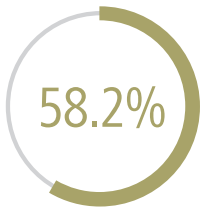
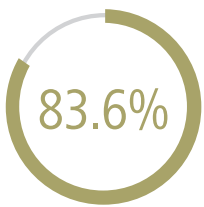


# Post-Secondary Attainment

MAY 2019



**58.2% OF STUDENTS IN WEST MICHIGAN ENROLL IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SIX MONTHS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL<sup>1</sup>**



**83.6% OF FIRST-YEAR POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS IMMEDIATELY CONTINUE INTO THEIR SECOND YEAR<sup>2</sup>**

Source:

<sup>1</sup> MiSchoolData, 2017-18

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## Reason for Action

West Michigan has made progress in post-secondary attainment since 2010 and is on track to achieve its goal of 64% by 2025. However, to become a top-20 region for talent, post-secondary enrollment, persistence and completion rates have to increase significantly over the next five years to keep pace with top performing regions. On average, if 100 West Michigan students begin 9th grade, 80 will graduate from high school, just 31 will earn an associate degree, and 33 will earn a bachelor's degree.

## Current State

- 58.2% of West Michigan students enroll in post-secondary education within six months after their high school graduation. Enrollment rates drop when disaggregating for race:
  - 48.1% of African American students enroll within six months of graduation, and
  - 47.8% of Hispanic students enroll within six months of graduation.
- 83.6% of first year, post-secondary students immediately continue into their second year.
- 16.6% of students graduate with an associate degree in four years. However, many students transfer to another institution before they earn a degree or credential.
- 59.9% of students graduate with a baccalaureate degree within six years.

## Leading Practices

Talent 2025 calls for 75% of all high school students in West Michigan to enter into post-secondary education six months after their high school graduation. There are already many leading practices taking place in West Michigan that can be scaled or replicated.

- High school students who enroll in **career technical education** (CTE) programs are more likely to pursue post-secondary credentials and earn more college credits.
- **Middle college** programs allow high school students to take a combination of core high school courses and college courses to receive their diploma and graduate.
- Research shows **persistence** from year one to year two is critical for students to earn a post-secondary credential.
- **Reverse Transfer Programs** allow students who transfer from a community college to earn an associate degree. Increasing the number of associate degrees awarded can be an effective way to increase degree attainment.

## Strategies

1. **Increase participation in middle college and career technical education** programs to boost post-secondary enrollment and completion.
2. **Decrease the number of first-year college students who take a development course** by increasing alignment of curriculum between high school and post-secondary education.
3. **Increase the number of associate degrees awarded annually** through Reverse Transfer Programs among the region's community colleges and baccalaureate institutions.