

# Sliding into Oblivion? Michigan's History and Social Studies Teaching Preparation Programs since 2010

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Katie Newman, 40, had wanted to become a teacher since she was a child. She began her career soon after graduating from college and loved her job teaching high school social studies. But after 16 years, the last five of which she had spent at a private coed Catholic school near her home in Seattle, she decided to leave her job and is now a full-time parent to her two children, who are 3 and 6. Contributing to her decision to leave were feelings of burnout and a constantly changing teaching structure, as well as a covenant containing anti-LGBTQ positions that the staff was required to sign, Ms. Newman said. "I feel like I had to completely redo how I taught several times: first to do it fully remote, then to do a hybrid system." She also expressed concern at the way that teachers' work in the classroom was being attacked through laws targeting critical race theory in the classroom and book bans in schools.<sup>1</sup>

Beau Thompson, 63, taught for 30 years with a maximum salary of \$58,000 in Texas. As most teachers, he held a multitude of titles including social studies teacher. He left social studies teaching because he thought leaders lacked focus on learning and teachers had lost autonomy. He was particularly concerned that he was limited in discussing race, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Civil War. Thompson turned his skills of making history interesting for his students into an acting career. While he misses the kids, he says he "wouldn't go back for any amount of money."<sup>2</sup>

Reports of alarming teacher shortages in Michigan's schools have become commonplace since the COVID pandemic. Describing efforts made by the state legislature to address this shortage, a September 2023 *Bridge Michigan* article explained the state's decision to loosen pension and healthcare restrictions for retired teachers and make it easier for them to return to the classroom. The article noted "Grow Your Own" programs where paraprofessionals in schools are paid to pursue teacher certification. The state has reduced requirements for substitute teachers and lowered barriers on out-of-state teachers' access to Michigan teaching positions. In a May 2024 address, State Superintendent of Education Michael F. Rice highlighted additional teacher recruitment efforts, such as the Michigan Future Educator Fellowships, which offer \$10,000 scholarships to up to 2,500 future educators, and the Michigan Future Educator stipends which provide \$9,600 for student teachers. The state has also supported Teach for America teacher retention and training programs as well as approved several other alternative certification programs, such as Michigan Teachers of Tomorrow.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Sejla Rizvic, "Teachers, Facing Increasing Levels of Stress, Are Burned Out," *New York Times*, 13 March 2023 <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/13/education/teachers-quitting-burnout.html>

2 Elizabeth Heubeck, "Behind the Stats: 3 Former Teachers Talk about Why They Left," *Education Week*, 18 April 2023 <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/behind-the-stats-3-former-teachers-talk-about-why-they-left/2023/04>

3 Isabel Lohman, "To Help Michigan Teacher Shortage, Lawmakers May Ease Retirement Rules," *Bridge Michigan*, 13 November 2023 <https://www.bridgemi.com/talent-education/help-michigan-teacher-shortage-lawmakers-may-ease-retirement-rules>; "State Superintendent Rice Highlights Teacher Educator Programs and State Efforts Addressing Teacher Shortage," Michigan Department of

University and college preparation programs in history and social studies have faced significant headwinds in preparing future educators including stiff competition from alternative certification programs in recent years. As this essay will explain, public and private college and university preparation programs across Michigan are facing dramatic declines in the numbers of students. A survey of five institutions and careful analysis of Michigan Test for Teacher Certification results highlights the challenges faced by history and social studies education programs within the broader context of teacher preparation in Michigan and beyond. Michigan's traditional teacher programs must respond and provide clear evidence for why their higher costs and longer completion times are worthwhile to individuals who are interested in becoming teachers and the schools that hire these teachers.

Although this competition in social studies and history teacher preparation is relatively new in Michigan, the modern era of alternative teacher certification emerged during the 1980s and its growth accelerated after passage of No Child Left Behind in 2002, which reauthorized federal involvement in state certification requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. In 1983, eight states offered alternative certification affecting just 0.06 percent of teachers. By 2016, 47 states did so and somewhere between 20 and 40 percent of teachers had pursued this route. Early on, alternative certification was generally associated with hiring practices for urban or rural school districts, but not suburban districts.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to addressing a growing teacher shortage, many early advocates of alternative certification believed it would help to diversify the teaching profession in terms of age, gender, and race. Ray Legler's study of alternative certification in the Midwest in 2002 found that new teachers were somewhat older than those who came out of traditional teacher education programs but not any more racially diverse. Citing studies from the late 1990s and early 2000s, Carlyn Ludlow noted that alternative certification programs had not diversified new teachers in terms of age or gender, but they did produce slightly more non-white teachers. James W. Fraser and Lauren Lefty's survey of major alternative certification programs found that one of the largest and oldest, Teach for America, prepared nearly all white and upper-middle class new teachers from its founding in 1989 through the early 2010s, but claimed to recruit increasingly non-white and less affluent young people starting in the late 2010s.<sup>5</sup>

Studies that focus on the performance of alternatively-certified teachers have noted some troubling trends. Linda Darling-Hammond has been especially adamant that alternative routes result in less prepared teachers. She emphasizes that "fully prepared and certified teachers are generally better rated and more successful with students than teachers without this preparation."<sup>6</sup> She found that traditional teacher education programs are especially important in conveying pedagogical knowledge to prospective teachers. Scholars have continued to note how the alternative programs often produce teachers who are not as well prepared as those who complete traditional programs. A 2023 study of Texas, the state with the largest teacher workforce in the nation, found that alternative certification programs produced a majority of its new teachers. The authors pointed out that the alternative programs, especially the for-profit ones, had much lower completion and retention rates than

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Education (MDE) press release, 3 May 2024 <https://www.michigan.gov/mde/news-and-information/press-releases/2024/05/03/state-superintendent-rice-highlights-state-efforts-addressing-teacher-shortage>

