

Good morning Madam Chair and members of the Committee. I am Beth DeShone, Executive Director of the Great Lakes Education Project.

I am testifying in opposition of HB 4271 which would eliminate the requirement that every Michigan high school student complete Algebra II.

To quote a good friend, "We cannot lessen our standards to make ourselves look better." That would be a slap in the face to every student that is working to prepare for life after their K-12 education, whether that is in a career or post-secondary education.

Since the implementation of the Algebra II requirement under the Michigan Merit Curriculum, graduation rates have increased significantly. While the debate for more flexibility in high school curriculum is an important one, and one that should encourage looking at classes like coding to prepare students for 21<sup>st</sup> Century careers, we cannot stand by and weaken our education system just because certain classes are difficult.

Instead, we should be asking the questions as to why students are not prepared to meet the standards and work towards solutions to those problems. We must demand high standards that promote critical thinking and problem solving skills, because every student deserves nothing less. Algebra II provides students experience in those skills, even for students like me who didn't retain much of the math concepts!

I look forward to discussions about what, if anything, is needed for educators to provide a strong, well rounded education to every student while also maintaining the rigor of our standards.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions.