



## Application Information Sheet

### (1) Applicant Identification

- Name: Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD)
- Address: 3011 W Grand Boulevard, Detroit, Michigan 48202

### (2) Website URL

- <https://www.detroitk12.org>

### (3) Funding Requested

- Grant Type: Cleanup
- Federal Funds Requested: \$3,918,490

### (4) Location

- City: Detroit
- County: Wayne
- State: Michigan

### (5) Property Information

- Property Name: Priest Elementary-Middle School
- Complete Address: 7840 Wagner Street, Detroit, Michigan 48210
- Map attached

### (6) Contacts

- **Project Director**
  - Name: George Vary, Senior Director of Site Management
  - Phone Number: (313) 578-7225
  - Email Address: george.vary@detroitk12.org
  - Mailing Address: 1601 Farnsworth Building C, Detroit MI 48211
- **Chief Executive**
  - Name: Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent of DPSCD
  - Phone Number: (313) 873-7922
  - Email Address: nikolai.vitti@detroitk12.org
  - Mailing Address: 3011 W Grand Blvd, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor, Detroit, Michigan 48202

### (7) Population

- Population of city/town/jurisdiction or affected areas: 645,705.

### (8) Other Factors

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less.	NA
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	NA
The proposed brownfield site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	1
Secured firm leveraging commitment ties directly to the project and will facilitate completion of the remediation/reuse; secured resource is identified in the Narrative and substantiated in the attached documentation.	3
The proposed site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the proposed site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	NA
The proposed site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	NA
The reuse of the proposed cleanup site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	NA
The reuse of the proposed cleanup site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	NA
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	2
The target area(s) is impacted by a coal-fired power plant that has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.	NA

