

Coalition for the Future
of Detroit Schoolchildren

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement from Mayor Mike Duggan regarding Detroit school reform legislation

DETROIT – In 2009, when the state placed the Detroit Public Schools under emergency management, it did so without ever developing a clear plan of how state management would improve the education of our children. The results have reflected that lack of planning: 5 emergency managers, 7 straight years of deficit, the largest decline in student achievement in Michigan, and the loss of nearly 50% of all students from the system.

Senate Bills 710 and 711 were a thoughtful attempt to prevent this kind of tragedy from repeating itself when the schools are returned to the Detroit School Board. The Senate Bills had the support of Governor Snyder, the support of community leaders in the Education Coalition, and the strong bipartisan support of the Senate. They provided the funding necessary to give DPS a real chance of a successful transition. Just as critically, the Senate Bills provided a tool for real reform in Detroit's classrooms – using the very successful Washington DC model to establish a local Detroit Education Commission with a single standard of accountability that applies to all schools – traditional and charter – that operate in Detroit.

I'm deeply concerned that the legislation adopted by the House of Representatives last night will inevitably repeat the tragic mistakes of 2009. The bills return some control of a broken system to the local board without adequate funding to reverse the declines of the last 7 years, and without any new method of accountability in the classroom, DEC or otherwise.

In the last two weeks, I met with numerous members of the House of Representatives who had thoughtful ideas on how to make sure that, this time, the transition of DPS has a realistic chance of success. Unfortunately, those ideas did not end up in the final bills.

The state can't just throw up its hands and give up in frustration, passing a bill that has no chance of providing educational success for Detroit's children. I urge Governor Snyder and the Republican and Democratic leadership in Lansing to work to resolve the differences in these bills so that this time we get a result that truly improves our children's achievement in the classroom.

*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.

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