

Autism Alliance of Michigan Applauds State Board Creation of Special Education Committee

New bipartisan committee builds on growing statewide momentum to improve outcomes for students with disabilities

SOUTHFIELD, MI, UNITED STATES, June 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Autism Alliance of

“

Students with disabilities and their families deserve to be heard, and their experiences must help inform our work.”

Dr. Pamela Pugh, President of the Michigan State Board of Education

Michigan (AAoM) today applauded the Michigan State Board of Education's unanimous vote to establish a Special Education Committee, calling the move a significant step toward strengthening support for students with disabilities and creating a dedicated forum to elevate the voices of families, educators, advocates, and students in shaping the future of special education in Michigan.

The new committee, announced during the Board's June meeting, will be chaired by Board President Dr. Pamela Pugh and vice chaired by Board Member Tom McMillin.

The committee is expected to work closely with the Michigan Department of Education while engaging students, families, educators, advocates, school leaders, and community partners from across the state to better understand needs, identify opportunities for improvement, and elevate promising practices.

AAoM commended the State Board for its bipartisan commitment to the effort and for recognizing the importance of learning directly from the lived experiences of students and families.

"We are deeply grateful to President Pugh, Vice Chair McMillin, and the entire State Board of Education for their leadership in establishing this committee," said Colleen Allen, President and CEO of Autism Alliance of Michigan. "This is an important and meaningful step forward for Michigan students with disabilities and their families. By creating a dedicated forum focused on listening to students, families, educators, and advocates, the Board is building on a growing statewide commitment to strengthen special education and improve outcomes for students across Michigan."

The committee's formation comes after years of engagement by students, families, educators, advocates, and organizations working to elevate the experiences of Michigan's disability community and identify opportunities to improve outcomes.

That emphasis on stakeholder-driven solutions aligns with broader efforts underway to strengthen special education policy and funding across the state. Through the legislatively approved [Michigan Special Education Finance Reform Blueprint](#) process, AAoM engaged more than 1,000 parents, educators, school leaders, advocates, policymakers, and community partners from across the state to develop recommendations for modernizing Michigan's special education funding system. The resulting Blueprint outlines strategies to better align resources with student needs and improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

The Blueprint's recommendations have already begun shaping policy conversations in Lansing. Earlier this year, the Michigan Senate included intent language in its School Aid budget proposal supporting the development of a weighted funding approach for students with disabilities, reflecting growing recognition among policymakers that Michigan's special education funding system requires modernization. Additional discussions continue around other recommendations included in the Blueprint, including strengthening support for students with the most significant needs and improving the alignment between funding and services.

Since January 2025, AAoM has regularly shared public comment, research findings, stakeholder feedback, and policy recommendations with the State Board of Education. That work has included findings from the [Special Education Experience \(SEE\) Survey](#), the [Michigan Special Education Benchmark Report](#), the Michigan Special Education Finance Reform Blueprint, as well as insights and recommendations developed through collaboration with the RISE coalition, a growing network of families, educators, advocates, school leaders, and community partners focused on advancing implementation of the Michigan Special Education Finance Reform Blueprint and strengthening special education across Michigan.

AAoM noted that the Board's resolution specifically recognizes the importance of stakeholder engagement and the value of learning from work already underway across Michigan, including efforts led by families, educators, advocates, and community organizations.

Dr. Pamela Pugh, President of the Michigan State Board of Education and Chair of the Special Education Committee, said the committee will help ensure stakeholder voices remain central to future conversations about special education in Michigan.

"Students with disabilities and their families deserve to be heard, and their experiences must help inform our work," said Dr. Pugh. "This committee will provide an opportunity to engage communities across Michigan, learn from stakeholders, and identify ways to strengthen educational experiences and outcomes for students. I look forward to working collaboratively with families, educators, advocates, and organizations as this work moves forward."

Tom McMillin, Vice Chair of the committee, emphasized the importance of giving special education the focused attention it deserves and creating opportunities for meaningful stakeholder engagement.

"For too long, families, educators, and advocates have been calling attention to challenges within Michigan's special education system without seeing meaningful change," said McMillin. "This committee creates an opportunity to take a fresh look at those issues, learn from what's working both in Michigan and elsewhere, and identify practical ways to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. I appreciate President Pugh's leadership and look forward to working together on this important effort."

About Autism Alliance of Michigan

The Autism Alliance of Michigan (AAoM) is a 501(c)(3) organization and trusted ally and partner for autistic individuals and their loved ones. AAoM's mission is to lead efforts to raise expectations and expand opportunities for people affected by autism across their lifespan. We work to create a more accepting future for all people by cultivating a world rich in diverse abilities, talents, and ideas.

Manny Rivera
Rivera Communications
+1 626-864-7467

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/920225183>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.