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August 10, 2009

House Speaker Andy Dillon
Room 166, Capitol Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear House Speaker Dillon:

Michigan's economic condition is disheartening to all of us who value education and human services. The question now is, how are we going to move forward both now and in the future?

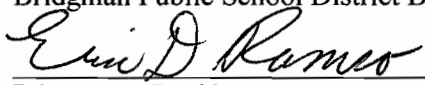
The State of Michigan faces significant shortfalls in both the School Aid Fund and the General Fund. One-time fixes have long been exhausted. The legislature has not been able to deal with fixing the structural deficit.

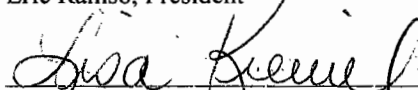
Michigan Schools are facing record cuts. Even after the State exhausts all Federal stimulus dollars, schools will still be forced to cut significant dollars per student over the next two years. During these difficult times the welfare of our schools must remain a top priority. A well-educated work force is critical to Michigan's prosperity.

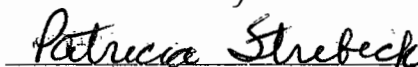
We realize there is no easy fix. Perhaps this dire financial situation will provide the motivation this legislature needs to do what should have been done years ago: make systemic changes that present a long-term solution. From our perspective, at a minimum that means we support your proposal to consolidate the planning, delivery and administration of health care benefits for all public sector employees and retirees in Michigan. This proposal represents the kind of thinking Michigan needs as we face our budget crisis. It is a proposal that embraces innovation and lays the groundwork for a new prosperity.

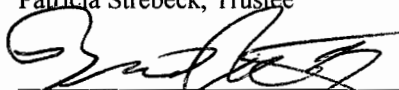
A statewide system will save districts money. It would also free up our time. Instead of haggling over insurance carriers, deductibles, and bids, we put our full attention to teaching and learning. We support your plan because it provides for a continued investment in our children and is a long-term financial solution that will benefit our State.

Sincerely,
Bridgman Public School District Board of Education

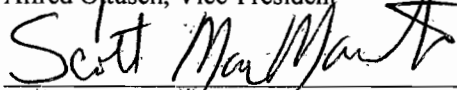

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