



K-12 Public Education vs. College/University

What's the difference?

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Public Education (K-12) Overview

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Public Education

Federal mandate that all children be educated until they reach a certain age

Each state sets its own minimum age – generally between 14-16, and penalties for not sending children to school

Truancy is a misdemeanor in Michigan and comes with a small fine (\$5-\$50) or up to 90 days in jail

Truancy may be referred to Child Protective Services, and may result in children being removed for educational neglect



In short, *all* children in the United States are expected to receive at least a middle school education.

Exclusivity and Accommodations

- Public schools cannot exclude children (although they can suspend or expel students under limited circumstances)
- Public schools must educate all students, regardless of intellectual ability
- By Federal law, students who have disabilities or who are gifted can get accommodations and a team assigned to monitor their academic needs – 504 plans, IEPs (Individualized Education Program)
 - Involves annual or semi-annual meetings with parents/guardians



Who Teaches?

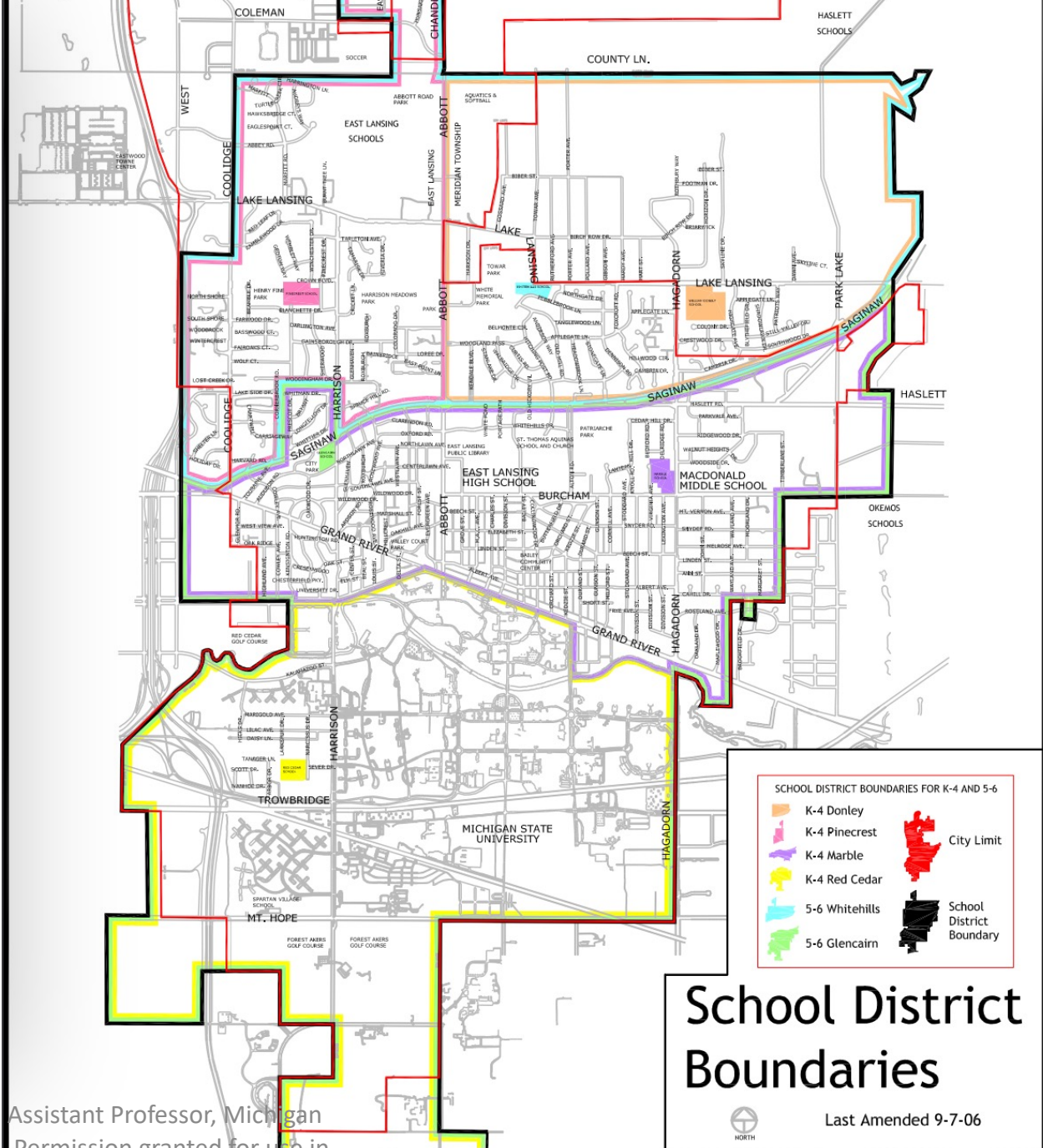
- Undergraduate degree in education
- Student teaching
- Yearly professional development and training during the school year
- Expected to create lesson plans for each module, including any slides, lecture notes, worksheets, handouts, assignments, etc. well in advance of teaching the module.
- Often (but not always) teach the same or similar class from year to year.
- Often see students over a longer time period and with more meetings per week, giving more time to review material to be taught.

