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March 9, 2023

Michigan High-Speed Internet Office (MIHI)

Subject: Realizing Opportunity with Broadband Infrastructure Networks (ROBIN)  
Applications – Local Support

To Whom it May Concern:

On behalf of the School Districts of Berrien County, the Berrien RESA writes to support the ROBIN grant applications for Berrien County from submitting Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

Berrien RESA is a service agency that works with fourteen (14) K-12 school districts, two (2) K-8 districts, and four (4) Public School Academies to provide educational services to approximately 25,000 students in Berrien County. We strive to optimize student outcomes through collaboration and transformative thinking. We have worked with the Berrien County Broadband Internet Task Force (BCBIT) to help identify the impact that greater broadband access would have on improving student outcomes.

The pandemic acutely illustrated that access to and use of the Internet was an integral component of every student's educational life. Where there were gaps in service education was not possible. These gaps were most hurtful to students that could least afford educational gaps, less resourced communities. It is imperative that communities leverage broadband network access to eliminate the homework/instructional gaps and improve education.

BCBIT, worked with school districts and their families, to identify gaps in broadband coverage that awarding this grant will address.

We respectfully ask when considering grant applications that you keep our intended goals of equity, accessibility and affordability in mind when awarding the grant to successful ISP applicants.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Hoppstock".

Eric Hoppstock  
Superintendent