



BEST BENZIE COUNTY

Cradle to Career Educational Network

OUR GOAL

By 2030, 60% of working-age Benzie County residents will have a certificate or college degree.





WHY DO THIS?

Michigan currently ranks sixth (6) in the country for **highest family share of college expenses** and **32nd** in the amount of need-based state **aid**.

Education is....



In general Benzie County has:

1. Great High School graduate rates
2. Persistence rate slight decline from 61% to 58%
3. Attainment rate: 40.4%
4. FAFSA completion on the decline.
(67 out of 115 students in 2024). 68%



OUR COMMON AGENDA

Create/support **a culture** in Benzie County that values any 'after high school' education because:

1. Education is the foundation for success in a knowledge-based economy
2. Residents can achieve a lifetime of their own goals, both economically and intellectually.



OUR FOCUS

BEST is small, but mighty!

Our work focuses on four priorities – each applies to students of all ages!:

College affordability,

Credential completion,

College-going culture, and

Pathways and transitions.



LESSON LEARNED SCHOOL DISTRICTS NEED CAREER ADVISORS

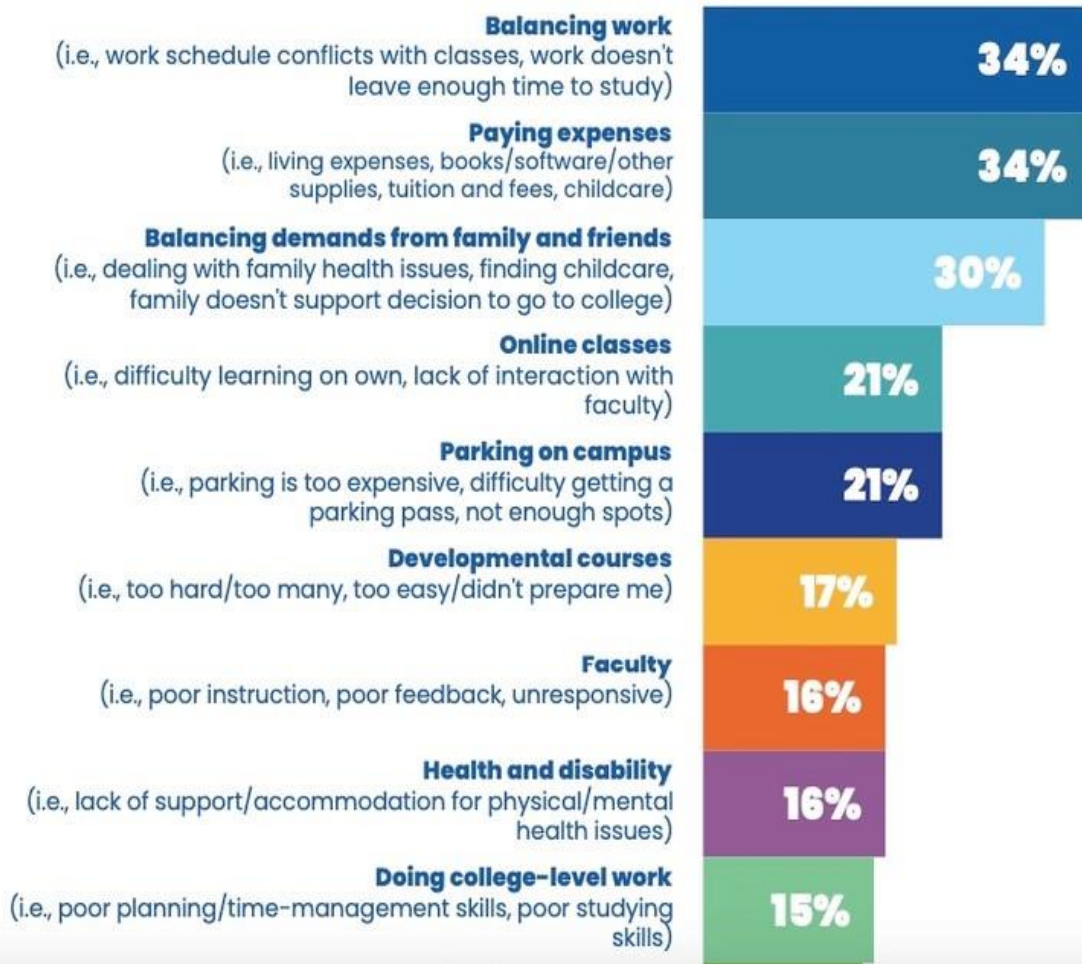
- Navigating the complex college exploration process
- Retaking college admissions tests
- Applying to colleges that are a good match/fit
- Completing the FAFSA
- Securing financial aid
- Matriculation to college



WHAT WE 'DO' with others

- FAFSA Events
- Career Expo
- Promote Michigan Reconnect and Community College Guarantee
- Convene or Participate when missions align.

Top Ten Challenges to Student Success



Research also confirms that transportation is an issue for many students, particularly low-income students and those from rural areas.

44% of Michigan Community College campuses **do not have a bus stop or another transit option within 4.5 miles.**

Holistic approach to improving outcomes: Wayne State University

- In 2011, Wayne State University (WSU) launched a university-wide initiative to dramatically improve a low overall graduation rate and close educational disparities.
- Focus areas included expanding undergraduate academic advising, implementing high impact practices, increasing support for high need students, launching an Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and expanding non-academic support services.
- **Positive results:** WSU more than doubled its overall graduation rate from 26% in 2011 to 60.3% in 2022 and roughly tripled the graduation rates for Black, Latinx, first-generation and low-income students.

WSU was recognized as the nation's fastest improving large public university during this time.

Graduation Rate Gains	2011	2022
Overall	26%	60.3%
Black Students	7.6%	39.5%
Hispanic/Latinx Students	16.7%	50.3%
First Generation Students	18.4%	57.7%
Low Income Students	16.1%	55.6%

Source: Wayne State University



2024-2025

- What could a scholarship foundation do for adult students?
- What scholarship are actually in Benzie County?
- How many of the approximately 6500 25-55 WANT to complete a certification or degree?
- We hope to get a Seed Grant from Rotary Charities to help with this project.



2024-2025

- **Northern Michigan Attainment Collaborative**

To improve education and lifestyle in the region by providing a credential or degree to 11% or more of the population.

MACRO of an local college access network.

- The collaborative would have:
 - community coordinator,
 - an industry navigator,
 - a non-credit transition navigator, and
 - a project manager/marketing

GROWING THE MIDDLE

Mission: Through intentional community organization, we will lead a 10-county collaborative effort to cultivate a flourishing and skilled workforce by increasing the percentage of people with a credential or degree to 60% by 2030. This initiative will expand the middle class, provide families with opportunities to thrive rather than merely survive, and drive economic growth and stability across the region.

Metrics: In Prosperity Region 2, 49% of adults hold a credential or degree, and 50.5% of families are in the middle income class. We will increase this by an additional 11% of adults with a credential or degree, and grow the middle class by an additional 9.5%.

Attainment Goal: Sixty by 30



NoMI ATTAINMENT COLLABORATIVE

Will you join us?

- Quarterly meetings in year one; semi-annual meetings in years two and three
- Industry partners and regional providers will have the opportunity to participate in subcommittees that meet every other month to further the mission
- Opportunity for shared marketing, promotion, and networking



Thoughts?
Questions?

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