July 31, 2026

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer
Governor of Michigan
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Governor Whitmer:

On behalf of organizations representing students with disabilities, families, educators, advocates, and communities across Michigan, thank you for your leadership and partnership in advancing special education finance reform in the FY27 state budget.

By including intent language supporting a transition to a weighted student funding model for special education, the Legislature reached an important milestone on the path toward implementing the Michigan Special Education Finance Reform Blueprint (MI Blueprint). While there is still work ahead, this action reflects a meaningful commitment to building a funding system that better reflects the needs of Michigan's students with disabilities. The next step is to translate that commitment into the policies and investments necessary to make needs-based funding a reality.

This progress would not have been possible without the thoughtful engagement of policymakers or without the voices of families, educators, self-advocates, school leaders, and community partners from across our state. We are deeply grateful that those voices were heard and that Michigan continues to build momentum toward modernizing its special education funding system.

The MI Blueprint represents years of collaboration and a shared vision for a funding system that is fair, transparent, and responsive to student needs. The progress made this year gives students, families, and schools reason for hope and provides a strong foundation for the next

phase of this work. It also creates a clear responsibility to build on this progress and move the MI Blueprint from legislative intent to full implementation.

Thank you for helping move this important work forward. Continued leadership will be essential as Michigan determines how to implement the weighted student funding model, establish a statewide High Cost Fund, and advance the MI Blueprint as a comprehensive reform package. We look forward to continuing our partnership as Michigan turns this important first step into lasting change for students with disabilities.

Sincerely,

RISE coalition partners

- Autism Alliance of Michigan
- EdTrust Midwest
- Launch Michigan
- Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan
- Michigan PTA
- Michigan's Children
- KConnect
- Michigan League for Public Policy
- Michigan Parent, Advocate & Attorney Coalition
- Michigan Center for Youth Justice
- Teach Plus Michigan
- Michigan Education Justice Coalition
- 482 Forward
- Michigan Advocates to End Seclusion & Restraint
- Michigan Transformation Collective
- The Student Advocacy Center of Michigan
- Washtenaw Association for Community Advocacy (Arc chapter)

https://autismallianceofmichigan.org/education-initiatives/rise/