

MICHIGAN

OVERALL RANK: 16TH¹
TIER 2 (STRONG)

STRONGER WEAKER

OVERALL		16			
1. RESOURCES AND MEMBERSHIP	6				
2. INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS	4				
3. SCOPE OF BARGAINING			22		
4. STATE POLICIES					51
5. PERCEIVED INFLUENCE			20		

AREA 1: RESOURCES AND MEMBERSHIP TIED FOR 6TH

Michigan’s state teacher unions benefit from both substantial internal resources and relatively high state spending on education. The majority of Michigan teachers—92.0 percent—are union members (the 14th-highest membership rate out of 51 jurisdictions), and the state-level NEA and AFT affiliates bring in \$903 per Michigan teacher each year (4th of 51). Members of the Wolverine State’s teacher unions also benefit from state spending: K-12 education’s share of state expenditures is 28.2 percent (also 4th of 51). However, per-pupil spending (a combination of local, state, and federal funds) is in the middle of the pack at \$10,624 (31st), with 51.7 percent of those dollars directed to teacher salaries and benefits (43rd).

AREA 2: INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS² TIED FOR 4TH

Over the past decade, teacher unions in Michigan have been more active in politics than those in nearly every other state. They contributed 4.2 percent of total donations received by state-level political parties; only in California and Alabama did teacher unions give a higher percentage to their states’ political parties. They were only slightly less generous with their contributions to candidates for state office: Donations from teacher unions accounted for 0.9 percent of the funds received by such candidates (18th), and 10.0 percent of such Donations from the ten highest-giving sectors in the state (14th). Finally, a full 23.1 percent of Michigan’s delegates to the Democratic and Republican national conventions were members of teacher unions (5th).³

AREA 3: SCOPE OF BARGAINING
22ND

Though Michigan is one of thirty-two states that require collective bargaining in public education, it restricts the scope of that bargaining more than many others do. Of the twenty-one items examined in this metric, Michigan law requires that only three—wages, hours, and terms of employment—are included in negotiations. It explicitly prohibits six provisions, more than most mandatory-bargaining states: transfers/teacher reassignments, layoffs, dismissal, evaluations, insurance benefits, and length of the school year. The twelve remaining subjects are either explicitly left to the discretion of the districts or implicitly permitted because state law is silent. While Michigan allows its unions to collect agency fees from non-members—a key source of the revenue reflected in Area 1—it prohibits teacher strikes.

AREA 4: STATE POLICIES
51ST

Michigan policies are the least-aligned to traditional teacher union interests of all the states; given that a number of these policies were passed in 2011 and 2012, this lack of alignment is in spite of, or perhaps explains, the unions' high level of political activity. For example, teacher performance is included in the salary schedule for all teachers; student achievement must be the preponderant criterion in teacher evaluations; and teachers are eligible for dismissal after multiple unsatisfactory ratings (as opposed to being placed on an improvement plan). Michigan is one of only five states that wait five years before granting tenure to teachers (the national norm is three), and one of only eight where evidence of pupil learning is the preponderant criterion in tenure

decisions. (In most states, tenure is granted without considering student achievement at all). The state's charter school laws are no better aligned: Michigan's cap on the number of charters now leaves ample room for growth, the state offers many viable authorizing options for charter schools, and it automatically exempts charters from district collective bargaining agreements.

AREA 5: PERCEIVED INFLUENCE
20TH

Despite the adverse policy environment, stakeholders in Michigan report having stronger teacher unions than do our informants in many other states. Survey respondents strongly agree that Democratic candidates for state office need teacher union support to win, reflecting the high degree of union contributions to Michigan politics (Area 2). But respondents rank teacher unions the second- or third-most influential entity on state education policy, not the first, and note that unions are neither especially effective nor ineffective in warding off proposals with which they disagree. Further, stakeholders note that policies *proposed* by the governor during the latest legislative session were *not at all* in line with teacher union priorities, and those that were *enacted* were *mostly not in line* with those priorities, reflecting a shift in Michigan's historically pro-labor environment (see sidebar).⁴

OVERALL
16TH

Michigan's teacher unions show a striking disparity in resources and political involvement on the one hand and their actual influence on policy on the other. Although Michigan is traditionally held as a bastion of unionism, teacher unions began

to lose influence under Governor John Engler in the mid-1990s and recently lost key allies at the state level. Without state leaders on their side, they have only limited avenues to leverage their resources into policies they support (see sidebar).

