



February 20, 2014

Dear EAA Team Members:

The purpose of this letter is to provide insight and clarity relative to the letter I received from our State Superintendent of Education, Mike Flanagan, terminating the transfer of functions and responsibilities from the State Reform/Redesign District to the Education Achievement Authority of Michigan (EAA), effective February 18, 2015.

In his letter, Superintendent Flanagan directly cites the need to “end the exclusivity provision of the Agreement between the EAA and the State.” He further referenced the need for the State to “have options in which to place persistently low-achieving schools in addition to the EAA.” Please understand that this does not affect the EAA’s current operations and/or its long-term position as a critically important part of the effort to improve Michigan’s lowest achieving schools.

We support the decision by the Michigan Department of Education to end the exclusive contract with the EAA. Essentially, this agreement rendered the EAA as the ONLY option available to assist in the reform of all priority schools in Michigan. It was never our intent to manage 150 schools, and thus, the cancelation of the agreement will allow the State to exercise more options to reform the many persistently failing schools aggressively. Again, we are supportive of this effort, and like the State, want as many high quality options for students and families in Michigan as possible.

It is also important to note that Mike Flanagan indicated in his February 18 letter that the EAA is a critically important part of the effort to help students who need it the most. He also indicated that EAA schools will continue to be a vital part of that effort now and in the future as we help meet the needs of students in more schools across the State. All of you are a vital part of this process, and I appreciate your work and your focus on student learning.

The students in the 15 EAA schools in Detroit have made strong academic progress since we began operating those schools in September 2012. Thanks to you, in our first year of operation, 59 percent of students achieved 1.5 or more year’s growth in reading, and 58 percent of students achieved 1.5 or more year’s growth in math.

The EAA will continue to function as we currently are and operate its 15 schools in Detroit under the inter-local agreement between the Detroit Public Schools and Eastern Michigan University. Moreover, we remain vigilant in our efforts to expand in other areas of the State and help even more Michigan students in the future.

As noted above, the contract transferring functions and responsibilities from the State Reform/Redesign District to the EAA will continue until February 18, 2015. As a result, the EAA will continue to manage exclusively the responsibilities for the State School Reform/Redesign District until then.

Clearly, we are making a huge positive difference in the lives of children. The strong academic progress our students are making serves as evidence that the EAA model is working. Though early signs of student growth are good, we have lots of work to do. Please do not view the February 18 letter from Mike Flanagan as an indicator that the EAA is unstable. This is not the case, and we continue to have the support of the Governor, State Superintendent, our Board, and other stakeholders who believe in the work we are doing.

Again, thank you for your continued service to the EAA and, most importantly, your dedication to providing a quality education for our students.

If you have any additional questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to call my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Wm. Covington". The signature is stylized and cursive.

J. Wm. Covington, Ed.D, Ph.D.
Chancellor
The Education Achievement Authority of Michigan