Who Teaches?

- Teachers generally have their own classrooms
 - Lower levels, teacher has same students for most of the school day, every day
 - At higher levels, students move between classrooms and teachers stay in same place; they may see the same students every day or on a regular schedule
 - Although some classes are overcrowded, teachers have the opportunity to get to know their students

Who is Responsible for Public Schools?

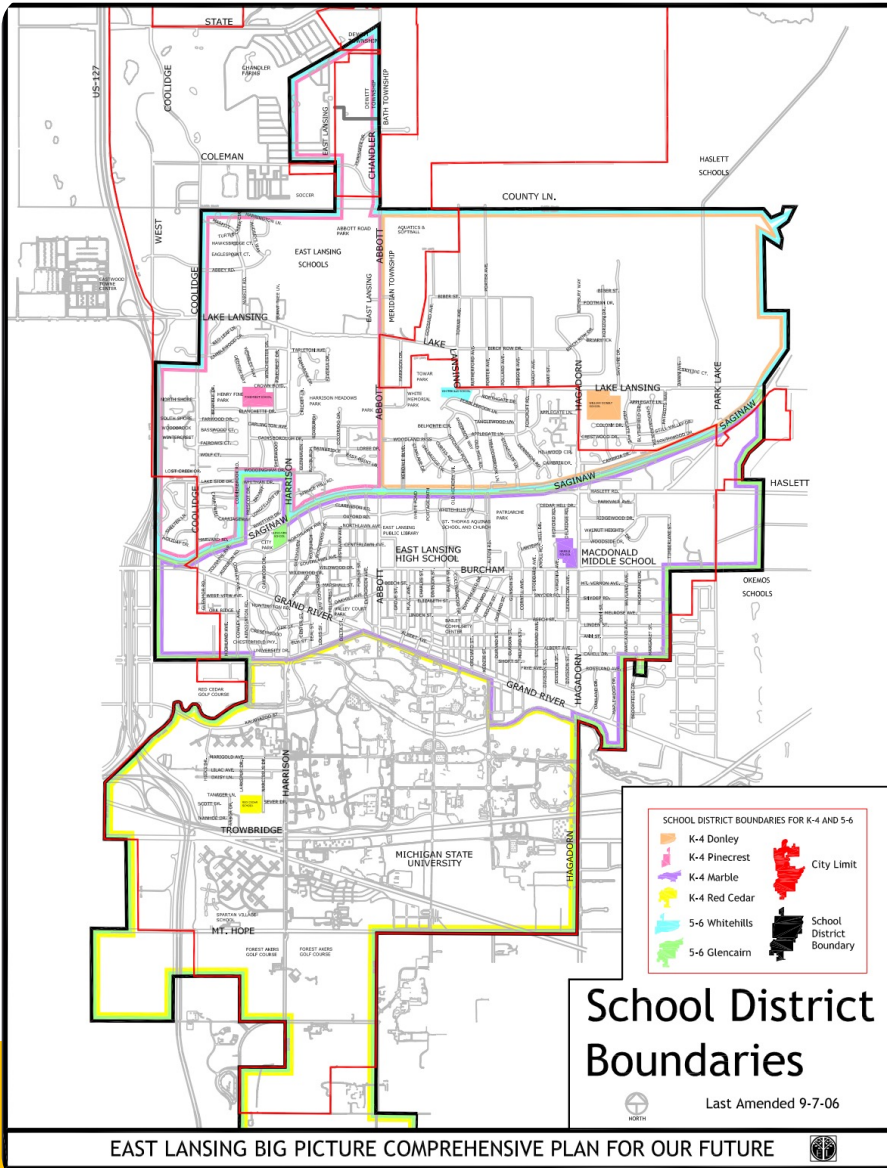
- Each State is responsible for maintaining their Public School system.
- Each City (or sometimes sets of cities) is responsible for maintaining their Public School system.
 - School Districts
 - Each District is subdivided into sections
 - On the right: East Lansing school district map with subdivisions.



