



## School Annual Education Report (AER) Cover Letter

February 10, 2021

Dear Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER) which provides key information on the 2019 - 2020 educational progress for Michigan Connections Academy. The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and state laws. The school's report contains information about student assessment, accountability, and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the AER, please contact Bryan Klochack at Michigan Connections Academy for assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the following website: [MICA AER Report](#) or you may review a copy in the main office at your child's school.

For the 2019-20 school year, schools were identified using definitions and labels as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school is one that has at least one underperforming student subgroup. An Additional Targeted Support (ATS) school is one that has a student subgroup performing at the same level as the lowest 5% of all schools in the state. A Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school is one whose performance is in the lowest 5% of all schools in the state or has a graduation rate at or below 67%. Some schools are not identified with any of these labels. In these cases, no label is given.

Our school was identified as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement school as our 2015-16, 4-year cohort graduation rate was 63.43%. Although the metric used fell below the 67% threshold, we have made marked improvements not only in our 4-year rate but also our 5 and 6-year rates over the past three reportable years as can be seen in the below table.

| School Year | CSI             | 4-year rate | 5-year rate | 6-year rate |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 2015-2016   | Identified Year | 63.43       | 71.43       | 68.42       |
| 2016-2017   |                 | 68.71       | 75.00       | 79.75       |

|           |  |       |       |       |
|-----------|--|-------|-------|-------|
| 2017-2018 |  | 69.12 | 78.32 | 76.42 |
| 2018-2019 |  | 75.00 | 76.12 | 81.56 |

Additionally, since the 2013-14 school year, we have increased our 4-year cohort graduation rate by 28.63 points, which equates to a 62.20% improvement in the last 5 years. As you can see by the numbers, we have instituted with great thought and fidelity a plan which has allowed us to increase our cohort rate through student engagement and improving and enhancing instructional strategies allowing us to graduate more students in the 4-year cohort as well as those students needing a little more time to complete their education as all students learn at different paces.

In our continued drive for academic success, the School Improvement Plan is reviewed regularly and updated annually with input from staff. This includes a review of our student achievement data and input from our committed teacher staff that drives school improvement and plans coordinating professional development sessions for our faculty.

Additionally, our school improvement plan includes a focus on critical literacy skills such as mathematics, reading and writing as well as important affective factors that impact student success.

State law requires that we also report additional information.

#### 1. PROCESS FOR ASSIGNING PUPILS TO THE SCHOOL

##### **Enrollment Cap and Lottery**

Open enrollment begins in March. If, after accounting for returning students and siblings of returning students, the number of new student applications exceeds the number of open enrollment slots, a lottery will be held each year in the April. The lottery will be held at the school office and will be open to the public. If a lottery is necessary, selected students must provide MICA with their academic documentation for course placement by June 30 or forfeit their space to another student on the waitlist. Students not selected in the lottery or who miss the open enrollment period will be placed on a wait list on a first-come, first-serve basis based on the date on which they complete the enrollment paperwork and return it to MICA. Siblings of enrolled students will have waitlist priority and will be released first if space becomes available in their grade. These criteria have been approved by MICA's authorizer, Ferris State University, and are reflected in the current MICA policies.

#### 2. THE STATUS OF THE 3-5 YEAR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

A copy of the school improvement plan is available at Michigan Connections Academy. The Michigan Connections Academy School Improvement Plan is on track, meeting all requirements for establishing goals and monitoring progress.

### 3. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EACH SPECIALIZED SCHOOL

Michigan Connections Academy (MICA) is a free online public school, also known as a cyber charter school, serving students in grades K–12 throughout Michigan. The school, which opened for the 2010-11 school year, is authorized by Ferris State University Charter Schools Office. MICA gives students the flexibility to learn at home with a curriculum that meets rigorous state education standards. At MICA, students, teachers, and Learning Coaches are all partners in the Personalized Performance Learning® (PPL) approach. Together, they develop an instructional plan tailored to each student's academic abilities. The program and goals are adjusted as needed to ensure the student is learning and growing at MICA. Teachers, students, and Learning Coaches monitor the plan and the student's progress throughout the year, aided by MICA's powerful Education Management System (EMS) known as Connexus®.

The school's mission is to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program featuring:

- A challenging, K–12 curriculum developed by leading education experts.
- Instruction from highly qualified and state-certified teachers.
- Support from trained counselors, principals, and administrative staff.
- Dozens of clubs and activities that foster social development and academic growth.
- An involved community of students and their families.

