



Coalition for the Future
of Detroit Schoolchildren

December 6, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Coordination Between All Detroit Schools Among Key Priorities in New Coalition Report

DETROIT – The Coalition for the Future of Detroit Schoolchildren – a diverse collection of Detroiters from the city’s education, corporate, philanthropic, and social sectors – released a comprehensive set of recommendations to improve the city’s schools. Among six priorities it lays out in its new report, *Our Schools, Our Moment*, is a call for cooperation and accountability from DPSCD and charter leaders to better serve the children and families of Detroit.

“Three years ago, the Coalition mobilized to put Detroiters back in charge of Detroit schools and keep the district alive. We accomplished this and nearly all of our other major objectives,” said Coalition co-chair and Walbridge CEO John Rakolta Jr. “Now we need Mayor Duggan, Superintendent Vitti, and leaders from the charter community to work together to impose basic coordination between the school districts that operate in the city of Detroit. Shame on all of us if we can’t accomplish this. We owe it to our kids.”

Other recommendations are:

- Reduce the chronic absenteeism rate.
- Make Detroit a desirable place for students and teachers.
- Improve third-grade reading proficiency.
- Provide Detroit students with college and career pathways.
- Fully fund special education.

“The recommendations made in this report are actions that Detroiters can take to ensure children get the education they deserve,” said Tonya Allen, Coalition co-chair and Skillman Foundation president & CEO. “It will help direct community, corporate and philanthropic efforts to areas that are urgent and ripe for change.”

“It’s time for Detroiters to tackle our heartbreaking literacy challenge,” said Angela Reyes, Coalition co-chair and executive director of Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation. “When you look at early literacy scores for students from low-income households, Detroit ranks last. If our children cannot read, they cannot learn.”

“Education provides children with hope for the future. It transforms communities. It is the key to the continued development of our great city,” said David Hecker, Coalition co-chair and president of AFT Michigan/AFL-CIO.

To form its recommendations, Coalition leadership teams conducted extensive research; heard from local and national experts; and received input from parents, students, educators and concerned community members. All recommendations were unanimously adopted by the Coalition's membership of approximately 150 community members.

To access the report *Our Schools Our Moment*, key research used to form the recommendations, and a list of all Coalition leadership team members, visit www.DetroitEducationCoalition.org.

The Coalition for the Future of Detroit Schoolchildren formed on December 11, 2014 as an independent, diverse cross-section of Detroit leaders who came together to make recommendations to improve the city's education system. Its first report, [The Choice Is Ours](#), focused on how the state could help. Most of our recommendations were enacted. Now, the Coalition is focused on actions Detroiters can take locally to strengthen the city's schools.

The Coalition's leadership teams are made up of approximately 150 community members. The Coalition is led by six co-chairs: Tonya Allen, Skillman Foundation president & CEO; Rev. Wendell Anthony, Fellowship Chapel and president of the Detroit branch of the NAACP; David Hecker, president of AFT Michigan/AFL-CIO; John Rakolta Jr., CEO of Walbridge; Mark Reuss, executive vice president, global product development, purchasing and supply chain of General Motors; and Angela Reyes, executive director of Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation.

*The Coalition's 2017 report, *Our School, Our Moment*, is available at www.DetroitEducationCoalition.org.*

###

Media contact: Natalie Fotias at nfotias@skillman.org or 313-393-1179