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**85 Michigan School Board Members Call on State and Federal Policymakers
to Defend Public Education and Fully Fund Public Schools**

Niles, MI — In a powerful show of unity, 85 school board members from 36 districts, including five Michigan State Board of Education members, have signed a joint letter calling on state and federal policymakers to take bold action to defend public education, fully fund Michigan's public schools, and condemn the elimination of the US Department of Education. The letter, coordinated by the Michigan Education Justice Coalition (MEJC), underscores the urgent need to address persistent funding gaps that affect all Michigan students but especially impact students of color, students with disabilities, and students from low-income communities.

Today, a copy of the letter was hand-delivered to Rep. Tim Walberg, the Chair of the Education and Workforce Committee. "As the Chair, Tim Walberg has the power to stop the dismantling of the Department of Education. We are here to ask him to do what is right for the children of Michigan and of America. Public schools should serve students, not political careers. Taking away school funding and civil rights of children is not what his constituents voted for," said Jim Pederson, advocating for his granddaughter with special needs.

"Dismantling the US Department of Education would be disastrous for all students and especially for the most vulnerable populations," said Benton Harbor School Board member Dashuna Robinson. "The inevitable funding gap will be most deeply felt by the students who already face systemic barriers to opportunity. We're calling on our lawmakers to do what's right—invest in every child's future, no matter their race, identity, or zip code." The entire Benton Harbor School Board signed onto this letter, asking elected leaders to prioritize equitable and sustainable investment in public schools.

"Federal special education funding ensures kids with disabilities get classroom aides, speech therapy, and adaptive technology. Without this funding, many special education services will disappear, leaving our kids without support, eliminating programs critical to student success. I'm worried that my grandson will no longer have a trained paraprofessional to help him learn," added Michelle King, a champion for special education funding.

Michigan stands to [lose approximately 10% of K-12 funding](#) federally, a huge problem for a state already plagued by a [\\$4.5 billion education funding gap](#) after decades of disinvestment. High poverty schools are at risk of losing essential supplemental funding from Title I and IDEA programs, which will severely harm special education.

The school board members' letter urges lawmakers to:

- Increase state and federal investment in K-12 public education
- Close equity gaps in funding for special education, English language learners, and students in high-poverty communities

- Oppose voucher schemes that divert public dollars to private interests
- Strengthen support for educators and school staff

The Michigan Education Justice Coalition, a statewide network of educators, parents, students, and community leaders, is leading this initiative as part of its broader campaign to ensure every Michigan student has access to a high-quality, well-resourced public education. MEJC is a partner of the national organizing initiative, HEAL Together.

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