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Who Goes Where?



- School district subdivisions generally determine which students attend which schools
- In other words, where a student's family lives determines the school they go to
- Can be exceptions
- Past efforts at desegregation resulted in bussing students to other schools
- School boards can redraw their District map as they like



Who Pays For It?

- Public education is funded through property taxes in the geographical area assigned to a particular school.
 - Houses, apartments, businesses, etc.
 - Schools in impoverished areas thus receive less property tax funding than schools in wealthier areas.
- Schools also receive funding for each student from
 - The State, set by the State
 - The Federal government, set by the Federal government



Who Pays For It?

- Public schools – grade schools, middle schools, and high schools – have *no* direct input on how much money they receive to maintain their buildings, pay their teachers and staff, etc., aside from lobbying state and Federal lawmakers.

Meeting Standards: Federal Law and Public Education

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- No Child Left Behind
 - Between 2002 – 2015, all schools in the public education system were subject to the No Child Left Behind act.
 - The goals sounded good:
 - Get 100% of students to “proficiency” in reading and math
 - Raise the ceiling, so higher-achieving students can do better
 - Raise the floor, so lower-achieving students get better
 - Students don’t fall through the cracks and “fall behind”
 - In practice (Forbes article [here](#) for more reading):
 - Schools were responsible for testing students regularly on math, science, etc
 - SCHOOL FUNDING WAS FUNNELED TO HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOLS AND AWAY FROM LOWER-PERFORMING SCHOOLS
 - All of public education shifted radically – to a radical focus on testing, preparing for testing
 - Students lost electives, recess, etc.

Meeting Standards: Federal Law and Public Education

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- Every Student Succeeds Act replaces NCLB in 2015
 - Retains testing, but returns standards to States and school districts
 - Expands performance measures beyond testing and graduation rates
 - Teacher engagement, advanced coursework, school climate and safety
 - Offers grant funding to lowest-performing schools
 - More at the [Department of Ed](#) and [US News](#)

