



## Graduate Michigan ACTION NETWORK

Welcome to the 2014 Graduate Michigan Action Network.

I know that we've been dormant for a little while. Through some transitioning at Michigan's Children and then through some transitioning 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. **NEEDS IMMEDIATE ATTENTION:** Sign on Letter supporting the Afterschool for America's Children Act, due back by February 4<sup>th</sup>.
2. **NEEDS ONGOING ATTENTION:** Refresher on the state budget process, with the Governor's Budget release set for February 5<sup>th</sup>.
3. **WILL NEED ATTENTION IN MARCH:** Public comment opportunity on the State Board of Education's work on adjusting school discipline policy.
4. **FYI, YOUTH VOICE FORUMS:** Opportunities to connect the voices of the most challenged young people with policymakers throughout 2014.

### **NEEDS IMMEDIATE ATTENTION: Sign On Letter supporting the Afterschool for America's Children Act**

Congressman Dan Kildee (D-MI) is planning to reintroduce the House version of the Afterschool for America's Children Act on February 10<sup>th</sup>. This is a companion to S.326 introduced last February in the Senate. It is important to demonstrate the strong commitment to extended learning that we have in Michigan, and one way to do that is to add your organization's name to a letter of support being circulated around the country by the Afterschool Alliance.

The Afterschool for America's Children Act reauthorizes and strengthens the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative, by far the largest resource available to support extended learning opportunities in Michigan. It promotes the sharing of data and resources between schools and community partners; supports increased quality through professional development of program staff; highlights STEM, physical activity and nutrition education as allowable uses of program resource; and provides accountability measures that show student progress over time towards meeting indicators of student success.

Chick on current [sign on letter](#). Email Kaitlynn Colbert, Program Specialist, Michigan Association of United Ways [kcolbert@uwmich.org](mailto:kcolbert@uwmich.org) to be included on the list of supporters. If you have any questions, just let me know by responding to this email.

### **NEEDS ONGOING ATTENTION: State Budget Process Revving Up in Lansing**

While we know that budget advocacy is really a year-round process, next week, the Governor will release his budget proposal for the fiscal year that begins this October (FY15). Stay tuned for the usual information about what's in and what's out, and for more detail about where Michigan's Children and the Legislature are in agreement or not with the Governor's priorities. As refreshers, take a look at the following:

[The Budget Process in Michigan: Opportunities to Advocate for Children and Families](#), which tells you what you need to know about the state budget process so that you can get involved in budget advocacy.

[The Fiscal Year 2014 Budget: Is it Promoting Equity to Ensure All Children Are Ready to Learn and Lead?](#), which analyzed how the FY14 budget impacted equitable outcomes for children, youth and families.

[The Fiscal Year 2014 Budget: What it Means for Youth in Michigan](#), which highlights how many of Michigan's Children's key issues of concern fared in last year's budget process.

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.

As always, you can get a pretty good idea of our current priorities by reading our blogs. A couple of recent posts:

[Improving the State of our State](#) is where we tied our priorities to some of the Governor's main priorities outlined in the 2014 State of the State address.

[Raising our Voices in 2014](#) expanded on an op-ed that we placed recently in the Detroit Free Press addressing some of our most pressing concerns and opportunities this year.

You can see all of our blog posts at [SpeakingForKids.com](http://SpeakingForKids.com)

### **WILL NEED ATTENTION IN MARCH: Input into Michigan's School Discipline Policy**

We've been so glad to have been a part of the Michigan School Discipline Task Force, an initiative taken on by the Michigan Department of Education through some support from the [National Association of State Boards of Education](#) and with the help of the [American Institutes for Research](#)

specifically to revise and implement new state student discipline policies that limit the use of out-of-school punishments, something that Michigan's Children has worked with many other partners to advocate for throughout our 20 years of existence. The Department will be taking a proposed School Discipline Policy Statement as well as a revised Model Code of Student Conduct to the State Board of Education at their March 11 meeting. After that, there will be the opportunity for public comment on both of these pieces. We'll keep you informed about that opportunity, but you can also keep track of the notices on their [web site](#).

## **FYI, YOUTH VOICE FORUMS**

As we have for the last 17 years, Michigan's Children continues to create opportunities for young people to share their stories, concerns and suggestions directly with policymakers, and we are always working to find new ways to provide young people and the supporting adults around them the tools that they need to advocate on their own behalf. The past few months have been busy ones with a Statewide KidSpeak at the Capitol Building on December 10, 2013 with Michigan Radio and Legislative hosts State Representatives Robert VerHeulen and Robert Kosowski, and State Senators Judy Emmons and Vincent Gregory.

This week, on January 27, we partnered with the Washtenaw Alliance for Children and Youth, the Washtenaw Intermediate School District and State Representative David Rutledge for a local KidSpeak held in the Washtenaw County Chambers. Later in February, we are partnering with the Park West Foundation, Foster Care Alumni of America-Michigan Chapter, Michigan Youth Opportunity Initiative and the Oakland County Board of Commissioners for a local KidSpeak being held in the Oakland County Chambers focused specifically on the concerns and opportunities for kids aging out of the foster care system.

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:

[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.

Expect more consistent communication from me moving forward about the state budget, federal opportunities and other policy issues impacting our most challenged young people.

Sincerely,

*Michele Corey*  
*Interim President and CEO*  
[michele@michiganschildren.org](mailto:michele@michiganschildren.org)

You are receiving this email because you have joined the [Graduate Michigan Action Network](#) to receive notices of special reports, Action Alerts, updates, and more information specifically about dropout prevention and recovery issues.



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