STATE OF EMERGENCY

Both 2010 and 2011 were rough for unions in Michigan. The 2010 election brought a new Republican governor who made it clear that he was no friend of organized labor.⁵ Republicans also won majorities in both houses of the state's legislature, as well as on the Supreme Court, and immediately looked to undermine union protections and prerogatives. Toward the end of the 2011 legislative session, one labor advocacy group denounced that the eighty-five proposed bills with an anti-labor message "start from the view that Michigan's economic problems are the fault of public employees and the poor, rather than driven by a merciless recession and the auto industry's contraction."^{6,7}

Teacher unions, in particular, found themselves facing a clutch of new laws aimed at their traditional rights: Public Acts 100 through 103 reduced the scope of collective bargaining to salary, benefits, and hours; made it more difficult for teachers to gain tenure; removed seniority from dismissal decisions; and required annual teacher evaluations that heavily weighed student growth.⁸

The biggest blow was Public Act 4. That 2011 statute gives the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the governor the authority to intervene in governmental bodies facing bankruptcy, school districts included. In such districts, they can appoint an "emergency district manager" to control finances, which includes the right to eliminate or modify an existing union contract.⁹ By early 2012, the Detroit and Highland Park school districts had emergency managers at the helm, and they did not shy away from making cuts.¹⁰ For example, faced with an \$86.3 million deficit, Roy Roberts, the emergency manager for Detroit, unilaterally imposed a 10 percent wage cut on employees and increased employee contributions to their health benefits plan to 20 percent.¹¹ He converted low-performing schools into charters, closed others, and placed some in a new state-wide district—saving \$7.5 million in annual operating costs along the way.¹²

Labor may yet have the last word, however. In November 2012, Michigan voters will decide whether to repeal Public Act 4. This referendum is the result of a massive campaign by an advocacy coalition called Stand Up For Democracy, which gathered the 162,000 necessary signatures—and then 64,000 more—to put the repeal on the ballot (and suspend the Act in the meantime). But after a union-supported campaign to recall Governor Rick Snyder fizzled in June 2012, the outcome of the repeal vote is far from certain.¹³ Michigan is known as the Wolverine State, but its teacher unions may no longer have the same bite.

MICHIGAN RANKINGS BY AREA AND INDICATOR

OVERALL RANK: 16TH

Area and Rank ^a	General Indicator	Sub-Indicator	Sub-Indicator Rank/Status ^b
AREA 1: RESOURCES & MEMBERSHIP 6*	Membership	By rank, what percentage of public-school teachers in the state are union members?	14th
	Revenue	By rank, what is the total yearly revenue (per teacher in the state) of the state-level NEA and/or AFT affiliate(s)?	4th
	Spending on education	By rank, what percentage of state expenditures (of state general funds, state restricted funds, state bonds, and federal "pass-through" funds) is directed to K-12 education?	4th
		By rank, what is the total annual per-pupil expenditure (of funds from federal, state, and local sources) in the state?	31st
		By rank, what percentage of total annual per-pupil expenditures is directed to teacher salaries and benefits?	43rd
AREA 2: INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS 4*	Contributions to candidates and political parties	By rank, what percentage of the total contributions to state candidates was donated by teacher unions?	18th
		By rank, what percentage of the total contributions to state-level political parties was donated by teacher unions?	3rd
	Industry influence	By rank, what percent of the contributions to state candidates from the ten highest-giving sectors was donated by teacher unions?	14th
	Status of delegates	By rank, what percentage of the state's delegates to the Democratic and Republican conventions were members of teacher unions?	5th
AREA 3: SCOPE OF BARGAINING 22	Legal scope of bargaining	What is the legal status of collective bargaining?	Mandatory
		By rank, how broad is the scope of collective bargaining?	37th
	Automatic revenue streams	What is the unions' legal right to automatically collect agency fees from non-members and/or collect member dues via automatic payroll deductions?	Permitted
	Right to strike	What is the legal status of teacher strikes?	Prohibited
AREA 4: STATE POLICIES 51	Performance pay	Does the state support performance pay for teachers?	Required for all teachers
	Retirement	By rank, what is the employer- versus employee-contribution rate to the teacher pension system?	**
	Evaluations	What is the maximum potential consequence for veteran teachers who receive unsatisfactory evaluation(s)?	Eligible for dismissal
		Is classroom effectiveness included in teacher evaluations? If so, how is it weighted?	Required; Preponderant criterion
	Terms of employment	How long before a teacher earns tenure?	Five years
		Is student/teacher performance considered in tenure decisions? If so, how is it weighted?	Required; Preponderant criterion
		Is seniority considered in teacher layoff decisions? If so, how is it weighted?	Optional; May be considered among other factors
		Is teacher performance included in teacher layoff decisions? If so, how is it weighted?	Required; Considered among other factors
Class size	By rank, what percentage of the teaching workforce was dismissed due to poor performance?	36th	
	Is class size restricted for grades 1-3? If so, is the restriction higher or lower than the national average (20)?	No restriction	