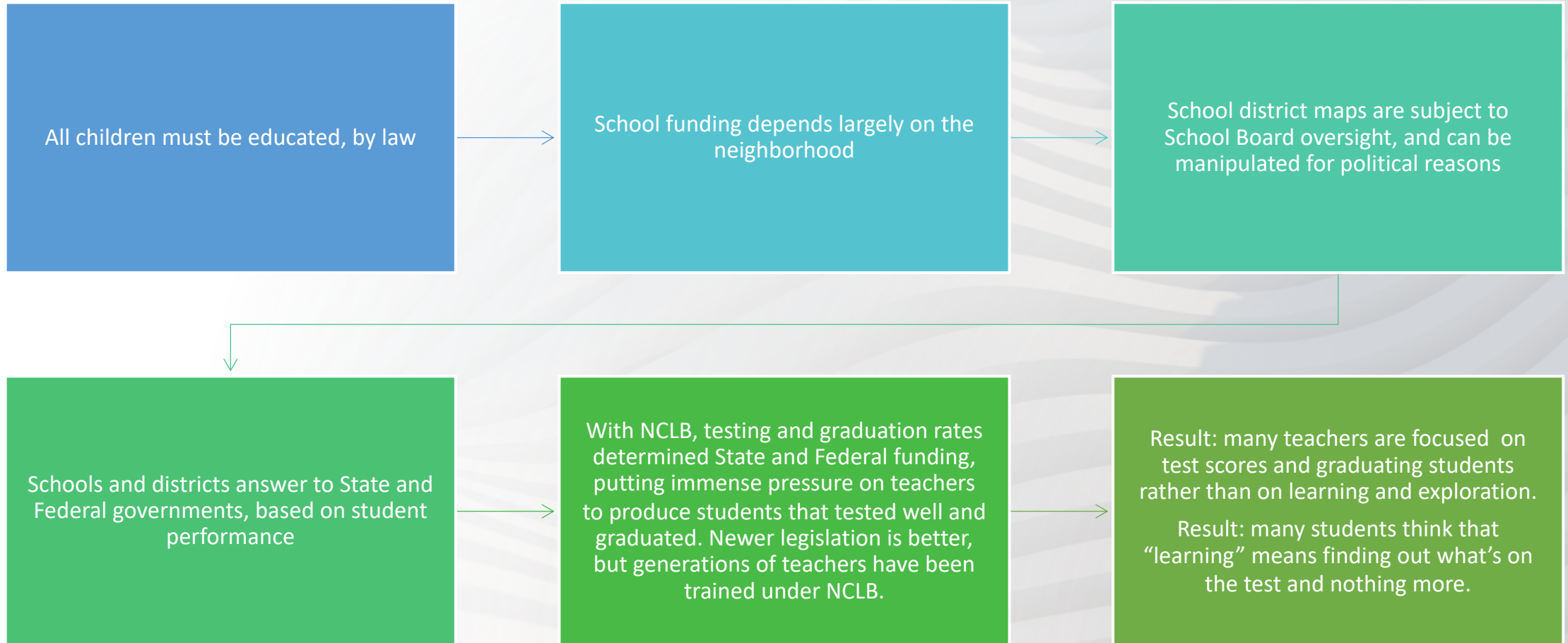
Meeting Standards: Federal Law and Public Education

ESSA Highlights

ESSA includes provisions that will help to ensure success for students and schools. Below are just a few. The law:

- Advances equity by upholding critical protections for America's disadvantaged and high-need students.
- Requires—for the first time—that all students in America be taught to high academic standards that will prepare them to succeed in college and careers.
- Ensures that vital information is provided to educators, families, students, and communities through annual statewide assessments that measure students' progress toward those high standards.
- Helps to support and grow local innovations—including evidence-based and place-based interventions developed by local leaders and educators.
- Sustains and expands this administration's historic investments in increasing access to high-quality [preschool](#).
- Maintains an expectation that there will be accountability and action to effect positive change in our lowest-performing schools, where groups of students are not making progress, and where graduation rates are low over extended periods of time.

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- From the [Department of Ed](#) site



The background features several large, overlapping organic shapes in teal, yellow, and purple. These shapes are filled with various patterns: white dots, pink dots, white dashes, and white vertical lines. The overall aesthetic is modern and artistic.

Higher Education (Colleges and Universities) Overview

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Higher Education

- No Federal expectation that students graduating high school will go on to college.
- Land Grant Universities
 - Beginning with the Morrill Act of 1862
 - First signed into law by Lincoln
 - MSU established in 1855, became land grant in 1862
 - To “teach agriculture, military tactics, and the mechanic arts as well as classical studies so members of the working classes could obtain a liberal, practical education” (Association of Public & Land Grant Universities [website](#))

Exclusivity and Accommodations

- Requirements to get into some schools
 - Why did MSU relax its requirements?
- Federally required to provide equal access to course material if students apply and are approved for accommodations
 - Faculty do not always honor accommodations
 - Students expected to deliver letters to faculty and work with faculty to receive accommodations



Who Teaches?



Depends on the college or university and the focus of the university. At research-intensive institutions like MSU (also known as R1 institutions), research is privileged.

Liberal arts colleges focus on teaching over research.



PhD: teacher with a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) in a field relevant to the department they work in. PhD requires becoming a specialist in a narrow sub-discipline of the degree field. Attained after getting a Master's degree.



Master's: teacher with a Master of Arts or Master of Science degree in a field relevant to the department they work in. Some are "terminal degrees," meaning that there is no PhD or that a PhD in that field means something very specific. Attained after an undergraduate degree.



