



March 12, 2024

To: Michigan Legislators

From: Michigan Collaborative Teacher Leaders

We are a group of educators from across Michigan and members of the Michigan Teacher Leadership Collaborative, a highly-selective leadership opportunity for outstanding Michigan educators co-convened by The Education Trust-Midwest and Teach Plus Michigan. Through this program, we strive to ensure that our state systems and policies benefit our diverse population of students. This is especially true when it comes to equitable school funding.

Policy Goal:

By June 2024, the K-12 Chairs of the Appropriations Committee will adopt a resolution to expand the Opportunity Index beyond 47% so that all Michigan students have access to an exceptional and equitable education.

Why This Issue Is Important:

- + Michigan ranks in the bottom five states nationally for funding gaps that negatively impact students from low-income families.
- + Before adopting the Opportunity Index, Michigan was one of only 16 states providing less funding to its highest-poverty districts than to its lowest-poverty district.
- + Allocations for students from low-income backgrounds are very low compared to what leading states like Massachusetts or Maryland provide and the level of funding that research recommends.

Source: Michigan's School Funding: Crisis and Opportunity- EdTrust Midwest

"We need to act now to ensure more than incremental improvement. Students like Daniela do not have decades to wait for an equitable education. The time is now to realize our goal of an equitable education for all Michigan students. The future health of our state and our economy depend on it."

- **Anna Mayotte, Detroit Public Schools Community District**

What the Evidence Shows:

- + “A 20 percent increase in per pupil funding for underperforming schools reduced the number of below-average students in mathematics, English, social studies, and science by 19.7 percent.” (MIT Press, Education Finance and Policy)
- + “Academic outcomes have improved when state and local governments invested more money in ... schools with disadvantaged students.” (C. Kirabo Jackson, “Does School Spending Matter?”)
- + “77% of all students at Michigan's public schools are being educated at a district where they are more than \$2,000 per pupil below funding adequacy.” (Education Law Center)

We Recommend:

- + Allocate an increase of 10% in the budget each year to fully fund the Opportunity Index by 2029.
- + Provide 100% funding that puts English Language Learners and students with special needs on a path for an equal and equitable education.

Potential Impacts:

- + Equitable funding will ensure access to high-quality educational resources, qualified teachers, and modern facilities, creating more opportunities for students and reducing disparities in academic achievement.
- + It will also improve the experience of teachers, communities, and the workforce as a whole as our education system is able to provide students with more skills, knowledge, and socio-economic mobility.

Potential Costs:

- + \$2.9 Billion to fund the Opportunity Index
- + Approximately \$500,000,000 to fund English Language Learners

Respectfully submitted,

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