

Action Alert!

Time-sensitive facts regarding legislation affecting Michigan's children and families.

for Child and Family Advocates



August 2023

Call to Action: Ask Your State Representative to Quickly Pass HB 4676, 4677, 4678 to Improve High School Graduation Rates for Youth Experiencing Foster Care

With the FY2023-24 state budget in place, the Michigan Legislature will soon return to work to focus primarily on passing policy bills. A flurry of legislative activity is expected in the coming days and weeks, and swift advocacy will be essential to ensure that bills that would have positive outcomes on young people and families don't get left behind.

One specific area is legislation that would help improve high school graduation outcomes for students who are experiencing foster care. For Michigan students who experienced foster care in high school class of 2022, the four-year graduation rate was just 41%. After two additional years to achieve a diploma, that number still did not reach 60%, well below the four-year statewide graduation rate of 81% for all students. These rates are the lowest of any group of students in Michigan. Efforts to solve this problem have begun with a package of bills that would codify Michigan's expectation for a quality education for all students experiencing foster care:

- HB 4676 would expand the Children's Assurance of Foster Care Quality Act to explicitly reflect a child's right to a credit-bearing education.
- HB 4677 and 4678 would require both new reporting of educational outcomes and audits of whether the educational arrangements at each Child Caring Institution (the licensing name for residential foster care institutions) are following all applicable education laws and regulations.

Current Status for HB 4676-4678: All three bills await approval from the full State House, which would send these bills to the Senate for a committee hearing and their approval.

We need your voice to ensure that these bills move ahead with urgency. [Urge your State Representative](#) as well as [House Speaker Rep. Joe Tate](#) to pass HB 4676, 4677, and 4678 this Fall.

Upcoming State Legislative Calendar Demands Urgency

A couple of key dynamics are giving advocates a tight window to work with this Fall for ensuring that their priority bills grab legislators' attention and achieve passage:

- Session could resume for a limited time, ending as early as October, as the majority Democrats consider "ending session" early to allow some recently passed laws to take effect more quickly.
- Two members of the State House Democrats are running for local elected offices. If both win, they would vacate their seats, bringing House representation to a 54-54 party tie, potentially grinding most work to a halt until next Spring, just before House election campaigns heat up.