



December 10, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of **Eaton Regional Education Services (RESA)**, I am writing to express our strong support for the comprehensive tobacco-related legislation currently under consideration in Michigan. Eaton RESA serves students, educators, and families in Eaton, Ingham, and Clinton Counties, and we are committed to fostering a healthy and supportive environment across our communities.

We are particularly supportive of the bills aimed at licensing tobacco retailers and repealing ineffective penalties for youth tobacco use. Specifically, we endorse **SBs 651 and 652, HBs 6002 and 6003, SBs 654 and 653, and HBs 6004 and 6005**. These bills present an important opportunity to protect the health and future of Michigan's youth and will have a positive impact on students in our region and throughout the state.

According to the 2023-24 Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth Survey, 10.1% of high schoolers in our Tri-County Region had used a vaping product in the past 30 days. Among students who used electronic vapor products recently, 15.3% reported obtaining them by purchasing them from a store or gas station. These statistics highlight the urgent need for action to prevent youth from accessing tobacco products.

By requiring tobacco retailers to be licensed, similar to liquor retailers, these bills will strengthen the enforcement of laws that prevent the sale of tobacco products to minors. Tobacco continues to be one of the leading causes of preventable death, and making it more difficult for young people to access these harmful substances is a critical step toward safeguarding their long-term health. In schools, where students are especially vulnerable, these measures will help ensure a healthier environment, free from the risks of tobacco-related illnesses.

We also strongly support the repeal of penalties that punish minors for purchasing, possessing, or using tobacco. While it is essential to prevent youth from using tobacco, punitive measures have been shown to be ineffective and counterproductive. Instead of focusing on penalizing youth, these bills prioritize prevention, education, and providing resources to help students make healthier choices. This shift towards a more compassionate and supportive approach will help foster positive environments in our schools and communities, ensuring that young people have the tools they need to make informed decisions about their health.

Together, these measures will significantly reduce youth access to tobacco, focusing on prevention, education, and local empowerment. By supporting these bills, we can move toward a healthier, tobacco-free future for young people in our region and across Michigan.



We urge you to support these critical pieces of legislation. Your support will help create a healthier environment for Michigan's youth, ensuring they are not exposed to the dangers of tobacco and allowing them to focus on their education and future success.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to seeing these important changes take place.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr. Sean Williams, Superintendent