



June 19, 2026

Michigan Department of Education
Section 97n Community Violence Intervention Grant Review Committee

RE: Letter of Support for Saginaw Public School District – Section 97n Community Violence Intervention Grant Application

Dear Grant Review Committee:

On behalf of HELP (Healing Engagement Love Presence) Community Violence Intervention Program, I am honored to provide this letter of enthusiastic support for Saginaw Public School District's application for funding through the Michigan Department of Education's Section 97n Community Violence Intervention Grant Program.

HELP CVI has worked in partnership with Saginaw Public School District since March 2025 to provide violence prevention, mentoring, leadership development, conflict resolution, family engagement, and youth intervention services for students throughout the district. During this time, SPSD has proven to be an exceptional partner, consistently demonstrating a student-centered approach and an unwavering commitment to placing the safety, success, and well-being of children first. District leadership, administrators, counselors, social workers, teachers, and family engagement staff have worked collaboratively with our team to identify student needs, create intervention opportunities, and provide meaningful support for youth and families facing significant challenges.

The need for this funding cannot be overstated. According to available statewide violence data, the City of Saginaw continues to rank among the communities most impacted by firearm violence in Michigan and currently ranks second only to Benton Harbor in rates of gun violence. The effects of this violence are felt daily by our students, families, educators, and neighborhoods. Far too many young people have been exposed to trauma, loss, victimization, and violence during their formative years.

Most recently, our community experienced the heartbreaking loss of a Saginaw high school senior who was tragically killed following Prom during an after-party gathering. This devastating incident serves as a painful reminder that violence does not stop at the school doors and that our young people require comprehensive support systems that extend beyond the traditional school day. The emotional impact of these tragedies reaches classmates, families, educators, and the broader community, reinforcing the urgent need for coordinated violence intervention and prevention efforts.

The proposed Saginaw Safe Futures Initiative represents exactly the type of comprehensive, evidence-based approach needed to address these challenges. Through this partnership, students will receive intensive mentoring, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy-informed interventions, trauma-informed support services, family engagement programming, workforce development opportunities, STEM and technology education, leadership development, academic support, and violence interruption services. These strategies are designed to address both the immediate and long-term factors contributing to youth violence while creating pathways toward academic achievement, personal growth, and future success.

Since beginning our partnership with SPSD, HELP CVI has documented more than 1,200 unique interactions with Saginaw Public School students through school-based mentoring, after-school engagement, weekend programming, leadership development activities, violence prevention education, and family support services. Together, we have witnessed firsthand the positive impact that trusted adult relationships, structured programming, and trauma-informed interventions can have on students who are navigating difficult circumstances.

The Section 97n funding opportunity provides a critical opportunity to expand these proven supports and reach hundreds of additional students and families throughout Saginaw Public Schools. This investment will help create safer learning environments, reduce violence-related risk factors, strengthen family engagement, improve school connectedness, and increase positive outcomes for youth who are most vulnerable to violence exposure and involvement.

HELP Community Violence Intervention Program is fully committed to serving as the implementation partner for this initiative and stands ready to work alongside Saginaw Public School District to ensure the successful execution of the proposed Community Violence Intervention Plan.

We respectfully urge the Michigan Department of Education to give this application its strongest consideration. The students and families of Saginaw deserve every opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive in safe and supportive environments. This funding will help make that vision a reality.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued investment in Michigan's youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Bowen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kareem J. Bowen
Executive Director
HELP Community Violence Intervention (HELP CVI)