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Testimony on Senate Bill 826
Daniel J. Hurley, CEO
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Good morning. My name is Daniel Hurley, I serve as the CEO of the Michigan Association of State Universities, the coordinating board for the state's 15 public universities. Collectively, these institutions enroll nearly 300,000 students annually—individuals who represent our state's future talent pipeline and our future workforce.

Michigan is competing in a global marketplace for talent; it is this talent pool that is our state's and our nation's most important asset when it comes to our collective ability to compete globally and to ensure future economic prosperity.

Fortunately, Michigan is seeing some progress in our talent building capacity within our P-20 educational system. As a state we have increased the percentage of adults with an associate's degree or higher from 35 to 39 percent over the past six years. It's a good start, but still a full 5 percent lower than the national average and far short of our goal of having 60 percent of adults with a postsecondary degree or credential.

One of the most critical indicators of whether a high school student will enroll in college following graduation—and remain enrolled through to degree completion—is whether he or she completed a rigorous core curriculum while in high school. The type of curriculum that is integrated into the current Michigan Academic Standards in mathematics and English Language Arts.

It was precisely this need to better prepare our young adults with college- and career-ready academic standards that originally led the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers to come together in a non-partisan manner to facilitate the development of more rigorous standards—the Common Core State Standards, of which the Michigan Academic Standards are

modeled after. The standards are being utilized by 42 states in a voluntary capacity.

I urge committee members to vote no on SB 826. To abandon the Michigan Academic Standards will decrease our students' preparedness to enter and succeed in college and in the workforce. This is the last thing we as a state should do given already-existing challenges involving educational achievement gaps, as well as other economic and demographic challenges. And we certainly should not embrace some alternative, regressive set of academic standards that will only set up our children for failure in college and in the state's future labor market.

The notion of replacing Michigan's current standards with a new set of curriculum standards based on those that existed in Massachusetts in 2008 is even more disconcerting. Officials in that state, recognizing the need to have the highest set of expectations of the skills, competencies and knowledge high school students should possess upon graduation—actually replaced their curriculum standards for mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy in 2010 with the Common Core State Standards. Based on a thorough review and independent analysis, the Common Core standards were determined to have set a higher, college- and career-ready bar than those that were previously in place in Massachusetts.

Michigan's universities and its employers require that our state's high school graduates meet the academic standards that are aligned with the expectations they will face when they enter college and the job market.

High expectations for all students. High standards for all students. These are two things our children must have if they are to succeed in Michigan's future.

Again, I urge you to vote note on SB 826.