

Governor's Education Summit
Breaking through Barriers Building a Network for College Access & Success
Regional Breakout Session
WEST MICHIGAN

Part I: What is College Access?

- Is access to college an issue for our community?
- What from the earlier sessions particularly resonates with the way you think about college access and participation in your community?
- Are there different ways to think about college participation in West Michigan?

Session Notes:

- Affirmative action
- Are they ready for college – are they going into the right area? Are we doing a good job preparing – feedback?
- Getting students who don't think they are college worthy – encouraging them.
- Scholarships – Where you go to find out about them.
- When parents aren't active in helping child research scholarships/paperwork.
- Counselors kept up to date on scholarship/paperwork
- Communication
- Understanding the value – Student and Family
- Messaging – Elevation of expectations of all students
- Access front door – not back door
- Access without support is not successful – once students are with us, how do we help them through to graduation?
- Look at long-term – P-16 or P-20.
- Support for families from birth – are children truly ready for kindergarten?
- Life-long learning – College is normal/traditional; life-long is broader.
- Make sure students have skills for work place.

Part II: Community Assets and Gaps

- What is the work you do and what contribution do you make to college participation in your community?
- What are the assets in our community that play an important role in helping students and returning adults go to college?
- What organizations exist in your area that play a role but are not represented here today?
- What are the current gaps in your community?
- What sorts of strategies might be appropriate given the strengths of your community?

Session Notes:

- Strengths: Higher education, scholarships, after school programs/tutors, STEM, TRIO.
- Weakness: Loss of jobs with no idea how to go about getting training/better education.
- Need to find ways to prepare adults for continuing education.

- Life long learning – going out and entering back into institutions. Transitions points. What happens to them to transfer them into college prep curriculum is different?
- Navigating college access vs. MI Works – Career Advancement Program – 1 semester.
- Opened middle school and high school buildings for classes – more comfortable and familiar; maximizes assets we have.
- ESL – Parents/children – give information on community college or GVSU.
- Community Compact
- Building trust in community, 1st generation kids coming into college/helping kids being successful, valuing education.
- Immigration – expectation from family is high – translation helping family.
- Emotional health – students waiting.
- Adjust teaching styles for student needs.

Part III: Next Steps

- Are there efforts underway in your community to improve college access?
- What do you believe are the next steps for your community?
- Who will initiate the next conversations and where?
- How might a statewide college access network be helpful to you along the way?

Session Notes:

- Community Compact/Connect
- Find out who Ambassadors are – get them to your table.
- How do we find out who Ambassadors are? How do open it up more (rather than same people).
- Get information out to parents.
- Parents and students are missing from meetings.
- Business – The Chamber needs to be at meetings.
- Community Foundation
- Health/Wellness – Well-being of the community
- African-American males who were able to attend GVSU on a scholarship no longer exists.