



For Release:
September 28, 2016

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Statement from Great Lakes Education Project ***On Attorney General opinion regarding state authority to close failing schools***

“Every child in Detroit is one step closer to a better academic future thanks to [today’s opinion from Attorney General Bill Schuette](#) confirming the state’s authority to close chronically-failing traditional and charter public schools,” said Gary Naeyaert, executive director of the Great Lakes Education Project (GLEP). “We agree with his clear reading of PA 192 that any public school included on the bottom performing 5% lists for 2014, 2015 and 2016 should be closed,” Naeyaert continued.

“The law is clear: Michigan parents and their children do not have to be stuck indefinitely in a failing school,” said Attorney General Schuette in releasing the opinion. “Detroit students and parents deserve accountability and high performing schools. If a child can’t spell opportunity, they won’t have opportunity.”

GLEP acknowledged the leadership of Senate Majority Leader Arlan Meekhof (R-Olive Township) and House Speaker Kevin Cotter (R-Mt. Pleasant), who requested this legal clarification from the state’s highest attorney. Attorney General opinions have the force of law unless overturned by the courts.

A provision in PA 192 requires that traditional and charter schools located in Detroit that appear on the bottom performing 5% list for the immediately preceding 3 years are subject to closure by the State Reform Office, unless closure would be considered an “undue hardship” due to the lack of other school options in the area.

“We continue to believe parents and families are best at choosing the educational opportunities that best meet the needs of their children, and we urge parents to move their children from any school that continues to fail in educating students,” Naeyaert continued. GLEP confirmed that [31 DPS/EAA schools and 4 Detroit charter schools are on the Bottom 5% list for both 2014 and 2015](#), and the 2016 list is expected to be announced on November 1.

“The real work is about helping children improve their achievement, and for the Detroit’s children, we cannot waste another day,” Naeyaert concluded.

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Supporting quality choices in public education.