**(9) Releasing Copies of Application**

Not applicable

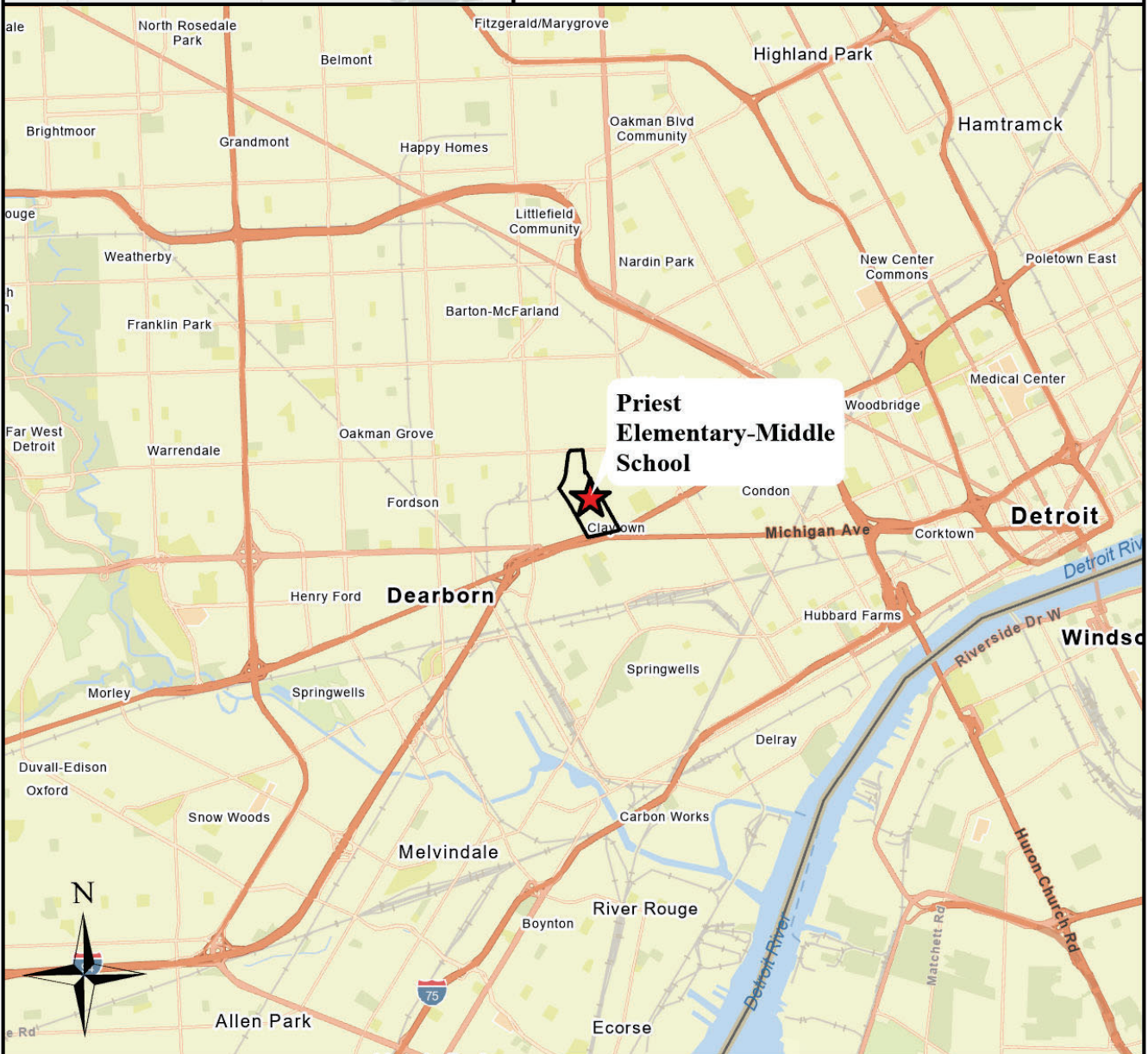
# Grant Implementation Area

*Detroit, Michigan*

## Legend

★ Brownfield Site

□ Target Area



## **(1) PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION**

### **Target Area and Brownfields**

#### ***a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area***

Detroit's history spans from fur trading and milling to manufacturing, shipbuilding, and automotive dominance. The grant target area is in Detroit's Claytown neighborhood, an area historically impacted by environmental contamination and economic disinvestment. Claytown was named for the Old West End's former clay mines, an industry long forgotten by most residents of the Motor City but which has left its scars beneath homes and schools. In the 1910s and 1920s, the Claytown neighborhood was built atop the former clay mining pits as Detroit's iconic manufacturing and automotive industry developed. Industries created a strong economy but also left behind widespread contamination, including fill materials beneath the neighborhood. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) has identified 755 brownfield sites in the city.

Detroit's population peaked at 1.85 million in 1950, fueled by automotive and industrial employment. From 1950 to the 2000s, manufacturing sectors collapsed, leading to widespread disinvestment. By 2015, the population had fallen to 680,000, and in 2013, Detroit declared municipal bankruptcy. While Detroit has become a symbol of urban decline, it is also a symbol of renewal. The city began blight reduction efforts in 2014 and has since demolished 27,000 vacant homes. Unfortunately, this effort created a new challenge: contaminated fill used to backfill demolition sites, further spreading environmental hazards. The regional manufacturing collapse also led to the 2021 closure of the River Rouge Power Plant, a coal-powered plant less than four miles from Priest School.

Claytown faces these same challenges. The target area for this grant is Census Tract 5262 in the Claytown neighborhood, encompassing approximately 0.3 square miles and 3,026 residents. Priest Elementary-Middle School (Priest School) is the largest property in this primarily residential neighborhood. The target area is bordered by Interstate 94 to the south, residential neighborhoods to the east and west, and a large steel mill to the north, separated only by railroad tracks. Within one mile of the target area are 20 industrial facilities, including metal recycling operations, auto manufacturers, bulk petroleum storage, waste management facilities, and trucking companies. Additionally, 119 homes were demolished in the target area through the City of Detroit's Demolition Program, increasing the risk of contaminated fill as basements were filled.