4 Ray Legler, "The Impact of Alternative Certification in the Midwest: Policy Issues," *North Central Regional Educational Laboratory Policy Issues* No. 12 (November 2002), 2-17 ERIC No. ED475775; Frederick M. Hess, "Revitalizing Teacher Education by Revisiting our Assumptions about Teaching," *Journal of Teacher Education* 60, no. 5 (2009), 450-457; Carlyn Ludlow, "Alternative Certification Pathways: Filling a Gap?" *Education and Urban Society* 45, no. 4 (2013), 441, 446; James W. Fraser and Lauren Lefty, *Teaching Teachers: Changing Paths and Enduring Debates* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018); Christopher C. Martell, "Introduction," in *Social Studies Teacher Education: Critical Issues and Current Perspectives*, ed. Christopher C. Martell (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc., 2018), 3-4. The statistics on alternative certification come from Fraser and Lefty, p. 24. Also see Melissa Tooley, "National Scan of Pathways to Becoming a First-Time Teacher," *New America* (April 2023) ERIC No. ED627948 <http://newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/national-scan-of-pathways-to-becoming-a-first-time-teacher/>

5 Legler, "The Impact of Alternative Certification in the Midwest: Policy Issues," 11; Ludlow, "Alternative Certification Pathways: Filling a Gap?," 449; and Fraser and Lefty, *Teaching Teachers*, 30.

6 Linda Darling-Hammond's perspectives are quoted in "How Teacher Education Matters," *Journal of Teacher Education* 51, no. 3 (May/June 2000), 166-173.

traditional programs.<sup>7</sup> Despite these findings, the appeal of these programs has not abated and criticisms of traditional teacher preparation programs have not subsided.

These broader trends in teacher preparation provide the context to understand the changing landscape of teacher preparation in Michigan. Research surveys confirm the media reports of dire teacher shortages. In September 2023, Public Policy Associates, a public policy research, development, and evaluation firm headquartered in Lansing, Michigan, released its findings on statewide K-12 staffing concerns. Based on interviews with 67 Michigan district school leaders, the report emphasized a “serious deterioration in the K-12 labor market in 2022-23.” The district leaders testified that the number of teacher vacancies had more than doubled between 2019-2020 and 2022-2023. Many of them said the quality of teacher candidates available was much or somewhat less in 2023 compared to what it had been in 2019.<sup>8</sup> In a January 2024 report by the Educational Policy Innovation Collaborative at Michigan State University, the authors found that the percentage of teachers appropriately credentialed for the courses they taught dropped between 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. Attrition rates in 2022-2023 exceeded those of any year in Michigan since 2012-2013.<sup>9</sup>

To explain the vacancies, media coverage has focused considerable attention on teachers, such as Katie Newman and Beau Thompson, who have left the profession. Currently, 10,000 Michigan teachers retire or leave the profession each year while fewer than 5,000 join the teaching ranks.<sup>10</sup> This has led to a falling number of total certified teachers. Michigan Department of Education (MDE) data shows that in 2017-2018 the number of valid teaching certificate holders was 194,335. Of that total, 73,305 (37.7 percent) held teaching positions. Five years later in 2022-2023, the total number of valid certificates had dropped to 167,365 with 83,934 (50.2 percent) holding teaching positions. The uptick in relative overall employment is encouraging, but the drop in total certificates is alarming.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to teachers leaving the profession and those with certification not pursuing or receiving teaching employment, another important reason for the shortage is the decline in the number of candidates in Michigan’s public and private colleges and universities’ teacher preparation programs. The national context as well as Michigan’s situation are important to keep in mind. The number of students who completed bachelor’s degrees in education declined steeply across the United States from the early 1970s until around 2015. In 1970-71, education degrees constituted 21 percent of bachelor’s degrees nationwide. This percentage tumbled until 2015-16 when it was 4.6 percent.<sup>12</sup> Between 2009 and 2014, teacher preparation enrollments declined by 35 percent and 23 percent fewer preparation candidates completed their programs. Because of a significant gap between supply and

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7 Jennifer A. Bland, Steven K. Wojcikiewicz, Linda Darling-Hammond, and Wesley Wei, “Strengthening Pathways into the Teaching Profession in Texas: Challenges and Opportunities,” *Learning Policy Institute* (February 2023), 2-3 ERIC No. ED630218 <http://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/pathways-into-teaching-profession-texas>

8 Chris Torres, Nathan Burroughs, Rebecca Frausel, Jacqueline Gardner, Dirk Zuschlag, and Calandra Reichel, *Final Report: The State of the Educator Workforce in Michigan: An In-Depth Look at K-12 Staffing Challenges* (Lansing: Public Policy Associates, 2023), 30-35. Quoted on p. 30. [https://mialliance.com/app/uploads/2023/10/Education-Workforce-Study-Report\\_092823.pdf](https://mialliance.com/app/uploads/2023/10/Education-Workforce-Study-Report_092823.pdf)

9 Tara Kilbride, Salem Rogers, and Jennifer Moriarty, *Michigan Teacher Shortage Study: 2024 Report* (Lansing: Education Policy Innovation Collaborative, 2024), 22, 30-31. [https://epicedpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Teacher-Shortage-Study-2024\\_Final\\_12-20-23.pdf](https://epicedpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Teacher-Shortage-Study-2024_Final_12-20-23.pdf)

10 Sneda Dhandapani, “Q&A: Michigan Teacher of the Year fears ‘mass exodus’ of instructors,” *Bridge Magazine*, 3 July 2024 <https://www.bridgemi.com/talent-education/qa-michigan-teacher-year-fears-mass-exodus-instructors>; Nick Rubeck, “What We Get Wrong About the Teacher Shortage,” *The Michigan Daily*, 30 May 2023 <https://www.michigandaily.com/opinion/what-we-get-wrong-about-the-teacher-shortage/>; John Gallagher, “Solving the Quandary: 3 Root Causes of Michigan’s Teacher Shortage (and What Could Fix Them),” *Crain’s Detroit Business*, 28 November 2022 <https://www.crainsdetroit.com/crains-forum-teacher-shortage/michigans-teacher-shortage-resists-simple-solutions>

11 MDE, Educator Workforce Data Report <https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/ed-serv/educator-workforce-research/educator-workforce-data-report>

