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## **Administrators: 98 Percent Of Michigan Teachers Average Or Above**

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The Cato Institute, a think tank based in Washington, D.C., recently rated Michigan's public schools as 36th best in the nation, using a method that measures the relative performance of schools when the socioeconomic background of their students is taken into consideration.

Despite the state's low ranking, Michigan's public school teachers continue to get high marks from their schools' administrators, who are required to evaluate teacher performance each year.

Four out of every 10 Michigan public school teachers in 2017-18 were deemed to be "highly effective," the highest of four possible ratings a teacher can receive.

And just 282 of the state's 99,916 public school teachers were given the lowest rating of "ineffective."

Nearly all of the state's public school teachers — 98 percent — received either the highest or second-highest rating, "highly effective" or "effective."

The figures were little-changed from the previous year, when public school administrators gave 39 percent of all teachers in the state the highest rating, while just 342 individual teachers were deemed to be ineffective.

"The system is rigged," said Michael Van Beek, director of research for the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. "Administrators either don't take this rating seriously or they have such low standards that everyone meets them."

"The problem is that school officials are forgoing an opportunity to improve their schools," Van Beek said. "They need to identify and differentiate good teachers from not-as-good teachers and get more in front of the good teachers and fewer kids in front of the bad teachers."

Some of the teacher evaluations raise eyebrows, given the overall academic performance of their students in state school rankings.

For example, Pontiac High School has for years been judged a failing school in the statewide school assessments. State officials do not consider the socioeconomic status of each school's student body when they create these rankings. One result is that schools in more affluent districts

tend to rank high compared to schools in poor areas, regardless of how much additional learning a school provides in peer-to-peer comparisons.

The Mackinac Center, however, has created a school report card of its own, which does take into consideration the socioeconomic status of each school's student body. Pontiac High School has received an F in its last five Mackinac Center report cards spanning the past 10 years, meaning that it does poorly even when compared to other schools whose students face similar challenges.

Nevertheless, Pontiac school administrators gave 40 percent of this school's teachers the top rating of "highly effective" while the remaining 60 percent were deemed to be "effective," the second-highest rating. No teacher at that building in 2017-18 was given a "minimally effective" or "ineffective" rating.