



The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe Of Michigan

TRIBAL CHIEF

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February 25, 2026

Via Email to TomKuhn@house.mi.gov

Michigan House of Representatives
Attn: Tom Kuhn, Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee
N-991 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7514

Re: Michigan Native American Boarding School Study Hearing

Dear Chairman Kuhn:

I am writing in response to your letter of February 10, 2026 inviting representatives of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan ("Saginaw Chippewa Tribe") to provide testimony at a hearing of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government concerning the Michigan Native American Boarding School Study ("Report"). On behalf of the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe, I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony at the hearing but believe the focus of the hearing will be on funding issues related to the Report and not the substantive history and ramifications of the American Indian boarding schools. Therefore the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe respectfully declines your invitation.

The Saginaw Chippewa Tribe submitted comments to the Governor's Office and I understand that these were transmitted to the State Legislature by the Administration. I have attached a copy of those comments here for your convenience. The Saginaw Chippewa Tribe did not participate in, and does not support, the Report prepared by the Kauffman firm. The Saginaw Chippewa Tribe is the only tribe in Michigan that still has an historic boarding school on its Reservation. Our Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways, Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Committee, and Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Historic Preservation Office have spent decades researching issues related to the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School and American Indian boarding schools. The devastating trauma

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inflicted on Anishinabe and Indigenous people and communities by these boarding schools still impacts our tribal communities and families today. Therefore, any “study” of the boarding schools should be conducted with all tribes’ participation, with a purpose and great care and respect for the survivors, descendants and tribal communities.

Finally, I have reviewed the letter by the Kauffman firm to the Michigan Attorney General and the Michigan Department of Civil Rights dated January 23, 2026. The Kauffman letter implies that the tribes support the release of their “complete report” and that objections were raised by tribes only to the release of the condensed version of the report. To be clear, the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe reviewed final drafts of the complete report and the condensed version and found that both inadequately addressed the scope and magnitude of the issues and conveyed a lack of knowledge and sensitivity of our tribal culture. Accordingly, we do not support either version of the Kauffman Report.

We welcome an opportunity in the future to discuss the American Indian boarding schools in a forum dedicated to the substance of the issues, which recognizes the harm perpetrated on Anishinabe and Indigenous people with a goal of providing opportunities for healing and reconciliation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Luke Sprague", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Luke Sprague
Tribal Chief
Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan



The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan

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November 26, 2025

SAGINAW CHIPPEWA INDIAN TRIBE OF MICHIGAN COMMENTS TO NATIVE AMERICAN BOARDING SCHOOL REPORT

I am providing the following comments on behalf of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan ("Saginaw Tribe") regarding the State of Michigan Indian Boarding School study.

The Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School is located within the Saginaw Tribe's Isabella Indian Reservation. This boarding school was established in 1893 and operated until its closure in 1934 and is one of just six Indian boarding schools in the State of Michigan and the only federal Indian boarding school in the State. The Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School's operation represents a dark period in the history of the Anishinabek people. The State of Michigan deeded the boarding school site and its buildings to the Saginaw Tribe in 2011. Since then, the Saginaw Tribe has spent a great deal of time, effort and money to preserve this historic site. The Saginaw Tribe has spent decades of study devoted to better understanding the impacts of this boarding school and has compiled a vast amount of data and research regarding the boarding school, its operation and its severe impact on Native Americans and their communities.

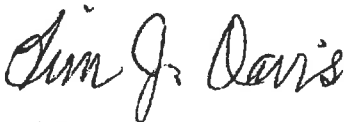
The State commissioned Kauffman and Associates Inc. to provide a report on Indian boarding schools in Michigan (Report). The Saginaw Tribe believes the draft report is seriously flawed in several respects. Some of these flaws are as follows:

1. The Report was drafted without input or support from the Saginaw Tribe.
2. The decision to conduct the study on American Indian boarding schools was made without proper consultation with Michigan's Indian tribes.
3. The Kaufman firm was retained to conduct the study without proper consultation with Michigan's Indian tribes.
4. The State's offer of Consultation to the Saginaw Tribe was delivered by email to the Tribal Chief. The State began its work prior to receiving any confirmation or any input from the Saginaw Tribe.

5. The State finally provided consultation to the Saginaw Tribe after the project began and the Tribe raised concerns and requested additional information. Those concerns were never adequately addressed. The Tribe's concerns included:
 - a) No clear purpose or intended use of the report was provided
 - b) Was not clear how the State/Kauffman intended to conduct interview of survivors in a respectful manner without causing additional trauma.
 - c) The timeline for the report was unrealistic and was not conducive to a thorough presentation or understanding of the history of the boarding schools or their impacts on tribes, tribal communities and individuals.
6. The Saginaw Tribe decided not to participate in the study because its concerns were not addressed and because the State had already substantially proceeded with its work without resolution of the Tribe's concerns.
7. The State's report is incomplete and if released, would likely harm Native American communities, especially the survivors, their families and descendants. Without the Saginaw Tribe's participation the Report does not contain important information regarding the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School.

For these reasons the Saginaw Tribe requested that the Report not be used or published in anyway without substantial substantive changes and thorough, meaningful input from all Michigan tribes. As indicated previously this is the only way a Report should be made that claims to document the historical significance or impact that the boarding schools have had on Native Americans and their communities.

Sincerely,



Tim J. Davis
Tribal Chief