



AUTISM ALLIANCE OF MICHIGAN

Help. Hope. Answers. Today.

Autism Alliance of Michigan Public Comment State Board of Education February 11, 2025

Good afternoon board members, Superintendent, and department staff.

My name is Heather Eckner. I am the statewide director of education for the Autism Alliance of Michigan.

The Autism Alliance Education pillar advances a Whole Child vision for Michigan by catalyzing advocacy and engagement activities to move an equitable education agenda for children and youth with special education needs focused on **funding reform, appropriate identification, access to interventions, system accountability, and decreasing disparities.**

I am here before you again this month to continue providing public comment on the findings of the **Special Education Experience (SEE) Survey.**

bit.ly/AAOM-SEE

In January, I shared with you a copy of the Report to the Community and tried to highlight significant concerns for students with disabilities and their families.

The top priority to address:

- **School funding and resources** - *ensuring they are adequate & equitable, delivering services and supports to students with disabilities so that they can succeed on par with their nondisabled peers.*

Currently, we have a way to go in providing an education system that produces outcomes for students with disabilities that ensures a pathway to prosperity that any Michigander would desire. We can and must do better.

The material I have shared with you today is a working paper which is the result of more than a year long research process with a national school finance expert who has studied Michigan's special education finance structure and outlines current challenges and limitations as well as proposes guiding principles that can help move our state toward a more cohesively designed system that is student-centered.

The Autism Alliance asks members of this board to engage with the findings of the Special Education Experience Survey as well as **Funding Our Future: The Call for a New Framework in Special Education Finance.**

<https://autismallianceofmichigan.org/education-initiatives/>

elevating lived experience, identifying system barriers, and amplifying voices of parents & students with disabilities



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<https://tinyurl.com/AAOM-Funding-Our-Future>

We want Michigan to move from the bottom to the top in special education access, opportunities, and outcomes. In order to do that, we must align efforts toward reimagining how our system serves kids with disabilities from PreK through post-secondary.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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