



**RESOLUTION OF ANN ARBOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION
Support of Benton Harbor Area Schools**

A regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Public Schools of the City of Ann Arbor, County of Washtenaw, Michigan held at Forsythe Middle School in Ann Arbor on the 26th day of June, 2019, at 7:00 p.m., prevailing Eastern Time.

PRESENT: Members Baskett, Gaynor, Johnson, Kelly, Lazarus, Lightfoot, Mitchell

ABSENT: Members none

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Member Lightfoot and supported by Member Baskett:

WHEREAS, the right to a free, high-quality public education, governed by locally elected officials, has been and remains a cornerstone of our American democracy; and

WHEREAS, the Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education affirms and supports the right of every student in the state of Michigan and the nation to receive a free, high-quality education in a traditional K-12 public school system, regardless of their demographic or geographic location; and

WHEREAS, this right can be, and has been, undermined by poor decision-making and education policy at all levels (including chronic under-funding and the diversion of funds intended for public schools to for-profit charter schools); and

WHEREAS, we recognize that the desire to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for all students is the stated goal of the Michigan Department of Education and everyone connected to public education; and

WHEREAS, we know that some proposed strategies and solutions to improve these outcomes, by the nature of such efforts, have been found to be ineffective at best and harmful at worst; and

WHEREAS, Governor Whitmer has proposed closing Benton Harbor High School, as well as the alternative high school, citing the Benton Harbor Area Schools' budgetary and achievement challenges; and

WHEREAS, such action would perpetuate the practice of usurping local governance, removing community control, and closing schools in predominately poor and African American districts across Michigan; and

WHEREAS, such action has had and will continue to have a destabilizing effect on students and the larger community and would further destabilize public education across the State; and

WHEREAS, the Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education and the Benton Harbor Area Schools Board of Education are both democratically elected by their communities and charged with ensuring academic achievement for their students and financial sustainability for their districts; and

WHEREAS, the Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education and the Benton Harbor Area Schools Board of Education both view their neighborhood and public high schools as vital institutions in many ways, including serving as communication hubs, polling locations, and sources of community pride; and

WHEREAS, closing the Benton Harbor Area Schools' only high school and alternative high school will have an outsized negative impact by disenfranchising the public and suppressing education; and

WHEREAS, Governor Whitmer inherited a state public school system with grossly inadequate financial support and policies that hurt communities already struggling economically, due to their lack of funding, and which cannot make up this funding shortfall through local mileages or other methods, due to their low property tax base;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education:

1. Strongly discourages the State of Michigan from closing any Benton Harbor Area School without a well-researched and broad assessment of alternative options for educational success and ideas for how the district can be assisted.
2. Strongly encourages the state, including Governor Whitmer, the Michigan Department of Education, and the Michigan Department of Treasury to work directly with Benton Harbor Area Schools stakeholders in an enhanced partnership model to ensure that an agreed-upon plan is mutually developed and successfully implemented in a way that does not close the Benton Harbor High School, or dissolve or convert the entire district (or any part of the district) into a charter school system.
3. Strongly encourages the state to create an enhanced partnership that can serve as the model utilized in other struggling districts.

4. Directs the Executive Assistant of the Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education to transmit copies of this resolution to:

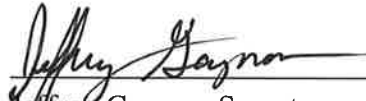
Governor of Michigan
All Michigan State Senators and Representatives
State Superintendent (Michigan)
All members of the State Board of Education (Michigan)
President, Michigan Association of School Boards
President, Michigan Association of School Administrators
President, Michigan Education Association
President, American Associate of School Administrators
Superintendent, Washtenaw Intermediate School District
City and County Leaders, Ann Arbor Public Schools
City and County Leader, Benton Harbor Area Schools
Benton Harbor Area Schools Board of Education

Local print, voice, and Internet media

Ayes: Baskett, Kelly, Lightfoot, Gaynor, Mitchell, Johnson, Lazarus

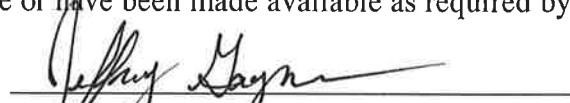
Nays: none

Resolution declared adopted.



Jeffrey Gaynor, Secretary
AAPS Board of Education

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the Board of Education of the Public Schools of the City of Ann Arbor, County of Washtenaw, State of Michigan, at a regular meeting held on _____, and that the meeting was conducted and public notice of the meeting was given pursuant to and in full compliance with the Open Meetings Act, being Act 267, Public Acts of Michigan, 1976, as amended, and that the minutes of the meeting were kept and will be or have been made available as required by the Act.



Jeffrey Gaynor, Secretary
AAPS Board of Education