No Master's: teacher with an undergraduate degree but no graduate school.

Who Teaches? Employment Designations

Doctor

Doctor: person who has earned a PhD, MD, or equivalent degree

- Always address a teacher with a PhD as “Dr.” unless they tell you otherwise.

Title

Lecturer, Instructor, Professor: title of an employment position in higher education. May, or may not, be tied to degree (Professor with PhD, others without).

Who Teaches? Tenure vs. Non-Tenure

Tenure: job security attached to specific positions. A “tenure-line” position typically has a line item in the University budget. Tenure-line positions generally have expectations for research, publication, service, and less for teaching. Higher levels of prestige are associated with this type of position.

Non-tenure-line positions focus more on teaching and are often funded from a pool of funding instead of a line item. Lower levels of prestige are associated with this position.

Who Teaches? The Professoriate

- Professor: a job designation – generally occupied by someone with a PhD.
 - Assistant Professor: lowest professor rank.
 - If a tenure-stream position, that person usually has 5 years to meet specific goals for research, publication, service, and teaching set by the department. At the end of that time they must submit a significant packet of their work for consideration. If they do not meet requirements, they are dismissed from the position. If the department is satisfied with their work, they are promoted and get tenure. (Promotion and tenure are two different things, but tend to happen at the same time.)
 - If not a tenure-stream position, tenure is not available and promotion may or may not be. Promotion is available to non-tenure-stream professors at MSU.
 - Associate Professor: second professor rank
 - Many tenure-stream professors stay at this rank for their career. At this rank, research, publication, service, and teaching expectations must still be met.
 - Full Professor: highest professor rank
 - Time to “go up” for full professor varies by institution, but 10 years is not uncommon. Someone applying for full professor will have established a reputation well beyond their institution, will be well published, seen as an expert in their field, etc. The need to research and publish is reduced after reaching full.

Who Teaches?

Tenure-stream Faculty:

- At most colleges and universities, focus is on research and publication, followed by service.
 - Retention and promotion are based on research and publication, getting grants, service to the university, with teaching generally a minor concern.
 - Teaching load varies by institution: larger universities generally have lower teaching loads; often 1-2 classes per semester at a large university.

Non-Tenure-Stream Faculty:

- At many colleges and universities, non-tenure, or contingent, faculty focus on teaching and are not expected to conduct research or publish.
- At some colleges, research and publication are frowned upon because they are seen as taking away from a teaching focus; teaching load can be up to 5-6 classes per semester.
- Contingent positions are often very unstable.



Who Teaches?

- Whether tenure-stream or non-tenure—stream, college and university faculty receive little to no training on how to teach
 - Faculty are trained to be scholars.
- Most college and university faculty are not trained to teach.
 - Some institutions offer professional development
 - Institutes
 - Workshops
 - Most voluntary
- Many college and university faculty teach different courses each semester, especially contingent faculty
- Faculty are not required to give students slides, handouts, worksheets, etc. unless a student has an accommodation for class notes.
 - Most create slides or the equivalent and most share their slides.



Who Teaches?

- Faculty have an office separate from classrooms (although many contingent faculty do not have offices)
- Faculty move from classroom to classroom just as the students do
- Classes range in size from 5-6 to 400+
- Classes meet anywhere from 1 day a week to 3
- Courses run from a few weeks to 4 months, reducing time to cover material
- Faculty often have little opportunity to get to know students

Who is Responsible for Colleges and Universities?



United States Department of Education

Oversees postsecondary accreditation system
Accrediting agencies must be recognized by the Federal government

Secretary of Education publishes a list of Federally recognized accrediting agencies as well as State agencies that approve “public postsecondary vocational education and nurse education”



Accrediting Agencies

Develop criteria to evaluate postsecondary institutions

Conduct regular evaluations of postsecondary institutions (“peer review” every four years)

Either renew accreditation or not; may put an institution on warning and give a list of things to fix before another review



Who is Responsible for Colleges and Universities?

