

Welcome to the 2014 Graduate Michigan Action Network.

Through some with our technology that has not been as smooth as we'd like, we are still not where we need to be with our e-networks. However, until we get the kinks worked out, you'll be receiving GMAN bulletins the old fashioned way – through direct emails from me. I know that they get long, but here are today's conversations:

1. **THANK YOU:** To all who advocated for the Afterschool for America's Children Act, introduced recently in the U.S. House.
2. **NEEDS ONGOING ATTENTION:** Governor's budget priorities impacting youth. More specifics for immediate action coming next week.
3. **FYI: NEW LEADERSHIP AT MICHIGAN'S CHILDREN:** We welcome Matt Gillard, our new President and CEO.
4. **FYI: YOUTH VOICE FORUMS CONTINUE:** Opportunities continue to connect the voices of the most challenged young people with policymakers throughout 2014.

THANK YOU: Supporting the Afterschool for America's Children Act

Congressman Dan Kildee (D-MI) reintroduced the House version of the Afterschool for America's Children Act on February 10th. This is a companion to S.326 introduced last February in the Senate. Many of you lent your names to the letter of support circulated around the country by the Afterschool Alliance. Let Congressman Kildee's office know that we are proud of his leadership and will help him move this critical issue forward with our own delegation members. You can phone his Flint office at 810-238-8627, or go to his website at www.dankildee.house.gov.

NEEDS ONGOING ATTENTION: State Budget Process Moving Forward

As you are all likely aware, on Wednesday, February 5, 2014, Governor Snyder released his proposed state budget for fiscal year 2015 (FY2015). You can learn more about this proposal and how it will impact youth in our latest Budget Basics publication. Because so many of you have a vested interest in two-generation strategies, you can also see the impact of the proposal on young children in our accompanying analysis. All can be found on our Budget Basics page <http://www.michiganschildren.org/Budget-Basics/>, which is where more details will be available throughout the process. We focusing significant advocacy effort over the next few months on securing funding for extended learning opportunities. Any time you can talk with your legislators about the importance of before- and after-school and summer learning programs and the need for the state to prioritize investment in those programs, take the opportunity, and let us know how we can help!

As always, you can see all of our blog posts at SpeakingForKids.com related to budget priorities and all else.

FYI: New Leadership at Michigan's Children, We Welcome Matt Gillard, our new President and CEO

Last week, staff were glad to welcome former state Rep. Matt Gillard as President and CEO. We've worked with Matt in his role as a former Legislative leader in the Michigan House of Representatives and in his more recent roles providing government relations and advocacy assistance to the Early Childhood Investment Corporation and the Sandbox Party. He is a great strategist and a terrific choice to lead our staff. I'm going back to the role I love, directing Michigan's Children's programs, and look forward to being able to again spend more time helping to keep all of you informed and engaged.

From the Press Release:

Mr. Gillard, who represented the 106th District in the Michigan House of Representatives from 2002 to 2008, brings a history of proven leadership on key issues affecting children, youths and families, combined with a deep knowledge of the latest research and practices to improve conditions and increase wise investments.

“Whether working across the aisle on tough budget issues or looking for new ways to solve persistent problems, Matt always has displayed a commitment to improving the lives of Michiganders, especially our youngest and most vulnerable,” said Terry Murphy, Chairman of Michigan's Children Board of Directors. “We are thrilled to have him lead Michigan's only statewide multi-issue children's advocacy organization. With his guidance, Michigan's Children will be a stronger advocacy presence, and the children of Michigan will be better off for it.”

Learn more about Matt [here](#).

FYI: Youth Voice Forums Continue

Activity to create opportunities for young people to share their stories, concerns and suggestions directly with policymakers continued into February with another KidSpeak opportunity in Oakland County, hosted by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners and co-sponsored by the. More information about this and previous youth forums is available on the web site [here](#).

What we learn from young people helps to shape our policy priorities and other work throughout the year. You can read our some of our initial reactions to these events in our blog posts:

[Rising to the Challenge](#)

[Building Champions for Education and Life Success](#)

[Seventeen Years of Expert Testimony](#)

If you are interested in working with us to facilitate youth voice in your community, please just let me know by responding to this email.

Sincerely,

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