Area and Rank	General Indicator	Sub-Indicator	Sub-Indicator Rank/Status
AREA 4: STATE POLICIES 51 (cont.)	Charter school structural limitations	Is there a cap (limit) placed on the number of charter schools that can operate in the state (or other jurisdiction) and/or on the number of students who can attend charter schools?	State cap with ample room for growth
		Does the state allow a variety of charter schools: start-ups, conversions, and virtual schools?	Start-ups and virtual schools only
		How many charter authorizing options exist? How active are those authorizers?	Two or more active/available options
	Charter school exemptions	Are all charter schools automatically exempt from state laws and state/district regulations (except those that safeguard students and fiscal accountability)? If not, are they eligible for exemptions?	No; Schools can apply for exemptions
		Are all charter schools automatically exempt from state teacher-certification requirements? If not, are they eligible for exemptions?	No; Schools cannot apply for exemptions
		Are all charter schools automatically exempt from collective bargaining agreements (CBAs)? If not, are they eligible for exemptions?	Yes

AREA 5: PERCEIVED INFLUENCE^c 20	Relative influence of teacher unions	How do you rank the influence of teacher unions on education policy compared with other influential entities?	Second- or third-most influential
	Influence over campaigns	On a scale from always to never, how often do Democratic candidates need teacher-union support to get elected?	Often/Always
		On a scale from always to never, how often do Republican candidates need teacher-union support to get elected?	Never/Rarely
	Influence over spending	To what extent, from strongly agree to strongly disagree, do you agree that even in times of cutbacks, teacher unions are effective in protecting dollars for education?	Agree
		Given recent budgetary constraints, would you say that teacher unions generally make concessions to prevent reductions in pay and benefits or fight hard to prevent those reductions?	Fight
	Influence over policy	To what extent, from strongly agree to strongly disagree, do you agree that teacher unions ward off proposals in your state with which they disagree?	Neutral
		On a scale from always to never, how often do existing state education policies reflect teacher-union priorities?	Sometimes
		To what extent, from totally in line to not at all in line, were state education policies proposed by the governor during your state's latest legislative session in line with teacher-union priorities?	Not at all/Mostly not in line
		To what extent, from totally in line to not at all in line, were legislative outcomes of your state's latest legislative session in line with teacher-union priorities?	Mostly not in line/Somewhat in line
	Influence over key stakeholders	On a scale from always to never, how often have the priorities of state education leaders aligned with teacher-union positions in the past three years?	Sometimes/Often
		Would you say that teacher unions typically compromise with policymakers to ensure that their preferred policies are enacted, or typically need not make concessions?	Does not generally concede

* Tied with another state

** Insufficient data; see Appendix A.

^a Area ranks are calculated using a weighted average of sub-indicators. For a more detailed description, see Appendix A.

^b Where possible, we report a state's rank as compared to other states on a given metric. For example, out of 51 states, Michigan has the 14th-highest percentage of teachers who are union members. Otherwise, we report a status: Michigan has mandatory collective bargaining, and union agency fees are permitted. For a more detailed description of our metrics and methodology, see Appendix A. To request the raw data for your state, send an email to uniondata@edexcellence.net.

