



January 11, 2021

RE: Letter of Support for the Detroit Public Schools Community District

Dear MACUL Innovative District Award Nomination Committee:

I write on behalf of **DTE Energy** in support of the **Detroit Public Schools Community District** (DPSCD) nomination to Michigan Association of Computer Users in Learning (MACUL) for the Innovative District Award. Early in 2020 schools across Michigan were suddenly forced to suspend in-person instruction. Online learning tools were critical for all students to engage virtually. Together with community leaders, DPSCD realized a major challenge lay ahead in order to provide the needed curriculum to its students.

The district had made investments in classroom upgrades to provide access to technology, yet the key barriers remained regarding student access at their homes – lack of devices and lack of connectivity in the City of Detroit. Through a partnership with DTE Energy and other regional community leaders, DPSCD set out to deploy over 50,000 devices – one to every student in the district – and establish high-speed internet access within 90 days. Hence, the Connected Futures program was born!

Mobilizing to reach this goal created a variety of uncertainties – what is the appropriate technical solution, what is the fundraising strategy, how do we quickly acquire, provision and deploy equipment, what will be the connectivity solution, how do we provide support services, etcetera. The key was to do this while keeping all involved – staff, families and volunteers – safe during a global pandemic.

Every step of the way DPSCD's leadership was exemplary, the DPSCD staff were innovators and problem solvers. The team went above and beyond to make sure their DPSCD families had access to the technology needed to keep students learning and connected in a very short time frame. This coordinated teamwork with DPSCD, and community leaders allowed this inspiring goal to be accomplished.

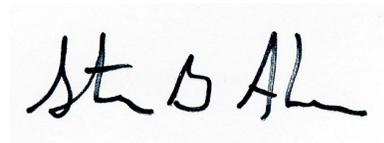
DTE Energy contributed logistical and technical support, yet one of the greatest contributions was a stronger connection to our local Detroit community. We employ many DPSCD graduates who were able to reconnect with their alma maters through this program. Additionally, non-alumni employees felt a sense of connection and purpose while contributing their talents and expertise amid a pandemic. DTE Energy had over 100 volunteers support the program - all who are grateful for the opportunity to serve the community.

Page 2  
DTE Energy  
January 11, 2021

The Connected Futures program established a foundation for an ongoing partnership between DTE Energy and DPSCD as we continue to work in other areas such as customer service to improve phone support to families, and to serve as a thought partner to DPSCD.

Everyone knows that 2020 was unprecedented and challenging. DPSCD rose to the occasion to keep its students at the forefront. The district exemplified what it means to be innovative and I passionately support the nomination for this award. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [steven.ambrose@dteenergy.com](mailto:steven.ambrose@dteenergy.com) or (313) 235-5332.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "St B AL". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Steven B. Ambrose  
Vice President & Chief Information Officer