

Strengthening the Federal Education Research Engine: Value and Impact

Growing the Early Education Workforce in Michigan

In 2021, Michigan began rapidly expanding its Great Start Readiness Program for 4-year-olds, increasing the need for more qualified early childhood educators. To address this urgent need, a group of educators, staff from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), and the Region 8 Comprehensive Center (R8CC) partnered to redesign the high school career and technical education (CTE) career pathway that allows high school students the opportunity to earn a Child Development Associate (CDA) or a Michigan Youth Development Associate (MI-YDA) credential.

MDE and R8CC worked together to design and launch a new program called the Proud Michigan Educator LAUNCH which utilizes a research-based approach to recruit and prepare future educators from their local communities to be able to enter careers in education or youth development. To develop this program, each engine of Federal R&D was needed. *Let's break it down....*



Engines of Federal R&D:

- **Accountability:** Data showed that there were not enough early childhood educators to meet the demand in Michigan.
- **Research:** The MDE and the R8CC used applied research to understand what elements would make a successful career pathway and what is necessary, by industry standards, to include in a CDA or MI-YDA credential.
- **Data Tools & Systems:** The MDE and the R8CC co-designed a program to align with Michigan's educator preparation standards and national standards to ensure that LAUNCH would align with existing systems for credential recognition.
- **Innovation:** LAUNCH was designed with innovative elements such as a competency-based approach and the inclusion of clinical experiences, providing flexible ways to earn the credential to help ensure completion.
- **Communication:** The MDE and the R8CC advertised LAUNCH through partnerships with local organizations such as HeadStart programs and Great Start Readiness programs and presented about the program at Statewide gatherings.
- **Evaluation:** The R8CC created a data collection and reporting plan for the MDE to evaluate LAUNCH's implementation and future impact and to support continuous improvement.

Each of the engines of Federal research are a critical piece of this story and led to significant outcomes for students. *Let's look at the results...*

Driving Impact:

- **Students:** One year after LAUNCH was introduced, "students in more than 90 percent of Michigan's 57 intermediate school districts had access" and more than 1,600 aspiring early educators had enrolled in MiRegistry, Michigan's professional development registry.
- **Parents, teachers, school leaders, community:** LAUNCH programs are available in a wide variety of communities including rural, suburban, and urban, and LAUNCH has established a wide array of community partnerships with child care centers, Head Start programs, and YMCAs.
- **State Policy and Action:** Through Michigan's Preschool Development Grant (PDG), CTE teachers in 48 LAUNCH programs have received \$1,000 mini-grants to purchase resources for their classrooms and Michigan has allocated funds to provide bonuses for those who have become assessors for CDA and MI-YDA certification.