



Dear Michigan Legislator,

On behalf of the Michigan Alliance for Student Opportunity (MASO), I am writing to urge Michigan lawmakers to increase funding in the FY 2026 state budget for our state's most urgent educational issues. Students living in poverty, special education students, English language learners, and the foundation allowance should be prioritized before resources are allocated to additional categorical funding, and lawmakers should work to streamline the number of categoricals to ensure dollars reach the classroom in a timely manner.

Research from the School Finance Research Collaborative (SFRC) underscores the urgency of addressing the disparities in educational funding and opportunities across Michigan. The report emphasizes that a significant investment is necessary to ensure every student can access the resources required to meet state standards. The SFRC identifies several critical areas where funding is most impactful, including:

- **Increased support for impoverished students:** Students from low-income families often require tailored support, including smaller class sizes, additional tutoring, and extended learning opportunities. Targeted funding in these areas is essential for bridging the achievement gap.
- **English Language Learners and special education services:** Providing adequate resources for ELL and special education students—such as dedicated staff, professional development, and technology—is crucial to meeting their unique needs.

Our mission is to advocate for equitable and adequate funding for Michigan's most vulnerable learners. By adopting an evidence-based funding formula, as outlined in the SFRC report, Michigan can address inequities and improve student outcomes across the board. Allocating resources to foundational areas—before expanding categorical funding—will ensure that our education system meets the needs of every child.

Additionally, I strongly encourage the legislature to create more efficiency in the budget itself. Each year, school administrators and teachers spend extensive time and resources on state grants that could be better directed toward the classroom. The proliferation of lengthy categorical grant applications creates unnecessary administrative burdens for school districts and diverts focus from core educational responsibilities. Simplifying and streamlining funding sources would improve access to resources and reduce bureaucracy.

We respectfully request your leadership in championing these priorities during the upcoming budget discussions. Michigan's future depends on the investments we make in our children today. By focusing on foundational funding and simplifying the budget, we can create an education system that offers all students the opportunity to succeed and follows the recommended best practices that numerous studies and research call for.

Thank you for considering these critical matters. I am happy to provide further information and am available to meet to discuss how we can work together to achieve these goals.

Sincerely,

Peter Spadafore  
Executive Director  
Michigan Alliance for Student Opportunity