

The Board of the Insight School of Michigan (“Insight”) is exceptionally concerned with a recent action by the Department of Education that would significantly damage our school and put the educational future of thousands of Michigan students at severe risk.

Since Insight opened four years ago, we have prided ourselves on providing a unique public school offering to Michigan’s families and students, many of whom may not be able to attend or have not met with success in brick-and-mortar public schools. Particularly in the situation of students who are dealing with some specific difficulty or crisis, Insight provides one of the few options for students to continue their education. Since our inception it has been critical for that option to be available throughout the school year.

Insight has always been open to students that need us whenever they came. Not only is that admissions policy central to our mission, but it has also always been supported by our authorizer, Central Michigan University, and the Department of Education. It has never been suggested by anyone that mid-year enrollments were in any manner forbidden until now. The Department’s new Pupil Accounting Manual appears to now forbid enrollments after the very early portion of the school year.

Put simply, families and students do not have the luxury of planning health issues or other crises around the school year.

In the last school year alone, 423 students would have been barred from enrolling at Insight had this new Department of Education policy been in place. Hundreds of families would have found themselves locked out of a school option they needed over the years, and that is just at our single cyber school of excellence.

While the numbers and consequences are staggering, let us tell you the story of one exceptional young woman this new policy could have dramatically impacted. Madison Z. walked into her guidance counselor needing to drop out of school. Health issues had prevented her from attending school on a regular basis and there was no possibility for her to catch up. Luckily, Madison’s counselor suggested Insight may be an option. With the school’s flexibility and ability to work from home, she could still work towards her degree. Madison not only received her diploma but was Insight’s first Salutatorian and is currently working towards another diploma at a four-year university. If Insight would not have been there for her, she might have never received that important high school degree.

Her story is compelling but as the enrollment numbers demonstrate, not unique. Every enrollment is the story of some family and some individual. No family or school takes a mid-year change of enrollment lightly.

We urge the Department of Education to review this recent change. The Department should return to the admission and enrollment policies and procedures that cyber schools of excellence and, more importantly, the Michigan families that need them, have relied upon for years.


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