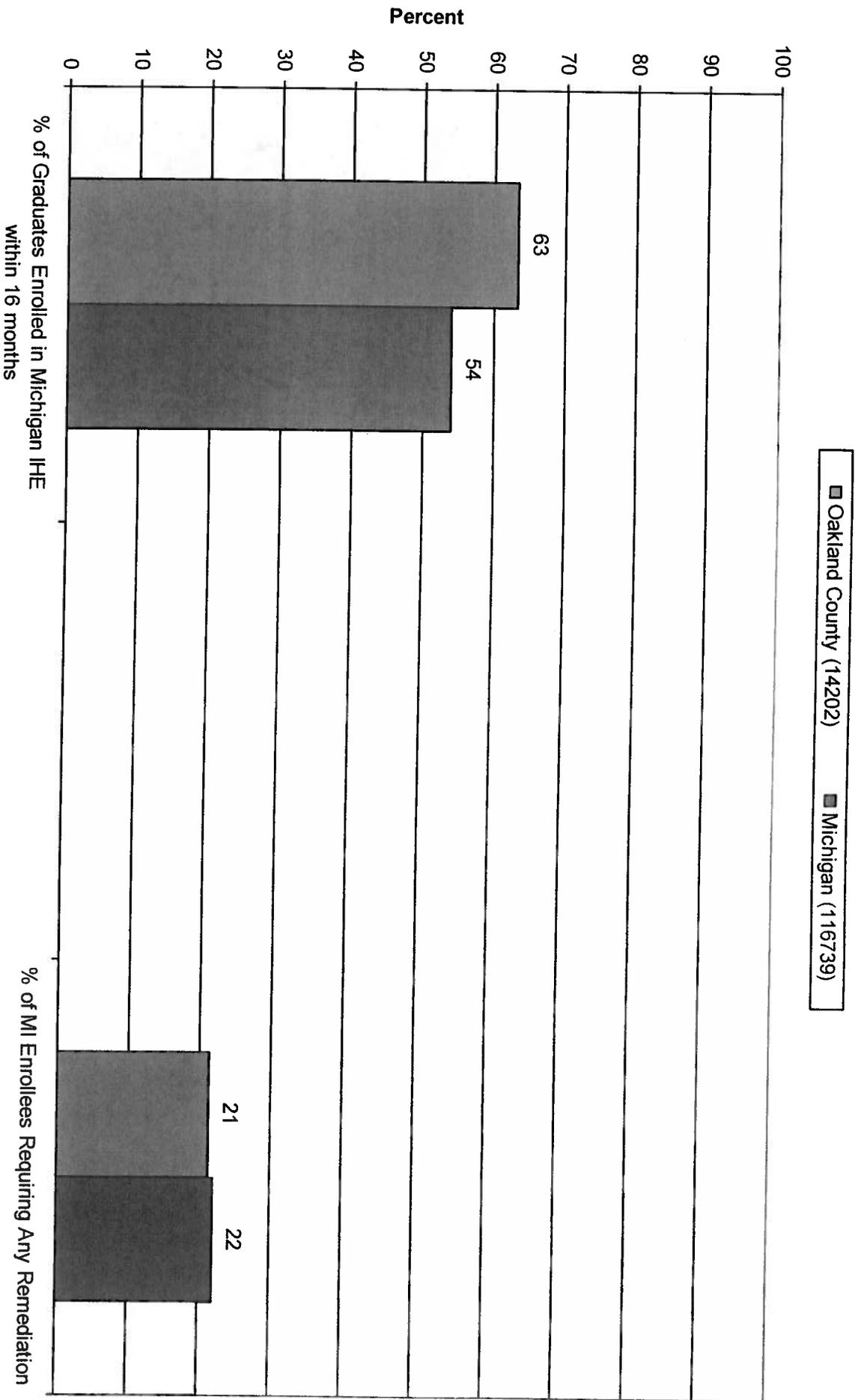
Oakland County Percent Enrolling in ANY IHE & Earning 24 Credits



What percent of Oakland County graduates enrolled in a MI IHE within 16 months?

What percent of Oakland County enrollees in a MI IHE required any remediation?

