



30100 Telegraph Road Ste 250  
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of Michigan

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
January 26, 2021

**Contact: Heather Eckner**  
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## **Special Education Coalition of Michigan announces support for increased Special Education school funding in the Michigan COVID Recovery Plan**

Bingham Farms – The [Special Education Coalition of Michigan](#) led by the Autism Alliance of Michigan (AAoM) supports Governor Whitmer’s Michigan COVID Recovery Plan, which includes a significant portion dedicated to school funding, with specific attention identified to address the needs of students with disabilities for special education supports and services.

“We commend the Governor for her commitment to all Michigan students. The additional funding she has recommended to address the unique needs of those with learning challenges is critical, especially given the barriers and learning loss incurred by so many during COVID” said Heather Eckner, Director of Statewide Education Initiatives for AAoM.

Originally created and launched by the Autism Alliance of Michigan, our Coalition is comprised of the top leaders for policy and administration for Special Education in the state of Michigan. We represent a powerful group of advocates for students with disabilities, inclusive of all disabilities and learning challenges, who come from diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise, all with the common goal of assuring students with disabilities receive the education they require so they have the very best opportunity for success upon leaving school.

While we address a variety of issues through our efforts, our top two priorities identified for this school year are:

- **Increasing equitable school funding at the state and federal level; and**
- **Addressing learning loss for students with disabilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Governor Whitmer’s Michigan COVID Recovery Plan proposal directly meets the top priorities our Coalition has identified.

*The purpose of the Special Education Coalition of Michigan is to improve access to educational opportunities and to improve experiences and outcomes for all students, with particular emphasis on students with disabilities.*



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Amid this unprecedented health crisis in our nation and state, it is clear some of those most impacted are our most vulnerable students, including students with disabilities. Students with Disabilities need more support to assure they will flourish in this drastically changed environment.

“The Governor’s announcement for more school funding will help schools provide additional service to students as they address learning loss during the past year, and will also help with other COVID related new costs they have incurred” said Wayne RESA Superintendent Dr. Randy Liepa.

Taking bipartisan action on the Governor’s Michigan COVID Recovery Plan proposal will allow our school systems to meet the needs of students in helping them get back on track through the provision of in-person learning opportunities. Our students are counting on State leadership, including our members of the Michigan Legislature.

On behalf of the thousands of students with disabilities in our state and their families, we look forward to continued advocacy ensuring access to opportunities and improving outcomes so all students have equitable opportunities to succeed.

Sincerely,  
Special Education Coalition of Michigan and Autism Alliance of MI

as the undersigned individual representatives

**/S/ Colleen Allen, Ph.D.**  
CEO, Autism Alliance of Michigan (AAoM)

**/S/ Heather Eckner**  
Statewide Director of Education Initiatives, AAoM

**/S/ Dave Meador**  
Vice Chairman, DTE Energy  
AAoM Board Chair

**/S/ Ron Fournier**  
President, Truscott Rossman  
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**/S/ Brian Calley**  
Former Lieutenant Governor  
President, Small Business Administration  
AAoM Board member

**/S/ Michelle Fectaeu**  
Former member, State Board of Education  
AAoM Board member

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**/S/ Randy Liepa, Ph.D.**  
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**/S/ Lohren Nzoma**  
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**/S/ Justin Michalak**  
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Dyslexia Legislative Taskforce

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