



Renaissance School Services



# The Coalition Opposed to the Detroit Education Commission

June 1, 2016

Dear Members of the State Senate and the House of Representatives:

We write today to share our concern over the chronic educational problems in Detroit’s public schools and the plans before you to help improve them. Improving the quality of all schools in Detroit is a goal we all share. Every Detroit student must have access to a quality, open-enrollment public school for the city of Detroit and our state to achieve its greatest potential. In order to realize world class education in Michigan, particularly Detroit, the solution must be guided by these actionable principles:

- Parents, not government, make the best decisions for their children’s education. Because of this, parents must be empowered with choices.
- Leaders of great schools should have the flexibility to innovate and run great schools, replicate their success, and focus on serving students, not navigating additional layers of bureaucracies.
- Multiple, independent authorizers coupled with strong accountability for student outcomes will result in the greatest accountability and opportunity for student achievement.

Sadly, some of the plans before you fall short of this goal. More specifically, **we strongly oppose the creation of a Detroit Education Commission** that will hamper educational choice and create an additional educational bureaucracy ripe for political capture. Parents, not politicians, should be empowered to make choices for their children, and allocating significant authority to such a political entity is a threat to every parent and student selecting the best school for their learning needs.

Though we oppose some of the proposals, we remain committed to being part of the solution. The above principles have guided our state’s reforms in the past and we believe they have a solid record of producing positive results for Michigan’s students. But we also believe more needs to be done, specifically;

- We support increased intervention and potential closure of chronically failing schools.
- We support a new statewide accountability system based on A-F letter-grading to provide clear and consistent information for parents and schools on academic performance.
- We support the use of the current authority under the State Reform and Redesign Office to intervene and/or close the lowest of the low performing schools until a new statewide accountability system can be implemented.
- We support the use of current authority granted to the State’s charter school authorizers to assess need and community input for the placement of charter schools, including increased expectations for current authorizers around more community engagement.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you on this important issue and respectfully ask that you **join us in opposition to the creation of a Detroit Education Commission**.

Sincerely,

The Coalition Opposed to the Detroit Education Commission