Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today about the proposed funding cut to cyber schools. My name is Teresa Boardman and I am the Head of School at Insight School of Michigan. I have worked for cyber schools for over 7 years. I was attracted to work in cyber schools because I learned early in my educational career that all students learn differently. This became even more clear when I had my children go through the secondary school system. Each learned very differently. There is no one school model that works for every student but every student is worth an education and students who attend cyber schools should not be treated differently. Actually, I would argue that Cyber charter schools already receive significantly less amounts in total funding than traditional

schools because we do not receive funding from local tax revenues.

- Cybers receive only the foundation allowance – approx. $7500 per student

Michigan's traditional schools receive the foundation allowance *in addition to* local revenue.   Yet we service students in the entire state and receive no local funds.

Cyber charter schools are full-time, full-service public schools that provide students a complete education and wrap-around support services as any other public school and we are held to the same state requirements. With our community being the entire state of Michigan we need to work with social workers, school psychologists, related services providers who are local to the families enrolled with us or who can travel to provide any services that can only be delivered face to face. We also spend

a great deal of time learning about the local communities that are students live in so when we become aware of that a family may need food assistance or other resources we can direct them to locations that can assist them.

Cyber charters may have less overhead expenses however we have expenses that traditional brick and mortar schools do not have. Traditional schools speak of the day they will reach 1 to 1 computing. We are already doing that. All students regardless of where they live in the state they receive computers and printers. My school even supplements families for their internet connection so students have can access state of the art digital interactive curriculum and can meet online with highly qualified state certified teachers in live/synchronous class sessions.

You have probably heard that testing is an additional expense for Cyber schools since we have to rent locations throughout the state to all of our students but that is not the only expense related to testing. When I took standardized tests, I used to break the seal on the side of the test booklet but today students use technology when testing. That requires that we bring in a whole set of secured computers that meet the technology specifications for use with state testing. We also cannot rely on internet connects so we have cradle points to ensure connectivity is not interrupted during testing.

As a school of choice, our students come to us for a reason. Let's face it, if everything was going well at their traditional school, they would still be there. But is wasn't working for them and while we have all of these discussions we can't forget the students. Students who often times feel like something is

wrong with them because a traditional school isn't working for them. Students who don't fit in to traditional school settings for a variety of reasons. Students who feel like giving up and dropping out. As the 2017 Salutatorian for Insight School of Michigan said...students whose plan was to drop out until they found us and through their experience with cyber schools learn that "when something isn't working out that giving up isn't the answer. There is always another path. In the future, we should remember this. If something isn't working, try something else. There's a solution somewhere – we just need to be persistent and creative in finding our way. We should never give up on our dreams. We should keep trying even if we don't succeed at first." I would implore you to do the same. Cutting cyber funding is not the answer. Be creative in finding another path.

One that doesn't jeopardize the education of students who

need something different to be successful.