12 “Bachelor’s Degrees Conferred by Postsecondary Institutions,” Table 322.10, National Center for Education Statistics <https://nces.ed.gov>

demand, Leib Sutchter and Linda Darling-Hammond's 2019 analysis estimated that 109,000 uncertified teachers were employed in schools in 2017-2018.<sup>13</sup>

Although much reduced compared to forty years earlier, since the mid-2010s, the proportion of education degrees nationwide has largely remained steady. In 2020-21, it was 4.3 percent. Michigan's situation generally parallels the national story. In 2012-13, education degrees made up 6.1 percent of all undergraduate degrees in Michigan compared to 5.9 percent nationwide. Michigan's percentage fell to 3.6 percent in 2017-18 and, by 2020-21, was 3.7 percent compared to 4.3 percent nationwide. The decline in new teacher candidates is especially dramatic when one considers that over this period the total number of undergraduate students nationwide jumped from 7.4 million to over 17 million from the early 1970s to 2010s. One of the major contributing factors to the post-1970s decline was the fact that women have had many more career options available to them in recent years.<sup>14</sup>

While education degrees across the nation, including Michigan, have declined over the past half-century, the new teacher situation is more perplexing when one looks at the most recent MDE data. The total number of initial teacher certificates in the state has actually increased in recent years. In 2017-18, there were a total of 3,792 new certificates. This increased to 4,518 by 2022-2023. While the total has risen, the relative number of teachers who received their certifications in Michigan's public and private universities has steadily declined. The number of initial teaching endorsements granted by public and private institutions with teacher preparation in Michigan dropped from 2,593 (68.4 percent) in 2017-18 to 2,516 (55.7 percent) in 2022-23. Out-of-state certifications have also declined slightly. The percentage of out-of-state initial certifications dropped from 29.2 in 2017-18 to 28.9 in 2022-23.<sup>15</sup>

Alternative credentialing is primarily responsible for the overall increase in number of teaching certifications. Michigan's current provisions for alternative licensing passed in 2009 (MCL 380.1531i) and require eligible candidates to hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree, have a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale, and pass a criminal background check. The state requires alternative credentialing programs to include a minimum of 12 credit hours in child development or child psychology, family and community relationships, diverse learners, and instructional strategies as well as a field-based experience in a classroom setting. Before receiving their initial license, successful applicants must also pass the Michigan Test for Teachers Certification (MTTC). Michigan's current list of approved alternative preparation providers includes Davenport University, Detroit Public Schools Community District on the Rise Academy, New Paradigm for Education, Professional Innovators in Teaching, Schoolcraft College, University of Michigan-Flint, University of Michigan-Michigan Alternate Route to Certification, and Michigan Teachers of Tomorrow. Initial teaching certifications for candidates from alternative programs leaped from 1.7 percent in 2017-2018 to 12.3 percent in 2022-2023. In particular, the Michigan Teachers of Tomorrow (MTT) alternative preparation provider has grown from providing a total of only 4 initial teacher certifications in 2017-2018 to 323 in 2022-2023. That number made MTT the single largest provider of new teacher certifications in the state.<sup>16</sup>

Although the total number of alternate certificate recipients statewide is still much fewer than the total of traditional certificate recipients, the number of alternate certification enrollees has exploded. MTT's rapid

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13 Leib Sutchter and Linda Darling-Hammond, "Understanding Teacher Shortages: An Analysis of Teacher Supply and Demand in the United States," *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 27, no. 35 (April 8, 2019), 1-36. The statistics on teacher preparation enrollments in 2009 and 2014 and uncertified teachers in 2017-2018 are found on page 4.

14 "Bachelor's Degrees Conferred by Postsecondary Institutions," Table 322.10; and "Bachelor's Degrees Conferred by Postsecondary Institutions, by Field of Study and State or Jurisdiction," Table 319.30, National Center for Education Statistics <https://nces.ed.gov>

15 MDE, Educator Workforce Data Report <https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/ed-serv/educator-workforce-research/educator-workforce-data-report>

16 MDE websites: <https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/ed-serv/ed-cert/cert-guidance/becoming-a-teacher/alternative-routes-to-teacher-cert-or-endorsement>; and <https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/ed-serv/ed-cert/cert-guidance/becoming-a-teacher/alternative-routes-to-teacher-cert-or-endorsement/approved-alternative-route-providers>

emergence has made it the single most important competitive challenge to college and university teacher preparation in the state. Founded in 2005, Teachers of Tomorrow is available in eight states—Arizona, Florida, Indiana, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas. Their website claims they have certified over 80,000 teachers nationwide to date. In Michigan, the program is available to anyone who holds a bachelor's degree, has a 2.95 overall GPA, and has passed the MTTC. Students who meet these qualifications can take their entire education coursework online and self-paced for a total base rate of \$5,899. After candidates are hired into teaching positions, they owe an additional \$5,600 to MTT. However, if they do not receive teaching employment, they pay no additional fee. MTT also provides a list of its eligible teaching candidates to any school district that requests it.<sup>17</sup>

Michigan's teacher certification exam is another factor likely contributing to Michigan's teacher vacancies. In addition to holding a bachelor's degree in a subject or subjects that are eligible for teacher licensing, teacher candidates throughout the United States must pass a state-approved test to demonstrate subject knowledge and skills. Michigan is one of only four states—the others are Arizona, Florida, and Illinois—that does not use Educational Testing Service's Praxis II for this purpose. The Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) developed by Pearson is used instead. Compared to the Praxis II subject tests, which have ample and thoroughly developed subject study guides, the MTTC does not provide this same level of assistance. Students who take the MTTC must rely on reviewing their class materials and examining the few sample questions provided by Pearson to prepare for taking the subject exams. In the three-year period from 2015 to 2018, the initial pass rate across all MTTC subjects was 79.4 percent. Because students are allowed to take the MTTC subject tests as many times as they like (and pay \$129 each time they do so), the cumulative pass rate for all subjects from 2015 to 2018 was 89.4 percent. This means that just over 10 percent of eligible college graduates had not passed the MTTC. The cumulative pass rate in some of the subjects is much worse than 89.4 percent. While Social Studies had an initial pass rate of 74.5 percent and a cumulative pass rate of 90.4 percent, History had an initial pass rate of 50.3 percent and a cumulative pass rate of 66.9 percent of test takers from 2015-2018. In those years, a total of 517 candidates took the History test, but only 346 had passed it. Those numbers dipped to a 64.6 percent cumulative pass rate—204 out of 316 test takers—in 2018-2021.

