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Renaissance High School

Governor Snyder, you recall that last week my team had a day full of meetings in Lansing. We met with members of your team, had some initially difficult conversations with legislative leaders, were generally running a very tight schedule, and frankly got in the vehicle for the return trip to Detroit, tired. We were tired. Then we headed into this very room, to attend a Meet and Greet from an invitation from this school's parents and students, I met Principal Gail Russell-Jones for the first time, and we were treated to an hour-long presentation on each of the curricular areas and several student performances. It didn't take long before that exhaustion turned into excitement and energy. It didn't take long to hear the Principal state her vision that all schools can, and should, offer all students the level of educational excellence clearly evident here. I knew immediately that when we would get together five days later for this important announcement, that this is the school and the setting that we should make it in. Thank you again, Principal Jones to you and Renaissance High School.

Governor, Superintendent Flanagan, Secretary Duncan, parents, students and Detroit community: today we change the game. You see, when Governor Snyder asked me to come out of retirement to accept this huge and daunting assignment, I knew it was the right thing to do. I knew that students in Detroit deserved our very best efforts and our very best minds and all the resources we can bring to bear on the situation to improve Detroit Public Schools. I also encountered many individuals who asked if I had lost my mind. I realized that they weren't questioning my mental state, but rather that they had given up on the system and, sadly in many cases, its students. Well, today this is not about giving up on

DPS or its students. It is about strengthening it, supporting them, creating a long term sustainable model, a System of Schools, that ensures [First PPT Slide]:

- 100 percent college- and career-ready graduates
- 100 percent of third graders reading at grade level
- Resources, as much as 95% of them, going directly to the schools
- Attracting and retaining students and families
- A wide range of innovative choices
- Safe and secure schools
- Financial sustainability
- Lean and supportive central administration
- Rewarding and flexible teacher career paths

We are NOT on the path to achieve these goals under the current system design. It's not about blaming the past or my predecessor or our teachers and educators who in nearly all cases are trying their level best. We have great people working in broken systems. When I accepted the task the Governor had given me, I knew there would be a lot to fix. But, I did not realize just how much was broken....There are no systems in place in such critical operational areas as Human Resources, Finance, Contracting and Procurement, IT. There is an organizational chart with some 30 people reporting to me and nearly half of them are contractors not full DPS employees and of those nearly all are scheduled to leave in 10 days at the end of this month. Our central office staff are spread out over 12 floors in four buildings in a condo ownership/lease arrangement that would make Donald Trump queasy. We all know about the \$327 million deficit. We've seen the headlines that only 3 out of 100 Detroit students scored proficiently on the NAEP-National Assessment of Educational Progress-test and that roughly 80% of Detroit high schools fail to produce a single college-ready graduate. We have of the 92 schools across Michigan that have been identified as Persistently Low Achieving, 45 of those right here in Detroit.

[PPT Slide Two] So today we announce a new system that drives vastly more resources into their classrooms, offers schools greater autonomy and ensures dramatic student achievement increases.

First, let me say that there are many good schools, scores of highly talented students, and cadres of dedicated educators in the Detroit Public School system that will remain within the Detroit Public Schools system. There's Detroit Renaissance High School but also Cass Technical High School. And there's also the Detroit International Academy for Young Women, whose "Pink Panther" girls attend the only all-female public school in the State of Michigan. And, Davis Aerospace where students can get a pilot's license in some cases before they get their drivers license. Eight of the top twelve highest performing elementary schools on the most recent Excellent Schools Detroit Report Card are DPS schools. Some names you probably have never heard-Thirkell, Charles Wright and Mann. The night after we visited Renaissance last week I attended a banquet for more than 300 DPS graduates who earned 3.5 or higher GPA's. Successful schools will remain with DPS and given greater autonomy to do what they do best. My very first day on the job I met the highly talented principal of Marcus Garvey Academy Mr. James Hearn recently named the Coleman A. Young Foundation Educator of the Year. DPS also will continue to manage all DPS property and debt service management and will continue to receive local tax revenue. DPS will also be issuing deficit elimination bonds and will eliminate the deficit in 5 years

A new Education Achievement System (EAS) will place underperforming schools across the state, beginning in Detroit, under the umbrella of a more autonomous system that, in turn, will place the ultimate power for running each school in the hands of the principal, teachers and staff at the school, rather than in a central administration. It will allow principals to hire the best teachers; place, train and support them; therefore providing continuous improvement based on student needs, and ensure that at least a third more taxpayer dollars are spent in the classroom, rather than in a central office far removed from the school.

Schools in the system will benefit from numerous resources, such as a longer school day and year, a challenging curriculum, dramatically more resources and funding for classrooms, greater parent input and more autonomy to hire the best teachers, principals and staff.

The new Education Achievement System also will place great emphasis on community involvement in schools. A Parent Advisory Council (PAC) will be formed at each school to incorporate local feedback and direction in a way that is much more direct than was possible previously. As the school progresses in its improvement plan, the parent council will assume additional responsibilities for supporting its school. Parents also will be asked to agree in writing to play a role in making sure their children succeed in school.

Additionally, we are working with foundations, businesses and philanthropic organizations to guarantee that all students who graduate from a high school in Detroit will have the financial resources to attend, at a minimum, their choice of a two-year college or career training school in Michigan. The goal is to expand the program to include four-year colleges as quickly as possible. The concept is modeled after the Kalamazoo Promise. Organizers have embarked on aggressive fund raising in an effort to create and then expand this program so that Detroit graduates may ultimately receive guaranteed financial resources to afford a four-year college education.

The system will be governed by an Educational Achievement Authority that will be established through an inter-local agreement between Eastern Michigan University and Detroit Public Schools.

(PPT Slide 3] The system will first apply to underperforming schools in Detroit beginning in the 2012-13 school year and will expand to cover the entire state. Over a five-year expansion period, it will envelop and operate underperforming schools across the state, in effect becoming a state-wide school district with a focus and specialization on the improvement of underperforming schools. Schools will remain within the Education Achievement System until they show dramatic progress for their students, at which time the improved schools may return to their traditional public school system.

I will remain Emergency Manager of DPS while at the same time serving as chair of the Executive Committee of the system during its 2011-2012 incubation and planning period. The system will develop capacity during the 2011-12 school year and will envelop the first schools from DPS in September 2012.

We have met with a great number of community leaders from all walks of life, many of and gotten a sounding from the larger community as well. Your input and counsel, much of it in the form of constructive criticism, has driven this model.

This Educational Achievement System, and Detroit Public Schools, are both centered on Achievement and Promise. They...we...are

the hope for our students,

the attraction for our families and those to come, and

the springboard from which fine educators both currently with DPS and from across the country can engage in 21st Century Teaching and Learning in autonomous and accountable, supported, nurtured, appropriately funded, properly equipped, safe and well maintained settings.

Combined with the promise scholarship opportunity, this is indeed Detroit's Promise. This is our promise and commitment to Detroit's youth. I am excited and humbled to be a part of it.

And now we are joined by United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan via video feed.