An EPA brownfields cleanup grant will allow DPSCD to remove asphalt covered contaminated soil and build outdoor classrooms, a microforest, an amphitheater and other community amenities. This will add value to the students education and to the neighborhood, providing much needed recreational and gathering space.

#### ***b. Description of the Proposed Brownfield Site(s)***

The Priest School property occupies approximately 10 acres and includes two two-story school buildings constructed in 1924 and later years, surrounded by residential neighborhoods. Priest Elementary-Middle School is an active K-8 public school serving approximately 700 students.

No historical records indicate the use of the property prior to 1920. Due to the size of the property (10 acres), fill material, and lack of records, it is believed to have been a clay mine. In 2001, Phase I and Phase II ESAs were conducted, including soil borings and chemical analyses. Foreign fill material layer was found across the property. The fill contains sand, gravel, wood, glass, rubber, charcoal, bricks, and other demolition debris that may have been used to fill a former clay mine pit. The specific source of contamination at the site is unknown but is assumed to be from the fill material. These investigations confirmed elevated concentrations of lead and arsenic throughout the site, with lead concentrations ranging from 9.8 milligram/kilogram (mg/kg) to 31,000 mg/kg and arsenic concentrations from 1.9 mg/kg to 87 mg/kg. These levels exceed Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) of 400 mg/kg for lead and 7.6 mg/kg for arsenic—meaning lead is present at up to 77 times greater than the allowable limit and arsenic at up to 11.5 times greater. No groundwater contamination was detected. The site is classified as a "facility" under Part 201 of Michigan's Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA), necessitating response actions to address soil contamination. This contamination presents a health risk to anyone that contacts the soil.

Student-accessible areas impacted by contaminated fill include playgrounds, athletic fields, and circulation areas surrounding the school buildings. An engineered exposure barrier is currently in place and managed in accordance with regulatory requirements; however, it represents a risk-management measure rather than a permanent solution. In a school setting, daily use, routine maintenance, surface degradation, and periodic utility or playground work increase the likelihood of soil disturbance. Each breach of the barrier requires immediate response to prevent potential exposure, creating ongoing operational risk and uncertainty.

## **Revitalization of the Target Area**

### ***c. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans***

Green spaces offer children significant physical, mental, and social benefits, promoting better attention, memory, and cognitive function while reducing stress, anxiety, and behavioral issues; they also encourage physical activity, improve motor skills, lower obesity risks, boost immune systems, and foster a stronger connection to nature, leading to overall better health and academic achievement. In short, green space is essential to the property fully serving its purpose of educating our children.

DPSCD plans to transform the primarily asphalt-covered property at Priest School into a vibrant recreational space that serves both students and the surrounding neighborhood. In 2024, Priest School conducted a survey of parents, receiving forty responses, 87 percent of which were from parents of children under age ten. The results showed strong support for improved outdoor facilities and a willingness among parents to volunteer their time. Respondents ranked a playground and walking trails the highest, followed by picnic areas and basketball courts. Based on this feedback, the DPSCD Office of Site Management developed a conceptual plan that includes an amphitheater gathering space, outdoor classroom with walking paths and a microforest, outdoor garden and classroom, two soccer fields, a basketball court, picnic areas, age-specific play areas, and additional gathering spaces. This redevelopment will convert asphalt into green space, creating a safe and welcoming environment for students and families while supporting DPSCD's commitment to healthy learning and play environments.

The project aligns with DPSCD's 2019 Facilities Master Plan, which identified physical and mental health support spaces as a top priority through thirty engagement sessions. Redeveloping the school grounds directly addresses this priority by providing additional play areas and green space. The project also complements Detroit's 27.5-mile Joe Louis Greenway, which will create a safe and efficient loop around the city. Priest School is located within the Greenway planning area, and Goal 1 of the May 2021 Framework Plan states that "the greenway will enhance residents' quality of life and promote community development." Redevelopment of the school grounds will advance this goal by providing safe play and educational spaces, creating a critical neighborhood asset for students, families, and residents, and enhancing quality of life in the Claytown neighborhood.