The history numbers ticked up by the 2020-2023 period with 402 taking the test with 267 passing it eventually at a 66.4 percent rate. In the 2018-2021 period, Social Studies had an initial pass rate of 71.3 percent and an 88.4 percent cumulative pass rate—511 or 578 test takers—which was also down from 2015-2018. The number of social studies test takers continued to grow significantly in the 2020-2023 period with 1,008 test takers but both the initial pass rate (66.3 percent) and 3-year cumulative pass rate dropped (83.7 percent) meaning there were 844 who passed the test in those years (See Figures 1 and 2).<sup>18</sup>

While the contribution of initial teaching certifications from Michigan's public and private institutions has declined rapidly, the erosion in the number of students pursuing social studies and history certification at Michigan's traditional teacher preparation institutions is even more dramatic than the national or statewide numbers suggest. The authors of this essay and many of our colleagues around the state have observed this steep decline first hand over the past decade and a half. As members of the Michigan Council for History Education, the authors encouraged the organization to sponsor a survey of statewide history and social studies university and college educators to gain a deeper understanding of the problem as well as possible avenues of reform. Based on these sources of information, we found there was an overall decline in teacher candidates even as there was a recent slight uptick in candidates at some state institutions.

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17 MDE, Office of Educator Excellence, *Educator Workforce Data Report, 2022* (Lansing: MDE, 2022), 73-74; and Michigan Teachers of Tomorrow: <https://www.teachersoftomorrow.org/michigan/>

18 MDE, Office of Educator Excellence, *Michigan Test for Teacher Certification, Three-Year Cumulative Report, 2015-2018* (Lansing: MDE, 21 December 2018); MDE, Office of Educator Excellence, *Michigan Test for Teacher Certification, Three-Year Cumulative Report, 2018-2021* (Lansing: MDE, 15 December 2021); and MDE, *Educator Workforce Data Report, Preparation: Tests for Certification* <https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/ed-serv/educator-workforce-research/educator-workforce-data-report>

Figure 3 highlights the social studies education enrollment trends at five Michigan public and private institutions from 2010 to 2023.<sup>19</sup> Over the period from 2010 to 2020, enrollment in the five institutions' social studies education programs dropped. This is especially evident between 2010 and 2015—comparable to the overall situation for education degrees nationally and in Michigan—and, to a somewhat lesser degree, between 2015 and 2020. However, since 2020, enrollments have increased at Grand Valley State University, Central Michigan University, and Calvin University. The University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and Western Michigan University experienced drop-offs since 2020. WMU's decline was due in part to the closing of its undergraduate secondary education certification programs and substitution of a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program. Thus far, the MAT has not attracted many students. For example, in 2024, just two students are enrolled in Western's MAT in social studies education.

Figure 4 summarizes the history education enrollment trends at the five institutions over 2010 to 2023. In this certification area, declines have generally continued since 2020, except in the case of Grand Valley State University. Part of the reason for the erosion in history education is because the MDE has altered certification requirements in social studies. Beginning in May 2023, the state approved new certification areas in Social Studies, grades 5-9, and Social Studies, grades 7-12. At the same time, individual disciplines in the social sciences, specifically history, economics, geography, and civics, became optional as certification areas for grades 7-12 teacher licensing in Michigan. Endorsements in history, geography, civics, and economics may now be earned by candidates only after they have completed the requirements for the social studies endorsement.<sup>20</sup>

Figure 5 combines the enrollment in both social studies and history education for the five institutions. Over the 13-year period from 2010 and 2023, all five institutions lost enrollment in their social studies and history education programs. The declines ranged from 33.5 percent at Grand Valley State University to 94.1 percent at Western Michigan University. For context, Figure 6 provides information from the MDE on the total number of initial teaching certificates provided by the five institutions. Aside from Grand Valley State University and the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, declines are noticeable at three of the five institutions between 2017-2018 and 2022-2023, but they were much less severe overall than was the case for their social studies and history programs.<sup>21</sup>

Figure 5 clearly suggests that the steepest decline in social studies and history enrollments occurred between 2010 and 2015. Enrollment continued to decline at a lesser rate between 2015 and 2020 with the exception of Western Michigan University. These declines partly reflect the downward trend in enrollments among many of the state's colleges and universities in the aftermath of the Great Recession. Between 2010 and 2020, Michigan's college and university enrollment declined by 33 percent.<sup>22</sup> However, during the recent COVID-impacted period between 2020 and 2023, enrollments actually tracked upward at Grand Valley State University, Central Michigan University, and Calvin University. The University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and Western Michigan University were the exceptions. The increases over the recent time span were moderate at the three schools, but they suggest that there may be some stability in students' interests in teaching social studies.

Graduate programs for secondary certification are available at four of the five institutions. In each case, students admitted to these graduate certification programs must hold a bachelor's degree in history or social studies. The University of Michigan-Ann Arbor offers a MAT for secondary schools that requires a full year of courses totaling 36 credit hours. This master's program has been relatively stable over the 2010 to 2023 period,

19 The MCHE survey questions were sent to all private and public colleges and universities in Michigan that offer history and social studies certification. The five institutions highlighted in this essay were the ones that responded to the survey.