- Michigan State University ultimately answers to the Higher Learning Commission ([HLC](#)) for accreditation (although some colleges have field-specific accrediting agencies).
 - [Overview from HLC](#)
 - [Criteria for accreditation](#)

Some Selected Criteria



Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Core Components

3.A. The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

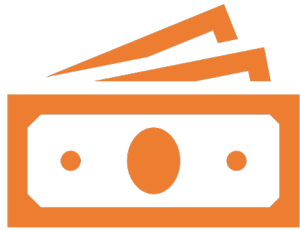
Some Selected Criteria

3.B. The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Criteria in the Daily Life of a College Student

- Access to high-quality subject matter experts
- Course syllabus
- Learning goals
- Learning outcomes
- Assessments
- Final grades as a guarantee of having earned the credential
- Also – access to accommodations, Title IV, assurance that degree is worth something after earning it



Tuition does not buy grades.



Tuition:

Grants access to an institution, which puts groups of students in touch with subject matter experts.

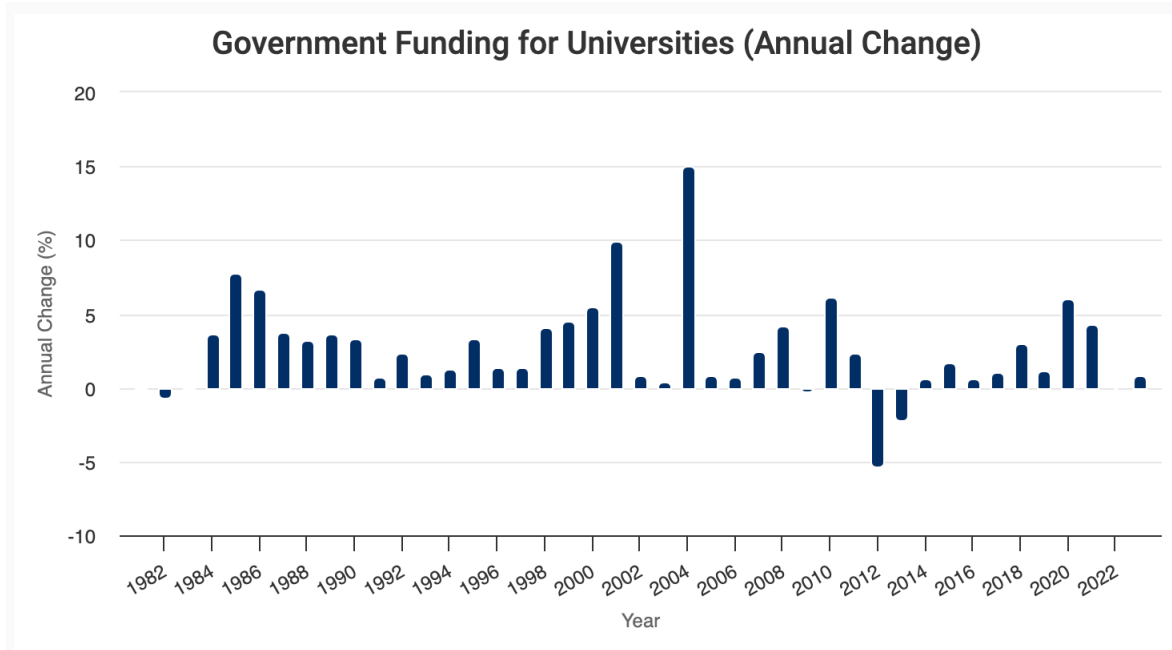
Offers students the opportunity to earn credentials based on that interaction.



Who Goes Where?

- Access to resources plays heavily into whether a student goes to college
 - Some states are making education freely available
- Access to resources plays heavily into where a student goes to college
- Access to resources plays heavily into being able to make choices about both of the above
- Degree preference affected by
 - Personal preference
 - Access to resources

Who Pays For It?