### ***d. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy***

The cleanup and redevelopment of the Priest School grounds will transform an underutilized, asphalt-dominated space into a vibrant green campus that serves both educational and community needs. About 5.7 acres of school property will go from asphalt paved to usable green space. This revitalization will stimulate economic activity by improving neighborhood aesthetics, encouraging reinvestment in surrounding residential areas, and creating a community hub for recreation and gatherings. The property serves as an essential community hub, providing much-needed open space in a densely populated neighborhood where housing leaves little room to gather. As a result, the site is frequently used for pickup basketball games, meetings, and a variety of community events.

**Community and Educational Benefits:** According to Green Schoolyards America, outdoor play and lessons significantly improve subsequent indoor learning by reducing stress and increasing focus, attention, motivation, and engagement. Studies show that students in green schoolyards demonstrate higher academic performance and improved social-emotional skills. Families and neighbors will gain access to shaded areas for cooling during summer heat, playgrounds, basketball courts, soccer fields, and an amphitheater and picnic area for community events, creating a shared space that strengthens social ties.

**Environmental and Resilience Benefits:** The redevelopment will increase grass-covered areas by 50%, replacing heat-retaining asphalt with permeable surfaces that enhance stormwater infiltration and reduce runoff. This change improves local resilience to extreme weather events by mitigating flood risk and lowering surface temperatures, which can reach 145°F on asphalt during summer. Adding trees and vegetation will further reduce the urban heat island effect and provide natural cooling. Importantly, construction of an 18-inch-thick exposure barrier atop contaminated soils will prevent erosion and dispersion of contaminated materials during extreme weather events and natural disasters.

**Economic and Health Impact:** Green schoolyard conversions have demonstrated a 4:1 return on investment in cities like Denver, driven by improved graduation rates, public health outcomes, and reduced energy costs. Increased green space promotes physical activity, reducing obesity and related health costs, while improving mental well-being for students and community members.

**Energy and Sustainability Opportunities:** The project design will incorporate energy-efficient features such as LED lighting and potential solar installations on shade structures or rooftops, supporting renewable energy goals and reducing long-term operational costs.

## **Strategy for Leveraging Resources**

### ***e. Resources Needed for Site Characterization***

No additional pre-cleanup site characterization is required to implement the selected remedy, as existing investigations, including Phase I/II work and subsequent assessments, provide sufficient detail to define excavation limits, estimate volumes, and develop bid documents. If limited additional sampling becomes necessary during implementation, DPSCD will seek funding from several resources, including the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), from which DPSCD is eligible to apply for grants or, if needed, loans to support any warranted assessment activities. DPSCD may also request assistance from the City of Detroit Brownfields Program, which operates an active EPA assessment grant and can provide support to ensure thorough site evaluation and compliance. DPSCD is eligible for this assistance as a Detroit-based entity. Additionally, DPSCD will collaborate with EPA Region 5 to pursue a Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) should further assessment be required.

### ***f. Resources Needed for Site Remediation***

DPSCD has already invested significant resources in this project, including funding for the Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives and quarterly monitoring events under its Due Care Plan to maintain the existing barrier system. Additionally, DPSCD is committing a minimum of **\$20,000 of in-kind staff time** to manage all aspects of the project, including grant administration, procurement of a qualified environmental professional and construction contractors, community outreach, and coordination with developers and stakeholders. This commitment is based on an average of five hours of staff time per month over the four-year grant period, totaling 240 hours at \$85 per hour, inclusive of salary and fringe benefits. EPA funding combined with DPSCD contributions is sufficient to complete the proposed remediation, but if cleanup costs exceed the grant amount DPSCD will seek additional resources. These include the EGLE Brownfield Redevelopment and Cleanup Programs, from which DPSCD will apply for a grant or loan if cleanup costs exceed available funding; the EGLE Cleanup Grant Program, which provides funding for environmental cleanup at brownfield sites to support redevelopment and reduce public health risks; and the MEDC, from which DPSCD will apply for grants or loans.

