



February 10, 2022

TO: The Michigan House of Representatives Committee on Education  
From: Michigan Collaborative Teacher Leaders

We are a group of educators from across Michigan and members of the inaugural Michigan Teacher Leadership Collaborative, a program for highly-effective teachers led by The Education Trust-Midwest and Teach Plus. Through this program, we strive to ensure that our state policies benefit our diverse population of students. This is especially true when it comes to addressing the severe teacher shortage across our state, particularly in certain subject areas. With the COVID pandemic now extending into a third year, teacher shortages are widespread and require immediate attention. We recommend the following as you consider HB 5107 and other measures to address this critical issue:

+ **Listen to teachers when considering how to address the current teacher shortage:**

Throughout Michigan, school districts have been forced to temporarily shut down or turn to remote learning in the face of critical staffing shortages. Those teachers who remain in school buildings face enormous challenges covering extra classes while still fulfilling their normal duties. Furthermore, this issue has been building for years, well before the current pandemic, because of a lack of investment in the teacher workforce. Teachers have unique insight into how staffing shortages affect their classrooms and their students, which puts us in a position to deeply inform solutions.

*“As a teacher and instructional coach, I have seen my valuable prep time, coaching meetings, and support for new teachers get cut time and time again so that I or someone on my team can step in and work as a substitute for the hour.”* —Joy Lyman, high school history and English teacher, Michigan Teacher Collaborative teacher leader

+ **Pass Michigan House Bill 5107:**

To make sure that every student has a qualified teacher guiding their learning, we must pursue multiple strategies for addressing the teacher shortage. House Bill 5107 that is currently before you can be part of the solution. HB5107 calls on the Michigan State Board of Education to develop a model teacher-cadet program that schools, districts, and intermediate school districts can implement. The teacher-cadet program would give high school students invaluable experience in preparing to one day become a teacher, and would build an important source of future educators.

+ **Invest in a state-funded, district-led Grow Your Own (GYO) Teacher Program:**

[Grow Your Own programs](#) leverage the talent of students, community leaders, and paraprofessionals from within communities and provide them with the skills and opportunity to become life-long educators in their schools. Many programs have a focus on building equity into the education system and recruiting and retaining people of color in the profession in order to ensure that students of color are taught by educators who look like them. Grow Your Own programs have the potential to alleviate teacher shortages at a time when we need this most.

*“At the beginning of the year, my 1st graders, who identify as Black and African American, questioned me if I were Black or White. I told them, “Neither!” As a Japanese-American educator,*

*I get to actively engage in cultural dialogue with my students every day by examining our own identities, and together, discover new and existing realities. Everyone deserves that in their learning.”* —Luna Terauchi, first grade teacher, Michigan Teacher Collaborative teacher leader

Listening to teachers, turning HB 5107 into law, and supporting robust state-funded, district-let Grow Your Own programs will benefit teachers, students, and the wider community in our state. Teachers will be supported by Michigan's policies that ensure their ability to do their work well while fulfilling joyful and lifelong careers in the profession. Students will receive a high-quality education from certified teachers who are important role models of the community and expand their cultural knowledge. Communities will generate a prosperous local education system by growing and feeding their own teacher talent.

Respectfully submitted,

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