MICA also offers Dual Enrollment, a program that allows eligible students to take a class at a local college or university as part of their regular school day. Students will receive credit from the college as well as Michigan Connections Academy. Admission to the program requires meeting additional criteria.

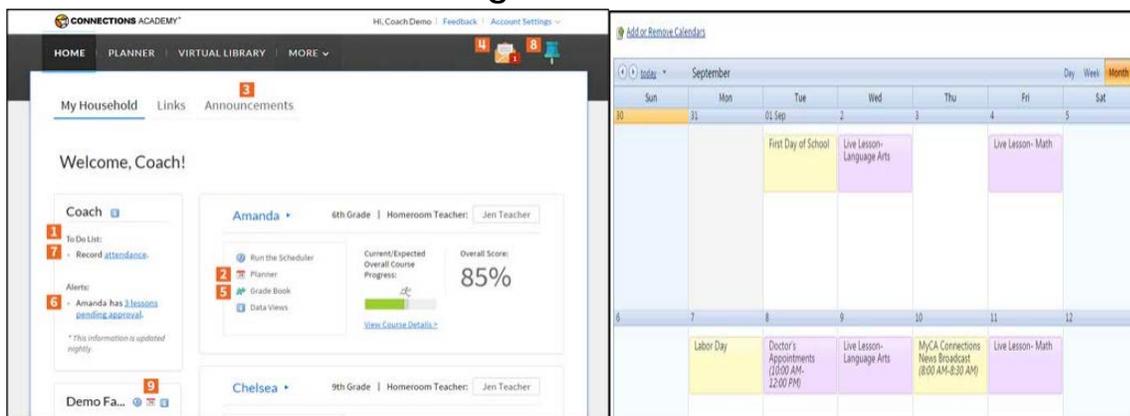
### 4. IDENTIFY HOW TO ACCESS A COPY OF THE CORE CURRICULUM, A DESCRIPTION OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION, AND AN EXPLANATION OF THE VARIANCES FROM THE STATE'S MODEL

MICA's curriculum and program information can be found in the Connections Academy Program Guide. The most current version of the [Program Guide](#) is also available by request from the school's website.

MICA is a virtual school, so rather than working in a traditional brick and mortar classroom setting, students, parents/Learning Coaches, and teachers all access curriculum and communicate with one another via Connections Academy's secure education management system known as Connexus.

Connexus is one of the most comprehensive, reliable, and user- friendly online learning systems available. This proprietary system, designed from the ground up to meet the exact requirements of the Connections instructional model and the needs of our students and families, brings the school right to students 24 hours a day from any Internet connection. Connexus is powerful, yet very intuitive and user-friendly. It is also comprehensive, allowing students, parents, and educators to access everything they need from one place.

## Tools for Parents and Learning Coaches



From their personalized home page, parents can:

- View all students' schedules, assignments, and lessons.
- Adjust the learning schedule for students in grades K–8.
- Monitor students' progress using the online grade book.
- Record attendance.
- Communicate with teachers and other families via our secure WebMail and message boards.
- Rate the Connections Academy learning experience, at any time.

## Tools for Students

The student's individualized home page helps students communicate, organize, and complete and submit assignments. From the homepage, they can:

View daily and monthly schedules and access lessons.

- Monitor progress through the online grade book (for students in grade 6 and above).
- Communicate with teachers and students through WebMail and message boards.
- Access many online learning resources.

- Participate in clubs and activities.
- View a directory of students.

### Tools for Teachers and Administrators

Connexus is used extensively by teachers and administrators. Some of the many tools for teachers allow them to:

- Conduct lessons live over the Internet with LiveLesson® sessions.
- Track student progress.
- Review and grade online assignments and assessments.
- Communicate quickly and effectively with students, parents, and Learning Coaches.
- Keep track of student and family interactions.
- Modify learning to meet students' needs

Because much of the learning and record-keeping is done online through Connexus, school administrators can monitor the effectiveness of instruction and assure students are making progress, every day.

### 5. THE AGGREGATE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS FOR ANY LOCAL COMPETENCY TESTS OR NATIONALLY NORMED ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

During the 2018 - 2019 and 2019 - 2020, students in grades 2 – 8 took the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) – Measure of Academic Progress (MAP®) assessment in Math and Reading.

