

March 12, 2026

To: Members of the Michigan House and Senate
From: Teach Plus Michigan Teacher Policy Fellowship
Postsecondary Pathways Working Group



We are a group of secondary educators from across Michigan and members of the Teach Plus Michigan Teacher Policy Fellowship, a highly selective leadership opportunity for outstanding Michigan teachers deepening their knowledge of education policy and gaining a voice in decisions that affect their students and the teaching profession. We are dedicated to preparing Michigan's students for the future by expanding access to high-quality postsecondary opportunities.

Policy Goal

By June 2027, the Michigan Legislature will pass a bill establishing a funding system to incentivize Michigan schools to broaden participation in and foster mastery of postsecondary-focused courses such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), dual enrollment (DE), early middle college (EMC), and Career and Technical Education (CTE). This funding will incentivize equitable access to high-quality pathways and improve long-term economic mobility.

Why This Issue Is Important

- + Participation in programs such as AP, IB, DE, Early Middle College, and CTE increases college enrollment, credential attainment, and workforce readiness.
- + Michigan's current funding structures do not consistently incentivize districts to invest in expanding these opportunities for students who would benefit most.
- + Students in economically disadvantaged communities have [significantly less access to advanced coursework](#) and high-quality postsecondary pathways.

"Jamie had been taking college-level classes since she was 14 because of the opportunity to enroll in a "middle college" ...a high school program partnered with a local college to provide students the opportunity to apply college courses to fulfill high school Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements at no cost to the student. As Jamie's advisor, I met with her on a regular basis to mentor, answer college questions, and build a plan for her future. Jamie graduated high school almost halfway done with a college bachelor's degree. Not all students are as lucky as Jamie." @Policy Fellow Michelle Vanhala, Washtenaw County teacher

"Kylee graduated and earned her high school diploma as the first woman in her family in two generations. She met every requirement asked of her, checked the boxes to secure a future she hoped would lead to independence. Despite reaching that milestone, Kylee still lives with her grandmother and works at the same fast-food restaurant she did in high school, with her dreams of a career and a place of her own stalled by a paycheck that barely covers the basics. Post-secondary planning could have changed this outcome." @Policy Fellow Tanika Greisiger, Benzie County Central Schools teacher

What the Evidence Shows

- + [Only 8 percent](#) of high school students in 2023-24 participated in Dual Enrollment (DE) or Early Middle College (EMC) and [23 percent in career and technical education \(CTE\)](#), all programs that increase their post-high school skills.

- + [Based on 2024-25 school year SAT scores](#), only 26.6 percent of students are ready for continuing education or the job world.
- + Students who complete advanced coursework are more likely to enroll in and complete postsecondary education, [Community College Research Center, 2025](#).
- + Early exposure to college-level work reduces remediation rates and increases persistence in both two- and four-year institutions, [American Institutes for Research, 2019](#).
- + [Michigan Department of Education 2024 Reports](#):
 - 95.1 percent of CTE students are placed in careers related to their coursework.
 - 77.5 percent of CTE students report using skills from their CTE courses in continuing education or jobs.
 - The four-year graduation rate for Michigan CTE students is 96.75 percent, compared to 81.77 percent statewide.

We Recommend

- + **Pass legislation establishing a tiered funding model** that rewards districts for expanding access to and completion of postsecondary-focused coursework.
- + **Allow for flexible use of funds**, including staffing like counselors, program equipment and materials, tuition and fees, program-affiliated transportation, and other supports aligned with federal Perkins V requirements and the existing CTE system.

Potential Impacts

This investment will **expand equitable access** to high-quality postsecondary pathways for Michigan students, particularly those in economically disadvantaged communities. By increasing participation in advanced coursework and career pathway programs, students will **graduate better prepared for college, careers, and credential attainment**. Targeting incentives to districts with the greatest need will help close opportunity gaps and **strengthen Michigan's future** workforce and economic mobility.

Next Steps

The Legislature should appropriate sufficient startup and performance-based incentive funding to meaningfully expand access in Opportunity Index Bands 5 and 6. A fiscal analysis from the House or Senate Fiscal Agency can determine projected participation rates and total investment required based on incentive tiers and eligible districts.

Respectfully submitted,

Teach Plus Michigan Teacher Policy Fellowship Postsecondary Pathways Working Group

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