20 MDE, *Standards for the Preparation of Middle Grades (5-9) and High School (7-12) Social Studies Teachers*, approved 9 May 2023, p. 29. [https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-media/Project/Websites/mde/educator\\_services/prep/standards/social-studies-teacher-preparation-standards-MG-HS.pdf?rev=d285062f3c814971aa7d0bdd7c8d928c&hash=5101D3A83CBFA1F0D695CD26F5784D50](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-media/Project/Websites/mde/educator_services/prep/standards/social-studies-teacher-preparation-standards-MG-HS.pdf?rev=d285062f3c814971aa7d0bdd7c8d928c&hash=5101D3A83CBFA1F0D695CD26F5784D50)

21 MDE, *Educator Workforce Data Report* <https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/ed-serv/educator-workforce-research/educator-workforce-data-report>

22 Melanie Hanson, "College Enrollment and Student Demographic Statistics," EducationData.org, 21 December 2024. <https://educationdata.org/college-enrollment-statistics>

though it lost students between 2020 and 2023. In 2010, it had 10 enrollees, 15 in 2015, 14 in 2020, and eight in 2023. Grand Valley State University offers a graduate teacher certification that enrolls a few students. The program requires 27 credit hours including a full-year student teaching placement. Western Michigan University's MAT program, started in 2020, requires 35-36 credit hours including a full-year student teaching placement. From 2021 to 2024, a total of nine students have pursued the MAT in social studies. Calvin University has just started a MAT program. It has fewer than five students currently. Because students in these programs already have content area preparation, nearly all the course work in the MAT programs is centered on education topics. Given the teacher shortages across the state, graduates of these MAT programs are likely to find teaching employment. Yet the small size of each program means that they will not do much to help address the overall teacher shortage.

The five institutions have modified their programs' curricula in various ways beyond offering master's programs over the past few years. Curriculum changes at the undergraduate level have been common. For instance, Grand Valley State modified its social studies major to include more content courses in history, geography, political science, and economics at a more advanced level. Western Michigan, while no longer offering undergraduate secondary-level certification, added a new social studies major that provides a foundation in all four content areas to help prepare students who might consider applying for admission to the new MAT program. Both Grand Valley and Central Michigan are planning changes in their social studies majors to adjust to the new state teacher preparation standards. Calvin recently changed its curriculum university-wide from three to four credit courses, which meant that it could no longer require students to take both semesters of World History. Students are now allowed to choose one or the other half of the world history sequence.

Four of the five institutions surveyed are involved in or plan to start additional outreach programs meant to address the teacher shortage. At the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, faculty in the teacher certification program are working with community colleges to bring students to campus who have an interest in teaching. They are also launching an initiative to recruit faculty in the arts and sciences to be "champions of teaching" as a way to spotlight the importance of teacher preparation. Grand Valley State University, Western Michigan University, and Central Michigan University are all partnering with the statewide "Grow Your Own" initiative to encourage paraprofessionals already in the schools to pursue certification in a content area. Grand Valley State has partnered with Intermediate School Districts in Kent, Ottawa, and Muskegon Counties in a West Michigan Teachers Collaborative to help people with or without bachelor's degrees or in need of additional credentialing pursuing a career path in teaching. In the fall of 2023, up to 300 applicants were chosen for the program. Successful candidates receive tuition, fees, and supplies and are eligible for stipends of up to \$20,000. Central Michigan University is partnering with area schools in a "Talent Together" program that is similar to "Grow Your Own." They also have developed a pipeline with six nearby community colleges to allow students to take coursework toward a teaching degree through online course work and help them find student teaching placements within a 60-mile radius of their community college partner.<sup>23</sup>

History and social studies education faculty are aware that attracting new teachers may require rethinking about how to prepare students for the realities of the classroom. The importance of content knowledge and disciplinary literacy for history and social studies teachers cannot be disputed. The 2023 Michigan Standards for the Preparation of Middle Grades (5-9) and High School (7-12) Social Studies Teachers establish what teachers need to know, able to do, and believe to be well prepared beginning teachers in the disciplines.<sup>24</sup> This includes focusing on disciplinary definitions in the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework. Section D specifically emphasizes disciplinary concepts in social studies disciplines that need to be "caught" as much as taught through

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23 "West Michigan Teaching Collaborative Creates Opportunities for Educators and New Teachers," 27 September 2023. <https://www.kentisd.org/pub/news/posts/1830>; Talent Together website <https://mitalenttogether.org/>; "A Systemic Solution to the Michigan Teacher Shortage," *Michigan Education Magazine*, Spring 2022 <https://marsal.umich.edu/magazine/systemic-solution-michigan-teacher-shortage>

24 MDE, Specialty Program Standards <https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/ed-serv/ed-cert/educator-preparation-providers/specialty-program-standards>

college level content coursework.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to content course requirements, teacher preparation programs typically require a methods course for teaching history and social studies. Methods course instructors have long struggled to provide appropriate instructional advice that goes beyond theory. The concept of pedagogical concept knowledge (PCK), which Lee Shulman first articulated in 1986, has been the major influence among history and social studies methods instructors for much of the past forty years. As Shulman explained, PCK is a “particular form of content knowledge that embodies the aspects of content most germane to its teachability.”<sup>26</sup> PCK reflects instructors’ attempts to blend both deep content knowledge and wisdom about how the teaching aspects of this knowledge can be distilled to help new teachers understand their craft.<sup>27</sup> Considerable work among history educators from the 1990s through the early 21st century has focused on identifying history’s specific PCK. Much of the research underlying PCK in history stemmed from participant-observer studies of grade-school history teachers and their students. Sam Wineburg’s *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past*, published in 2001, inspired many other history educators to encapsulate PCK that could be taught to pre-service teachers. Indeed, the phrase historical thinking has since often been used as the shorthand phrase for PCK in history education.<sup>28</sup> For instance, University of Northern Colorado history educator Fritz Fischer’s “History’s Habits of Mind,” which elaborates on historical thinking skills, is an important teacher tool that is available on the National Council for History Education’s website.<sup>29</sup>

Over the past decade, many history and social studies educators have called for a closer alignment between pre-service methods course material and classroom teachers’ practices. Referred to as core practices (CP), the most recent emphases in methods instruction focus on connections between the theoretical emphases of teaching standards, C3, and PCK and their practical applications in actual classrooms.<sup>30</sup> CP practitioners advocate for methods courses taught in close alignment with students’ field experiences so that there is a stronger alignment of methods with classroom practices. In these field placements, preservice teachers are asked “to observe, critically evaluate, and practice particular CPs.”<sup>31</sup> Considerable attention focuses on identifying and refining the most important CPs.<sup>32</sup> One of the most often cited history CPs is discussion leadership, particularly text-based discussion. Other CPs for history instruction include using historical questions, selecting and adapting historical sources, modeling and supporting historical reading skills, and modeling and supporting historical writing.<sup>33</sup>

25 See, for instance, Christopher C. Martell, ed., *Social Studies Teacher Education: Critical Issues and Current Perspectives* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc., 2018); and Bob Bain, Arthur Chapman, Alison Kitson, and Tamara Shreiner, ed., *History Education and Historical Inquiry* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc., 2024).

