

## Issue Brief

## EDUCATION IN MICHIGAN



As of 2009, more than one-third (35.9%) of 4th graders in Michigan public schools scored below basic on reading proficiency and 22.0% scored below basic on mathematics proficiency.

### WHAT IS SOCIETAL DISTRESS?

Societal distress describes living conditions that do not satisfy basic human needs, such as food, shelter, health, income, and education.

Visit [www.humanneeds.vcu.edu](http://www.humanneeds.vcu.edu) for more details.

### What is education?

**Educational attainment** is the highest grade of school an individual attends and completes. **Educational proficiency** measures a student's mastery of skills and understanding. High school dropout rates are defined here as the percentage of students in grades 9 through 12 who dropped out of school in the past year (*event dropout rate*) or the percentage of 16- to 24-year-olds who are not enrolled and have not yet completed high school (*status dropout rate*).

### How many Michigan residents are affected?

In 2008–2009:

- 3.8% of Michigan public school students in grades 9-12 dropped out of school (event dropout rate) in the preceding year.

As of 2009:

- 12.1% of adults (age 25 and older) in Michigan—about 802,000 persons—had not completed high school, and 43.2% had not attended one or more years of college.
- 3.7% of adults (age 25 and older) in Michigan had less than a 9th grade education.
- More than one-quarter (28.0%) of 8th graders scored below basic on reading proficiency in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).
- Almost one-third (32.2%) of 8th graders scored below basic on mathematics proficiency.



**THE PROJECT ON SOCIETAL DISTRESS** is an initiative of the Virginia Commonwealth University Center on Human Needs, which examines the prevalence of societal distress in five domains—food security, housing, health, education, and income—and makes the information available to the public and policymakers. This research effort focuses on presenting accurate data on the number of Americans affected by these conditions and not examining the causes or proposing solutions. The Project on Societal Distress is funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

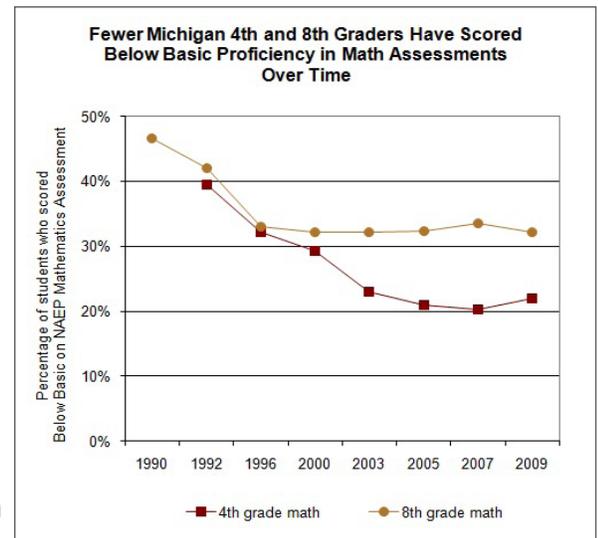
In 2008–2009, the public school event dropout rate in Michigan was three times higher among black students than white students (7.9% vs. 2.6% respectively).

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Poor education limits future prospects for employment, earnings, housing, and health. It is a growing problem in an era based on a knowledge economy. An inadequate education can perpetuate a cycle of distress for families across multiple generations.

## What are the trends?

Between 1992 and 2009, the percentage of Michigan 4th and 8th grade students who scored below basic in mathematics proficiency assessments decreased by 17.5 and 9.9 percentage points respectively.



## Who is affected?

**Males:** As of 2008-2009, the event dropout rate in Michigan was higher for males (4.4%) than females (3.2%).

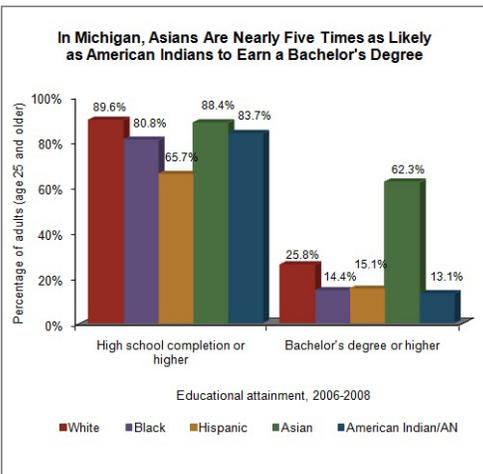
**Seniors:** In 2009, almost one out of four (22.4%) older adults (age 65 and older) in Michigan did not have a high school diploma.

**Minorities:** Among 8th graders evaluated for mathematics proficiency in 2009, average scores in Michigan were 269 and 246, respectively, for Hispanic and black students and 286 for whites.

**The Poor:** In 2007–2008 the event dropout rate was 8.2% among economically disadvantaged students, compared to 5.6% among all Michigan students.

## SOURCES AND METHODS

The statistics reported here were obtained from the U.S. Department of Education, *Digest of Education Statistics, 2010*; U.S. Department of Education, *NAEP Data Explorer*; and U.S. Department of Education, *Public School Graduates and Dropouts for the Common Core of Data: School Year 2008-2009*. The data underwent statistical analysis by the research staff of the Virginia Commonwealth University Center on Human Needs. Analytic methods are detailed at [www.humanneeds.vcu.edu](http://www.humanneeds.vcu.edu).



**THE VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY CENTER ON HUMAN NEEDS** ([www.humanneeds.vcu.edu](http://www.humanneeds.vcu.edu)) was chartered in 2007 to provide the public and policymakers with information about the prevalence of societal distress in the United States. Its mission is to document how many Americans confront food insecurity, precarious housing or homelessness, inadequate health and health care, inferior education, and inadequate income/poverty.

For more details, visit [www.humanneeds.vcu.edu](http://www.humanneeds.vcu.edu).