Oakland County Percent Enrolling in ANY MICHIGAN IHE & Any Remediation



Reliable data show fewer Michigan community college students need remediation than national average

Vickie L. Markavitch, Ph.D.
Superintendent, Oakland Schools
May 16, 2011

In his educational message, Governor Snyder said, "...many parents may be surprised to learn that 61% of community college students require developmental coursework in order to be successful at the college level." Did the Governor mean for us to draw a direct correlation between those 61% of students needing remediation and the preparation they received in high school? If not, why does he list this metric on his K-12 Michigan Education dashboard (<http://www.michigan.gov/midashboard/0,1607,7-256-58084---,00.html>). This metric and correlation to K-12 education is just plain wrong.

In a May 2009 report written by Michigan's Auditor General, a performance audit was completed on developmental education at Michigan's community colleges. The report, #032-0651-07, is filled with lots of interesting data. One clear metric is "a comparative analysis of students enrolled in at least one developmental education course at each Michigan public community college during fall 2005, winter 2006, fall 2006, and winter 2007 academic terms."

Results of that study showed, that "The percentage of students enrolled in developmental education courses at each community college ranged from 7% to 37%. Twenty-two percent (22%) of all community college students enrolled in developmental education courses." Of that 22%, 69% were below the age of 25, 30% were 25 years or older, and 1% could not be identified by age. What's more, the percentage of first-time freshman enrolled in developmental education courses statewide was 25%.

Of course we would like to improve that 25% statistic for first-time freshmen and graduate fewer students who need to take developmental courses, even though "Nationwide, some 30 to 40 percent of incoming college students need to take remedial courses." (see article by reporter Christine Armario: The Herald-Sun - Community colleges into the limelight http://www.heraldsun.com/pages/full_story/push?article-Community+colleges+into+the+limelight%20&id=7131078)

However, the Governor's reference is even more misrepresentative of what is really happening in these courses when other aspects of the Auditor General's report are noted.

- Developmental education testing, placement, and enrollment policies lack uniformity among Michigan community colleges;
- Placement testing waiver requirements differ among the community colleges including how many times a student can take the waiver test; and
- Wide variances existed among the community colleges' minimum test scores needed to place into college-level courses.

When asked on the survey administered by the Auditor General, community college staff reported the following causes for students needing developmental education:

- Older students who have been out of high school for many years and need to refresh their skills (62%).
- Students' basic behavioral and emotional needs have not been met (such as poor parental care, lack of stimulating environment, and poverty) (54%)
- Inadequate high school curriculums and lack of students' and/or educational system's understanding of college-level expectations (27%)

To add even more confusion to these statistics in an article entitled "*New Evidence on College Remediation*," author Paul Attewell, et al, (published in the *Journal of Higher Education*, Fall 2006), asked "Who took remedial coursework in college?" Based on national data, the answers were:

- 10% of students whose academic skills are in the top quartile enrolled in remedial courses;
- 25% of students whose academic skills are in the second quartile enrolled in remedial courses;
- 14% of students who took the most advanced curriculum in high school enrolled in remedial education;
- 32% of students in the lowest academic skills quartile did not take remedial education; and
- 42% of students in the lowest quartile of high school curricular intensity did not take remedial education.

When using numbers to tell a story, one must be careful to consider the full context. The average age of an Oakland Community College (OCC) student is 29 years old. Nationally, 46% of community college students are age 25 or older. In this Michigan economy, the number of displaced workers has grown and many of them have had to return to post-secondary education to retool their skills in order to rejoin the workforce. Most adults, out of school for five years or more, not having to use Algebra in their daily lives, would have a hard time passing a high school algebra test, much less a college one.

In actuality only 25% of first-time freshman are enrolled in developmental education courses in Michigan community colleges. That is better than the national average, but we should still work to improve that number. In order for the K-12 system to do so, we need an accurate statistic. Why not collect data on the percent of freshmen at community college campuses taking developmental courses who have recently graduated from high school? And, if we could get community colleges to agree on their standard for placing students in development courses, we might even be able to measure apples to apples.

We certainly have things to improve in K-12 education and in post-secondary education as well – but let's use accurate and reliable data to take an honest snapshot of where we are so we can better design an improved future for Michigan students.