26 Lee S. Shulman, “Those Who Understand: Knowledge Growth in Teaching,” *Educational Researcher* 15, no. 2 (1986), 4-14, quoted on p. 9

27 Shulman, “Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform,” *Harvard Educational Review* 57, no. 1 (1987), 1-22.

28 Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001).

29 <https://ncheteach.org/conference/history-of-habits-of-mind/>. See Fritz Fischer, “The Historian as Translator: Historical Thinking, The Rosetta Stone of History Education,” *Historically Speaking* 12, no. 3 (2011), 15-17.

30 For an excellent overview of recent work in the field of history and social studies core practices, see Peter Jay Lightning, “What Do Social Studies Methods Instructors Know and Do?: Teacher Educators’ PCK for Facilitating Historical Discussions,” *Theory and Research in Social Education* 51, no. 1 (2023), 72-99. Another useful overview is Anthony Clarke, Valerie Triggs, and Wendy Nielsen, “Cooperating Teacher Participation in Teacher Education: A Review of the Literature,” *Review of Educational Research* 84, no. 2 (2014), 163-202.

31 Todd Dinkelman and Alexander Cuenca, “A Turn to Practice: Core Practices in Social Studies Teacher Education,” *Theory and Research in Social Education* 48, no. 4 (2020), 583-610. Quoted on p. 584.

32 Francesca M. Forzani, “Understanding ‘Core Practices’ and ‘Practice-Based’ Teacher Education: Learning from the Past,” *Journal of Teacher Education* 65, no. 4 (2014), 357-368.

33 For examples and discussion of specific history CPs, see Chauncey Monte-Sano and Christopher Budano, “Developing and

Innovation in methods training, applying this recent understanding of CPs, may help to better differentiate university teacher preparation programs from the rapidly growing challenge from alternative certification programs, specifically MTT.<sup>34</sup>

In addition, the Michigan Department of Education has adopted “Core Teaching Practices” that educator preparation programs must teach.<sup>35</sup> These practices are based on the research and work of TeachingWorks.<sup>36</sup> While these are general practices, TeachingWorks gives specific examples of the importance of the different ways disciplines enact these practices. For instance, explaining and modeling content in social studies requires teachers to know how experts practice sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration. Teachers of history and social studies also need to be able to answer open-ended questions to elicit and interpret individual student thinking instead of asking questions that only require students to demonstrate memorization of fact or learning a single story.<sup>37</sup> The preparation of history and social studies teachers to do these kinds of specific practices is not something easily learned without careful apprenticing.

Traditional college and university teacher preparation programs cannot compete with alternative certification programs in terms of cost and relative ease of access to coursework. These competitive challenges will need to be met head-on by faculty and administrators at the colleges and universities. They should directly advertise to potential teacher candidates that their programs offer expert guidance from leaders in the teacher preparation field who can specifically address candidates’ questions and needs particularly about PCK in history and social studies. By contrast, MTT’s online, self-paced coursework is a one-size-fits-all approach. It seems sensible for colleges and universities to let potential students know that they will pay more for their preparation but that it will provide better quality. Good teachers can come from alternative preparation routes, but curriculum and programs which have been designed by content and pedagogical experts have a better chance of preparing teachers for long-term success in the field as professional educators of history and social studies. Teaching history and social studies with success takes a high level of intellectual sophistication and a well-planned program of apprenticing through a college or university program.

In addressing candidates’ questions and needs about the profession, history and social studies education faculty must be able to contextualize and explain many of the most important issues facing the teaching profession. Teaching has never been a prestigious profession in American society, and in the MCHE survey results, faculty note that society’s perceptions of teachers have continued to slide. Among the concerns that faculty expressed is a disproportionate emphasis in the news media on teachers who leave the profession, instead of those who stay in it. Faculty pointed to the current divided and politicized climate of American society which influences the curriculum by contributing to an overdramatization of areas of contention. Other concerns include lack of diversity among teachers in the profession and a perceived erosion of professionalization among teachers.

The need for strong teacher preparation programs in history and social studies that emphasize disciplinary and pedagogical skills is underscored by the 2024 American Historical Association’s report, *American Lesson*

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Enacting Pedagogical Content Knowledge for Teaching History: An Exploration of Two Novice Teachers’ Growth over Three Years,” *Journal of the Learning Sciences* 22, no. 2 (2013), 171-211; Bradley Fogo, “Core Practices in Teaching History: The Results of the Delphi Panel Survey,” *Theory and Research in Social Education* 42, no. 2 (2014), 151-196; and Abby Reisman, Peter Cipparone, Jay Lightning, Chauncey Monte-Sano, Sarah Schneider Kavanagh, Sarah McGrew, and Brad Fogo, “Evidence of Emergent Practice: Teacher Candidates Facilitating Historical Discussions in their Field Placements,” *Teaching and Teacher Education* 80 (2019), 145-156.

34 Gordon P. Andrews, Wilson J. Warren, and James P. Cousins, *Collaboration and the Future of Education: Preserving the Right to Think and Teach Historically* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 75-118, highlights a long-term collaborative effort between Western Michigan University’s social studies preparation program and the students and teachers at Portage Central High School.

