



Coalition for the Future  
of Detroit Schoolchildren

May 9, 2016

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Metropolitan Affairs Coalition endorses the Coalition's recommendations**

DETROIT – The Metropolitan Affairs Coalition is committed to quality education in Detroit and throughout our region and state. Educational opportunity is fundamental to the success and well-being of our citizens, our quality of life, and economic prosperity. MAC has endorsed the recommendations of the Coalition for the Future of Detroit Schoolchildren (CFDS), and commends Governor Snyder for his leadership, the Senate for its recently passed legislation on this issue, and both chambers for their efforts already in place to keep Detroit Public Schools (DPS) operating through the rest of the school year.

CFDS addressed many critical issues impacting the education of Detroit students, including the need to improve academic performance, enhance school choice, stabilize the educational landscape, encourage parental and community involvement, and address DPS finances. Key recommendations include the establishment of a Detroit Education Commission to provide coordination and oversight, members of which would be appointed by the Mayor; return to an elected school board; and having the state pay the DPS debt.

Bi-partisan legislation that passed the Senate includes these key elements, supported by the CFDS, Mayor Duggan, and MAC:

- The State's responsibility for DPS debt accrued while under emergency management is addressed without impacting the School Aid Fund.
- MAC supports funding of DPS without negatively affecting other school districts.
- Governance of DPS is returned to a locally-elected school board.
- Schools under the Education Achievement Authority are returned to the public school system.
- Teacher and staff contracts and collective bargaining agreements are honored.
- The Detroit Education Commission is established to provide coordination and structure to the opening and closing of schools, issues of accountability and quality, transportation access, etc. (with consideration of input from parent-teacher, community and other interested and knowledgeable parties).

The House and Senate have now passed legislation that presents two different approaches to addressing the Detroit Public Schools crisis. MAC believes that the Senate version represents the most balanced and reasonable approach. It presents a practical and realistic way forward with a focus on students, quality education, and stability for families and neighborhoods.

We urge timely and thoughtful consideration of the Senate package. The future of Detroit and its children is at stake.

Debbie Dingell, Congresswoman  
Michigan 12th District  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Co-Chair, MAC

Mark Gaffney, Business Agent  
Teamsters Local 214  
Co-Chair, MAC

John Rakolta, Jr.  
Chairman & CEO  
Walbridge  
Co-Chair, MAC

*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](http://www.DetroitEducationCoalition.org).*

###

Media contact: Natalie Fotias at [nfotias@skillman.org](mailto:nfotias@skillman.org) or 313-393-1179