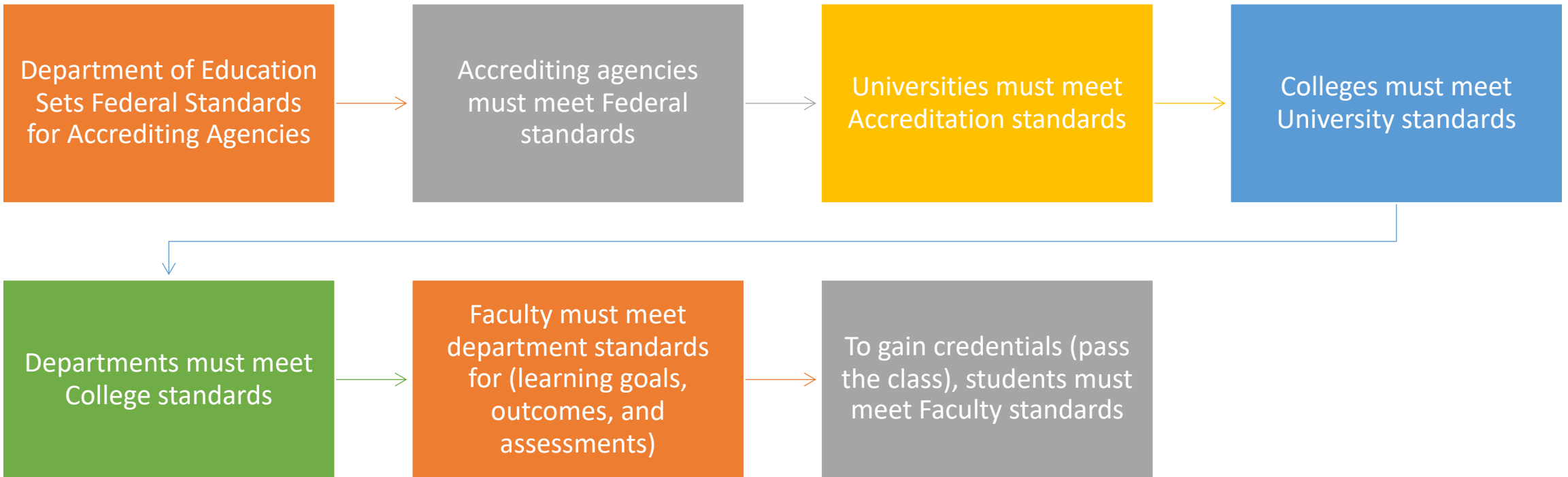


- The Institutional budget is covered by a combination of tuition & fees, grant funding (for research projects, programming, etc), and government funding
 - Government funding is sensitive to changes in the economy



Who Pays For It?

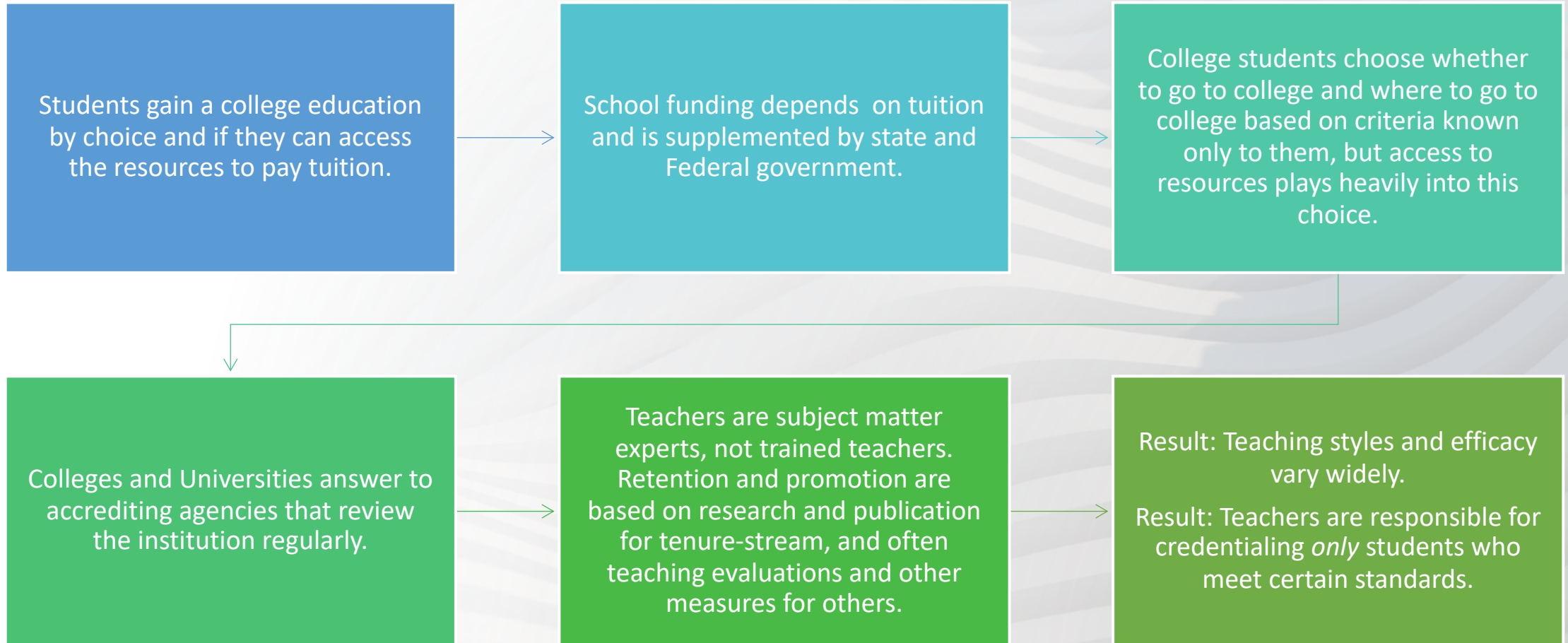
- Tuition Rates in Michigan set by Board of Trustees
 - [Article](#) about new tuition increase