35 MDE, Information for Educator Preparation Providers <https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/ed-serv/ed-cert/educator-preparation-providers>

36 TeachingWorks, High-Leverage Practices <https://www.teachingworks.org/high-leverage-practices/>

37 TeachingWorks, TeachingWorks Resource Library, Social Studies High-Leverage Practices <https://www.teachingworks.org/high-leverage-practices/>

*Plan: Teaching U.S. History in Secondary Schools.* This extensive study sheds light on the importance of teachers as key deciders of what is taught, what resources are used, and what values are passed on in a classroom. As teachers choose materials and make curricular decisions, teachers in the history and social studies classroom play key roles. They need to be prepared for this intense work by a well-organized and intentional college or university preparation program.<sup>38</sup>

In the face of increasing marketing competition, history and social studies education faculty offer a variety of ideas in the MCHE survey regarding other strategies for recruiting new teacher candidates. All agree that monetary incentives such as free tuition and higher teacher salaries are especially important. School districts might attempt to recruit new teacher candidates in ways that are common in the nursing field by identifying students with teaching potential and then providing them with sign-on bonuses. New teachers who receive such bonuses would then be contracted to work for a designated period of time for their school. Schools might incentivize teacher recruitment by providing support to defray the cost of housing. History and social studies education faculty pointed out that more effort needs to be directed toward publicizing the stories of thriving teachers to elaborate on how and why they are thriving. Student teachers also need placements with outstanding teacher mentors who are engaged and committed to excellence in the classroom.

Historically, Michigan's public and private teacher preparation institutions have played an important role in providing the state and the rest of the nation with new teachers. This study shows the need for history and social studies teacher preparation programs to pay attention to the current context. Because of the increasing numbers of people who are pursuing alternative credentialing, especially from MTT, the public and private institutions need to provide stronger evidence to potential teachers of their excellence and relevance in teacher preparation. More study is needed to learn from all teacher preparation programs, understand the pipeline of teachers, and better articulate what learning happens in teacher preparation programs. In the case of history and social studies, the faculty from the five institutions surveyed in this study are both aware of this need and are working hard to provide evidence of their ability to contribute to the state's teaching ranks.

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<sup>38</sup> American Historical Association, *American Lesson Plan: Teaching U.S. History in Secondary Schools* (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 2024).

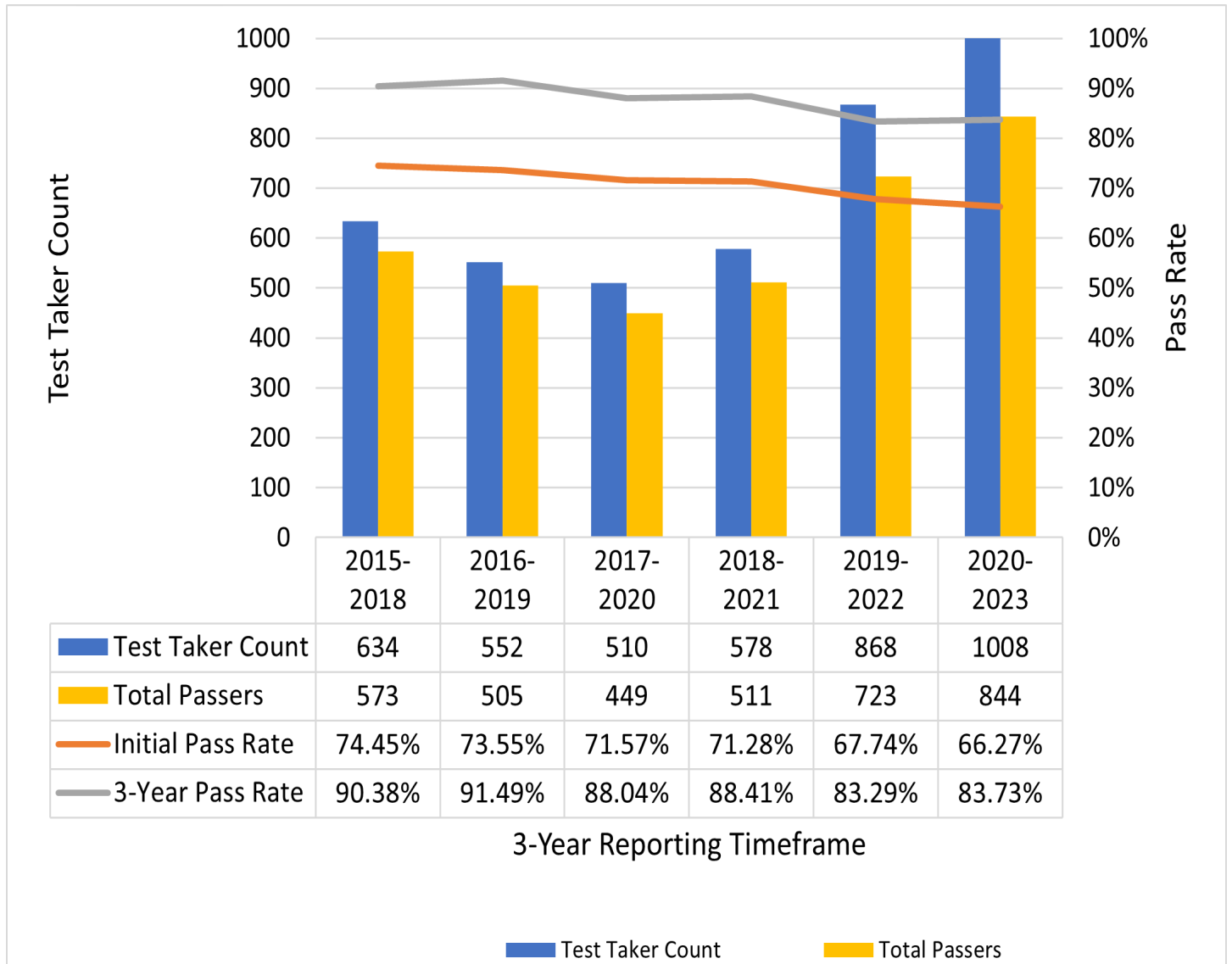


Figure 1: Michigan Test for Teacher Certification 084 Social Studies (Secondary) Results

