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**MIHEART Coalition Hosts Talent Summit**

*Broad coalition emphasizes importance of investment in education beyond high school*

**LANSING, MICH**. — MIHEART, a broad coalition of business, military, law enforcement, philanthropic, education and government leaders, is hosting a Talent Summit today, Thursday Jan. 24, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. to educate members of Michigan’s 100th Legislature and the Whitmer Administration on the urgency of supporting education beyond high school for all Michigan citizens. The Talent Summit has more than 100 attendees from a variety of sectors.

“Progress has been made, but Michigan still has work to do if we want to keep a competitive edge when it comes to filling the need for talent,” said Sandy Baruah, President and CEO of the Detroit Regional Chamber. “The time has come to provide all Michiganders 21st century skills to fill the job needs of tomorrow.”

MIHEART released the Total Talent Report in September detailing the need to support strategies that help Michiganders earn employer-valued postsecondary credentials, degrees, and certificates that position them for long-term success and meet the state’s talent demands.

“Effective career exploration and navigation for students from middle school to college is essential if Michigan is going to produce the talent industry needs now and in the future,” said Kevin Stotts, Talent 2025. “Students and their parents want to know more than what are today’s hot jobs. They want to know which postsecondary education and training programs lead to high-wage jobs fulling careers that are match their interests and abilities.” Talent 2025 is a catalyst working to ensure an ongoing supply of world-class talent for West Michigan. Composed of over 100 CEOs from the region, Talent 2025 illuminates gaps, evaluates leading practices, and advocates for the implementation of those leading practices to make West Michigan a top 20 employment region by the year 2025.

The Talent Summit is focused on the critical need to improve post-secondary education and training programs to help develop diverse career pathways for Michigan students.

“Michigan’s pressing challenge is to build up our talent, equipping all with the skills and postsecondary credentials needed for the jobs of today and tomorrow,” said Tim Sowton, Business Leaders for Michigan.

Michigan business representatives are taking part in a constructive conversation, addressing the skills gap Michigan is facing. By 2025, more than 60 percent of Michigan jobs will require education beyond high school, such as a postsecondary degree or professional or technical certificate. Despite this looming need, only 44 percent of adults in Michigan have that level of education.

“Talent is the new currency of economic development. It is our ticket to building a stronger region and more vibrant state,” said Tim Daman, President & CEO Lansing Regional Chamber**.** “If we are to solve the growing talent gap in Michigan, business and education leaders must work together to create and promote diverse career pathways for our students. We need to take a visionary and creative approach to bridge the gap between business, education and talent to develop a workforce that is prepared and empowered to succeed now and well into the future*.”*

“Our state’s economic vitality is rooted in the education levels and workforce readiness of all Michiganders,” said Caroline Altman Smith, Deputy Director-Education of The Kresge Foundation. “*Total Talent* reveals promising gains in postsecondary participation. But we must invigorate this pace and help more students complete a degree, especially those for whom college attainment is most transformative – students of color and students from low-income households. The Kresge Foundation remains committed to supporting Michigan-based organizations working to improve student outcomes.”

More information on the MIHEART coalition can be found [here](http://www.micollegeaccess.org/advocacy/miheart).

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