Meeting Standards: Assessments

- Assessments are not a measure of teaching effectiveness
 - Teachers generally have full control over type and number of assessments
 - Teachers may test on material not presented in class
 - Students are expected to learn much of the material on their own
- Assessments are expected to measure student learning
 - How a student performs on assessments determines whether or not they pass a class and with what score.
 - Funding and teacher pay is not directly associated with the number of students who pass a class or how high their scores are.



K-12 Public Education vs. College/University

Public Education

- Federal law says that all students must be educated to a certain level
- No child can be excluded
- Accommodations must be made for disability
- Schools are overseen by state and local governments, but also subject to the Federal government

College

- Federal law includes no guarantee of education beyond high school
- Individuals can be excluded based on test scores as long as the policy is applied to everyone
- Accommodations must be made for disability
- Schools are responsible to accreditation standards, which are then responsible to Federal oversight

K-12 Public Education vs. College/University

Public Education

- Faculty are trained teachers
 - Regular professional development
 - Create complete lesson plans for content, including learning aids
 - Often teach the same or similar content from year to year

College

- Faculty are subject matter experts, usually not trained to teach, though professional development is often available
 - Not required to create lesson plans, give students slides, worksheets, etc. Most faculty share slides.
 - Often teach different classes every four months and from year to year.
 - Time to teach content limited to a few weeks in a quarter system and four months in a semester system.

K-12 Public Education vs. College/University

Public Education

- Students typically attend schools based on where they live
- Education is primarily funded through local property taxes and subsidized by state and Federal governments. Public school is ostensibly “free”
- Schools have no control over funding

College/University

- Students attend schools based on personal preference and access to resources
- Education is primarily funded through tuition and fees and subsidized by grants and state and Federal funding
- Schools have the ability to raise tuition rates

K-12 Public Education vs. College/University

Public Education

- Standards for what is taught are strict and homogenous, with an outsized focus on test scores. In the past, test scores and graduation rates were tied to future funding.

College/University

- Standards for what is taught are heavily influenced by the accreditation process, but what is taught, and how it is taught, is left to faculty. Future funding is not closely tied to test scores or graduation rates.

K-12 Public Education vs. College/University

Public Education

- Goal: provide a basic education to *all* students, regardless of who or where they are.
 - Key to Democracy: an educated populace.

College/University

- Goal: provide students – with the interest and the means to attend college/university – access to the higher education credentialing process.
- HLC guiding values include:
 - A focus on student learning
 - Education as a public good, with students having transformational experiences while gaining their credentials
 - Graduates with an understanding of diversity, technology, and global dynamics, who are capable of lifelong learning and civic engagement.