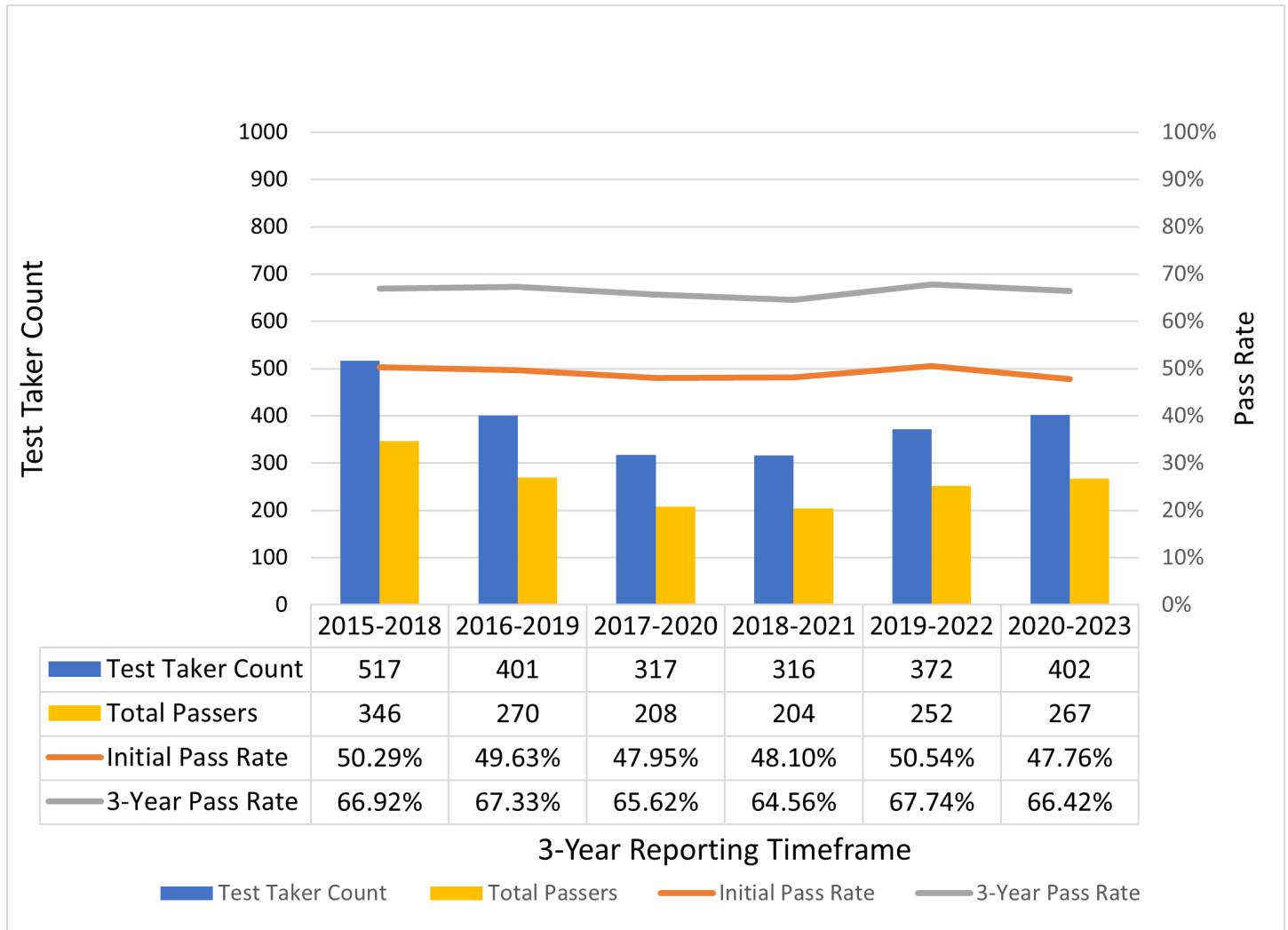


Figure 2: Michigan Test for Teacher Certification 009 History Results

Figure 3: Total Enrollment in Social Studies Education

Institution	2010	2015	2020	2023
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor*	18	7	17	7
Grand Valley State University	244	184	129	148
Western Michigan University**	155	79	23	12
Central Michigan University	N/A	N/A	59	102
Calvin University	25	N/A	23	34

\*The enrollment numbers include both social studies and history.

\*\*Western Michigan University closed its undergraduate teacher preparation programs in secondary education in 2020. WMU now offers a Master of Arts in Teaching for students interested in secondary-level teacher certification.

Figure 4: Total Enrollment in History Education

<b>Institution</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2023</b>
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor*	18	7	17	7
Grand Valley State University	78	28	51	66
Western Michigan University**	99	29	12	3
Central Michigan University	N/A	N/A	71	33
Calvin University	42	N/A	13	9

\* The enrollment numbers include both social studies and history.

\*\*Western Michigan University closed its undergraduate teacher preparation programs in secondary education in 2020. WMU now offers a Master of Arts in Teaching for students interested in secondary-level teacher certification.

Figure 5: Total Enrollment in Social Studies and History Education

<b>Institution</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2023</b>
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	18	7 (-61.1%)	17 (+142.9%)	7 (-58.8%)
				Overall= -61.1
Grand Valley State University	322	212 (-34.2%)	180 (-15.1%)	214 (+18.9%)
				Overall= -33.5
Western Michigan University	254	108 (-57.4%)	35 (-67.6%)	15 (-57.1%)
				Overall= -94.1%
Central Michigan University	N/A	N/A	130	135 (+3.8%)
Calvin University	67	N/A	36	43 (+19.4%)
				Overall= -35.8%

Figure 6: Total Initial Teaching Certificates Issued by the Five Institutions, 2017-18 and 2022-23

<b>Institution</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2022-23</b> <b>(% change)</b>
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	136	136 (0.0%)
Grand Valley State University	304	310 (+1.9%)
Western Michigan University	188	151 (-19.7%)
Central Michigan University	238	235 (-1.3%)
Calvin University	77	58 (-24.7%)