Performance on each test window for the MAP assessment is expressed as the mean RIT score at each grade level. To measure Satisfactory Progress on this assessment we use the mean normative RIT scores and the expected growth measures provided by the testing company, NWEA. This is defined as students who make the expected RIT gain score from pretest to posttest or who score one standard deviation above the mean RIT score on the posttest. This analysis only includes students who tested within the testing window.

#### 2018 - 19 MAP Results – Math

| Grade | Mean Math Pretest RIT Score | Mean Math Posttest RIT Score | % with Satisfactory Progress |
|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2     | 181.2                       | 190.6                        | 37.29%                       |
| 3     | 191.7                       | 203.3                        | 51.22%                       |
| 4     | 202.7                       | 210.0                        | 44.29%                       |
| 5     | 210.9                       | 218.5                        | 39.78%                       |
| 6     | 212.9                       | 218                          | 44.88%                       |
| 7     | 221.9                       | 225.8                        | 46.58%                       |
| 8     | 227.1                       | 229.1                        | 44.67%                       |

### 2019 - 20 MAP Results – Math

| Grade | Mean Math Pretest RIT Score | Mean Math Posttest RIT Score | % with Satisfactory Progress |
|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2     | 186.8                       | 197.1                        | 33.9%                        |
| 3     | 188.3                       | 199.3                        | 47.6%                        |
| 4     | 202.8                       | 213.3                        | 40.0%                        |
| 5     | 209.1                       | 216.0                        | 37.6%                        |
| 6     | 214.7                       | 221.5                        | 44.9%                        |
| 7     | 219.3                       | 223.7                        | 43.8%                        |
| 8     | 227.7                       | 231.5                        | 41.3%                        |

### 2018 - 19 MAP Results – Reading

| Grade | Mean Reading Pretest RIT Score | Mean Reading Posttest RIT Score | % with Satisfactory Progress |
|-------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2     | 180.1                          | 189.0                           | 35.6%                        |
| 3     | 191.3                          | 199.9                           | 47.6%                        |
| 4     | 202.6                          | 205.9                           | 45.7%                        |
| 5     | 210.8                          | 211.8                           | 51.6%                        |
| 6     | 212.4                          | 215.8                           | 44.9%                        |
| 7     | 219.5                          | 218.2                           | 48.3%                        |
| 8     | 219.9                          | 220.1                           | 55.7%                        |

### 2019-20 MAP Results - Reading

| Grade | Mean Reading Pretest RIT Score | Mean Reading Posttest RIT Score | % with Satisfactory Progress |
|-------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2     | 177.4                          | 190.8                           | 30.5%                        |
| 3     | 190.8                          | 202.3                           | 47.6%                        |
| 4     | 202.6                          | 210.8                           | 40.0%                        |
| 5     | 208.2                          | 211.7                           | 46.2%                        |
| 6     | 215.7                          | 218.8                           | 44.1%                        |
| 7     | 218.2                          | 220.8                           | 39.3%                        |
| 8     | 223.5                          | 226.7                           | 51.0%                        |

6. IDENTIFY THE NUMBER AND PERCENT OF STUDENTS REPRESENTED BY PARENTS AT PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

2018 – 2019 School Year: 1495 (95.4%)  
2019 – 2020 School Year: 1438 (95.5%)

7. FOR HIGH SCHOOLS, ONLY ALSO REPORT ON THE FOLLOWING:

a. THE NUMBER AND PERCENT OF POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENTS (DUAL ENROLLMENT)

2018 – 2019 School Year: 34  
2019 – 2020 School Year: 29

b. THE NUMBER OF COLLEGE EQUIVALENT COURSES OFFERED (AP/IB)

2018 – 2019 School Year: 17  
2019 – 2020 School Year: 17

c. THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN COLLEGE EQUIVALENT COURSES (AP/IB)

2018 – 2019 School Year: 14  
2019 – 2020 School Year: 16

d. THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS RECEIVING A SCORE LEADING TO COLLEGE CREDIT

2018 – 2019 School Year: 2  
2019 – 2020 School Year: 1

Michigan Connections Academy continues to provide an educational opportunity and alternative to the students in the State of Michigan. Our mission is to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards. We are a high-quality, high-tech, high-touch “school without walls” that brings out the best in every student. We appreciate the continued support of our parents, staff, and greater school community in this effort.

Sincerely,

*Bryan Klochack*

Bryan Klochack  
Superintendent  
Michigan Connections Academy