

Coalition for the Future
of Detroit Schoolchildren

March 23, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tonya Allen apologizes for off-the-cuff jab at lawmakers

DETROIT – Coalition for the Future of Detroit Schoolchildren co-chair Tonya Allen released the following statement after an appearance on WDET-FM earlier today:

“I want to apologize to Michigan lawmakers for a careless remark I made earlier today.

“This morning, I had the privilege of being a guest on the radio show ‘Detroit Today with Stephen Henderson’ to talk about the Michigan Senate’s passage of the Return to Excellence legislation for Detroit schools. During that conversation, I clumsily characterized legislators as ‘the worst of the worst,’ while expressing my frustration with the impact Michigan’s term limits have had on education reform. This was a mistake, and I was wrong to misdirect my frustration at lawmakers, who are working hard on behalf of kids in imperfect circumstances. I regret my words.

“What the Senate was able to accomplish yesterday with its speedy passage of the Return to Excellence legislation was quite remarkable in this hyper political era. The Coalition for the Future of Detroit Schoolchildren, which I help lead with four other co-chairs, appreciates these bipartisan reforms. I do too. And I’m sorry that my mouth got the better of my brain and heart.

“My friends and colleagues sometimes joke that I must have attended the same public speaking course as Vice President Joe Biden. At times my fervor gets the best of me, and I miscommunicate my thoughts. Words sometimes fail me. For that I am truly sorry.

“I will continue to advocate for kids and for policy that improves educational outcomes for Detroit and Michigan children. I hope my friends in Lansing will judge me by my deeds and not my careless remark.”

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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