



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

BRIAN J. WHISTON
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 1, 2015
TO: State Board of Education
FROM: Rick Joseph, Michigan Teacher of the Year
SUBJECT: October MTOY Report

In August, I became a Michigan Educator Voice Fellow and attended a workshop of the Michigan Educator Voice Fellowship at the Amway Grand Hotel in Grand Rapids. I was one of 50 educators from around the state and I learned how to advocate for issues in public education that are well-served by a strong teacher voice.

I heard Abbie Groff-Blaszak, Director of the Office of Educator Talent and Policy Coordination at the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), speak about teachers' role in education policy. She stated that: "Policy is a 'good' word. Teachers belong in Ed policy." Her work related to Equitable Access to Excellent Educators, a federal program, is of significant interest to me. I will meet with Abbie next month to discuss ways I may support this work.

I published three blog posts on the [Meemic blog](#). The first is an introduction to the new Michigan Teacher of the Year (MTOY). The second is an essay urging teachers to raise their voices as advocates for education. It was published with the release of [this](#) video, which was conceived by Bill Cecil, MTOY 2003, and created by 12 different educators from around the state. The third one centers on the importance of building and cultivating empathy.

I declared the book [Junkyard Wonders](#), by Patricia Polacco, to be the official book of the MTOY 2016.

On September 1, I gave a keynote presentation to all the teachers, para-educators, secretaries, and administrators at our back-to-school breakfast in Birmingham Public Schools.

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On September 1, I became a board member of the Superhero Training Academy (STA). The mission of STA is to instill a spirit of creativity, inspire belief in potential, and ignite a passion of service to others.

On September 11, I attended a meeting of the Job-Embedded Professional Learning Network led by Lauren Childs of Learning Forward Michigan and the Oakland ISD.

On October 2, I presented two sessions on the STA at the GearUp2Lead Conference, a day-long leadership experience for middle and high school students from Flint and the surrounding areas of Genesee County.

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