^c For all survey questions, stakeholders were asked specifically about teacher unions, candidates, policies, and leaders in their state. In addition, we asked about unions and policies in the "current legislative session," but because legislative calendars vary from state to state, responses refer to policies proposed and enacted within the 2010-11 window.

ENDNOTES

¹ A state's overall rank is calculated as follows: First, we score it on multiple sub-indicators (sub-indicator data and scores for Michigan are shown in the table, *Michigan Rankings by Area and Indicator*). Second, we take a weighted average of the sub-indicators in each of five areas. In each area, we use that average to place the states in rank order: For example, in Area 1: Resources and Membership, Michigan is ranked 6th of 51 based on the weighted average of its sub-indicators. To generate the state's overall rank, we average the five area ranks together, then re-order the states. For a more detailed description of data sources and methodology, see Appendix A.

² Readers should note that these figures include only direct donations from unions and union-connected PACs, but not their spending on electioneering/advertising, mobilizing the union's own membership, lobbying, or advocacy. A recent *Wall Street Journal* report found that donations and lobbying activities account for a small share of union political spending compared with their expenditures on member mobilization and advocacy. Even the AFT agreed, making the argument that since its mission is organizing and activism, it will naturally spend significant amounts on these activities. Thus, the percentages we report here are extremely conservative representations of what unions actually spend on politics. For more information, see Appendix A, Area 2; Tom McGinty and Brody Mullins, "Political Spending by Unions Far Exceeds Direct Donations," *Wall Street Journal*, July 10, 2012; and Jeff Hauser, "Wall Street Journal Compares Union Political Spending to Corporate Donations," AFL-CIO, July 10, 2012.

³ At the time of publication, the 2000 conventions were the most recent for which such detailed data were available in forms that met rigorous standards. However, 2008 data provided by the Democratic National Convention were highly correlated with the reliable figures from 2000.

⁴ We asked stakeholders about unions and policies in the "current legislative session," but because legislative calendars vary from state to state, responses refer to policies proposed and enacted within the 2010-11 window.

⁵ Nathan Bomey, "Rick Snyder, Virg Bernero Will Test Voters' Opinions On Organized Labor, Outsourcing," Ann Arbor.com, August 5, 2010, <http://www.annarbor.com/elections/rick-snyder-virg-bernero-will-test-voters-opinions-on-organized-labor-outsourcing/>.

⁶ Evan Rohar, "Michigan Unions And Poor Face 85 Hostile Laws," Labor Notes, October 26, 2011, <http://labornotes.org/2011/10/michigan-unions-and-poor-face-85-hostile-laws>.

⁷ John Rummel, "Michigan Warning: Republican Extremism Goes Too Far," *People's World*, December 16, 2011, <http://peoplesworld.org/michigan-warning-republican-extremism-goes-too-far/>.

⁸ "Anti-Collective Bargaining And Tenure Bills Enactment," AFT Michigan, August 16, 2011, <http://aftmichigan.org/files/tenure-cb-pkg2011.pdf>.

⁹ "Local Government And School District Fiscal Accountability Emergency Manager," AFT Michigan, April 20, 2011, <http://aftmichigan.org/files/emergencymanager.pdf>.

¹⁰ Simone Landon, "Public Act 4, Michigan Emergency Manager Law, Marks First Anniversary," HuffingtonPost.com, March 16, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/16/public-act-4-michigan-emergency-manager-law-anniversary_n_1353510.html.

¹¹ Associated Press, "Emergency Manager Roy Roberts To Impose 10 Percent Wage Cuts In Detroit Public Schools," July 29, 2011, http://www.mlive.com/news/detroit/index.ssf/2011/07/emergency_manager_roy_roberts.html.

¹² Simone Landon, "Detroit To Close 9 Schools, Convert 4 To Charters," HuffingtonPost.com, February 8, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/08/detroit-school-closings_n_1263165.html.

¹³ Dave Murray, "Michigan Rising Ending Effort To Recall Gov. Snyder, Looks To Form Progressive Think Tank," MLive.com, June 7, 2012, http://www.mlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2012/06/michigan_rising_ending_effort.html.