### ***g. Resources Needed for Site Reuse***

**DPSCD will contribute \$100,000 to the project** from its annual Capital Improvement Funds, and to maximize project success the City will leverage a diverse portfolio of funding sources for which DPSCD is eligible. DPSCD will seek support from Greening of Detroit by applying for tree plantings, with both DPSCD and the Priest School submitting requests twelve months before the property is ready for reuse as required by the organization. The District will apply to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund Grants for community forestry and tree planting grants, which provide funding for outdoor recreation and green space enhancements such as trails, playgrounds, and nature-based learning areas that support site reuse and community engagement. DPSCD will also request funding and volunteer assistance from local corporate foundations such as the DTE Energy Foundation and Ford Motor Company Fund to aid in project implementation. Assistance will also be pursued through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority Neighborhood Enhancement Program to support landscaping, school gardens, and small-scale infrastructure improvements aimed at creating vibrant and livable outdoor spaces. Finally, DPSCD will apply for USDA Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production Grants to fund school gardens and expand opportunities for hands-on learning and community-focused urban agriculture.

### ***h. Use of Existing Infrastructure***

The redevelopment of Priest School grounds will make strategic use of existing infrastructure to ensure cost efficiency and sustainability. Current school buildings will remain in place, with new outdoor classrooms and learning spaces integrated into existing circulation patterns, avoiding demolition waste and reducing embodied carbon. Existing water, sewer, and electrical systems will support irrigation, lighting, and potential renewable energy installations, minimizing the need for new utility extensions. Coordination with utility providers and adherence to city standards will ensure uninterrupted service and compliance. Parking lots and access roads will remain functional, preserving connectivity for school and community use. All activities will occur within DPSCD-owned property; no off-site access, utility extensions, or third-party approvals are required to complete the cleanup or support subsequent reuse.

## **(2) COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **Community Need**

#### ***a. The Community's Need for Funding***

The Priest School is in Southwest Detroit, an area that has experienced decades of economic decline and industrial legacy contamination. The median household income in the target area is approximately \$40,354, compared to the Michigan state median of \$72,389. Forty-two percent of residents live below the federal poverty line, double the rate of Wayne County at 20.1%. The youth poverty rate is even more staggering with 58.1% of youth in the census tract living below the federal poverty line compared to 44.2% in Detroit and 29.7% in Wayne County. In addition, Zillow reports that the average home value in Claytown is \$75,000. These economic conditions leave families and local institutions with limited resources to address environmental hazards.

Data Type	Census Tract 5262	City of Detroit	Wayne County	State of MI	US
Median Household Income	<b>\$40,354</b>	\$39,209	\$59,294	\$72,389	\$77,719
Poverty	<b>42%</b>	31.5%	20.1%	13.4%	12.1%
Youth Poverty	<b>58.1%</b>	44.2%	29.7%	18%	15.5%
<i>US Census 2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates</i>					

DPSCD does not have funding to carry out largescale cleanup of Priest School. DPSCD’s annual operating budget is focused on essential educational services, building repairs, and safety measures. Michigan funds schools primarily on a per-pupil basis. DPSCD’s enrollment has plummeted from 156,000 students in the 2002-03 school year to about 52,000 in 2025-26, greatly reducing the state dollars dedicated to DPSCD. Capital improvement funds are already committed to urgent facility needs such as roof replacements, heating systems, and maintaining classrooms. There is no dedicated funding stream for environmental remediation, and the district cannot divert resources from core educational priorities without compromising student learning. DPSCD is not eligible for tax increment financing because school districts do not generate taxable redevelopment so they cannot meet the financial structure required to trigger tax increment financing reimbursement.

