

DRAFT - Template Letter to Legislators:

Dear Senator/Representative _____,

I am writing to encourage your support of the cradle-to-career approach to education and a P-20 (prenatal to age 20) Council to oversee and direct its application.

Research shows that education begins long before kindergarten, with 90 percent of the brain's intellectual and emotional hardwiring set in the first five years. Furthermore, education does not occur in a vacuum – a child's ability to learn is handicapped when they are abused, neglected, hungry, sick, or stressed about their family's financial situation.

Sadly, many of Michigan's children are facing these obstacles to learning and that poses hazards not only for the children, but also for the state's economic future. The new Kids Count in Michigan Data Book finds over 20 percent of children ages 0-17 are living in poverty, nearly 30 percent of babies born in 2008 had less than adequate prenatal care, and there were 30,799 victims of child abuse and neglect in 2009, up 25 percent since 2000.

As we rebuild Michigan's future and lay the path to economic recovery we cannot forget the growing number of children whose current struggles will present obstacles to becoming the skilled, educated workers we need.

A P-20 Council would develop and oversee a prenatal to adulthood education system built on a partnership of resources from a variety of sectors.

P-20 councils or task forces operating in 38 other states are finding success in joining the many factors that influence a child's ability to learn – health, safety, economic security, and more – to overcome barriers and challenges facing many of our children and families. Recognizing that education starts long before kids enter school and that education is not isolated from these other factors, the councils utilize a coordinated approach to align programming, funding and expectations by identifying, creating, incentivizing and supporting interagency, public/private partnerships toward an end goal of educational and workforce success for all young people.

I ask that you support legislation establishing in law a P-20 Council, providing resources to support it, and broadly defining its role to maximize leveraging opportunities so we can give Michigan's children and Michigan's economy the best chance of success.

Sincerely,

(Your name and city here)