Without EPA assistance, contamination at the Priest site will remain unaddressed, posing health risks and preventing redevelopment. The site contains lead and arsenic contaminated soil, which limits redevelopment opportunity. Cleanup is essential before the property can be safely reused for outdoor learning, a micro forest, school garden, upgraded playgrounds, and community activities. This grant is essential because DPSCD lacks the financial capacity to remediate the site, and local and state resources are insufficient to cover cleanup costs. EPA funding will enable soil remediation and infrastructure improvements, creating safe outdoor spaces for learning and community engagement while supporting neighborhood revitalization. Without this grant, the property will remain asphalt covered with minimal outdoor usage, delaying redevelopment and denying students access to healthy outdoor environments. EPA funding will remove financial barriers, reduce health risks, and advance redevelopment, improving safety and quality of life for residents and future generations.

**b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations**

The target area is home to several sensitive populations that face heightened health and welfare challenges, most notably the 700 elementary and middle school students at the site daily. These communities have disproportionately high poverty rates, youth populations, and significant youth poverty compared to county, state, and national averages. DPSCD serves more than 48,000 students, with over 80% qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch, a key indicator of economic hardship. Additionally, educational attainment is markedly low, with 22.7% of residents over the age of 25 without a high school degree, higher than Wayne County at 11.3% and the state at 8.2%, limiting access to higher-paying jobs and economic mobility. These factors indicate a population that is economically vulnerable and less able to absorb health risks associated with environmental contamination.

Data Type	Census Tract 5262	City of Detroit	Wayne County	State of MI	US
Children ≤18 years	<b>25.8%</b>	23%	22.4%	24%	21.6%
Adults (≥25 yrs) without a high school degree	<b>22.7%</b>	23%	11.3%	8.2%	10.3%
Median Household Income	<b>\$40,354</b>	\$39,209	\$59,294	\$72,389	\$77,719
Poverty	<b>42%</b>	31.5%	20.1%	13.4%	12.1%
Youth Poverty	<b>58.1%</b>	44.2%	29.7%	18%	15.5%
Households that are Housing Cost Burdened	<b>75.9%</b>	48.4%	27.3%	23.9%	23.6%
Housing built 1979 or earlier	<b>93%</b>	91.8%	71.3%	64.8%	49.1%
<i>Data from US Census 2023 ACS 5-year estimates</i>					

Economic hardship exacerbates health disparities. Children are particularly susceptible to the effects of hazardous substances commonly found on brownfield sites, such as lead and arsenic. Exposure to these pollutants, particularly lead in children, can lead to neurological disorders, and other chronic conditions. In communities where resources are already stretched thin, these health risks compound existing challenges, including food insecurity and inadequate housing. Nearly all (93%) residents in the census tract live in housing built in 1979 or earlier, indicating a higher likelihood of housing with lead-based paint and cumulative lead exposure. A brownfields cleanup grant will play a critical role in reducing threats to students at Priest School and neighboring families. The cleanup grant will allow DPSCD to remove lead and arsenic contaminated soils and create more green and recreational spaces in the neighborhood. Ultimately, the grant will support a healthier living environment for vulnerable populations.

### ***c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions***

The area around Priest Elementary-Middle School in Southwest Detroit experiences higher rates of several health conditions that may be linked to environmental exposures and economic challenges. Soil testing at the Priest School found lead concentrations up to 31,000 mg/kg, which is approximately 77 times the Michigan residential cleanup criterion of 400 mg/kg. Arsenic levels reached up to 87 mg/kg, about 11.5 times the residential cleanup criterion of 7.6 mg/kg. These elevated levels pose potential exposure risks to children and residents.

- **Asthma and Respiratory Diseases:** The community in ZIP code 48209, where the school is located, has an age-adjusted asthma hospitalization rate of 4.3 per 10,000 residents (Michigan Inpatient Data, 2021–2023), which is above the Michigan state average of 2.8 per 10,000. These respiratory illnesses are worsened by environmental pollutants and poor air quality, which are ongoing issues in Southwest Detroit. (*Source: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Asthma Hospitalization Data by ZIP Code, 2021–2023*)
- **Cancer Incidence:** Wayne County, including Detroit, has cancer rates higher than the state average, especially for lung, colorectal, and breast cancers. Data from the Michigan Cancer Surveillance Program show that neighborhoods with a history of industrial activity and environmental contamination have elevated cancer rates compared to less industrialized areas. Wayne County’s overall cancer incidence is about 470 cases per 100,000 residents, compared to the Michigan average of 450 cases per 100,000. (*Source: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Cancer Incidence by County, 2016–2020*)
- **Birth Outcomes:** Detroit reports a higher rate of low birth weight infants (12.2%) compared to the Michigan average (8.5%). These outcomes are linked to various factors, including environmental exposures such as lead and arsenic contamination found at the Priest site. Higher rates of infant mortality and preterm births in Detroit further highlight the need for environmental health interventions. (*Source: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Maternal and Infant Health Indicators, Detroit vs. Michigan, 2022*)

The grant will fund removal of contaminated soil to 18 inches with a demarcation barrier to reduce exposure risks. Replacement of parking lot asphalt, playground improvements, and creation of green space will create safer outdoor environments for students and the community. Cleanup and redevelopment will reduce environmental contributors to asthma, cancer, and other health conditions by lowering pollutant exposure. The project will enable safe reuse of the site for educational and recreational purposes, improving community health and quality of life.

### ***d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations***

Decades of under-investment in mitigation for industrial operations has left the Detroit and target area residents disproportionately share the negative environmental consequences from the lack of governmental policies. Manufacturing facilities released pollutants such as heavy metals, volatile organic compounds and particulate matter resulting in widespread residential and industrial contamination. Air deposition has long been a concern in Detroit, as documented in EPA’s Detroit Exposure and Aerosol Research Study (2007), and the use of contaminated fill for backfilling has plagued the city. Detroit news has recently highlighted multiple demolition contractors that have been suspended and fined up to \$4.7 million for using contaminated fill, spreading pollutants throughout Detroit. For the Claytown neighborhood, this is not only recent history. Built atop old clay mines that were frequently filled with industrial waste in the early 1900s, Claytown has always been disproportionately impacted by the negative environmental consequences of industry. This grant will address lead and arsenic potential exposures, directly addressing public health threats linked to historic industrial activity.

## **Community Engagement**

### ***e. Project Involvement. f. Project Roles***

DPSCD operates within a complex urban environment, partnering effectively with a range of local, regional, and state organizations to support environmental cleanup and site redevelopment projects. These partnerships leverage expertise, resources, and community connections to ensure successful project outcomes that benefit students and

the surrounding neighborhoods. DPSCD’s collaborative approach strengthens project implementation and aligns with broader community revitalization efforts.

<b>Organization &amp; Mission</b>	<b>Point of contact</b>	<b>Specific involvement</b>
<b>Claytown Neighborhood Association:</b> Represent residents of Southwest Detroit; advocates for community interests	Wagner Street Block Club wagnerblockclub@yahoo.com	Provide input on site reuse priorities, participate in community engagement and advisory groups
<b>Parent Teacher Association (PTA):</b> Represents parents and guardians to support student success and school improvement.	Aundra Simpkins president.detroitptacouncil@gmail.com	Acts as a liaison between parents and DPSCD; participates in community engagement, provides feedback on site reuse plans, and supports outreach efforts to ensure community needs are addressed
<b>Kansas State University TAB:</b> provides expert guidance and tools to empower communities to revitalize brownfield sites	Beth Grigsby Beth27@ksu.edu	Supports outreach efforts to ensure community needs are addressed
<b>Detroit Future City:</b> Provides planning resources and community engagement strategies for equitable land reuse and neighborhood revitalization.	Michael Johnson mjohnson@detroitfuturecity.com	Offers planning and engagement support to ensure equitable land reuse and neighborhood revitalization around DPSCD sites.
<b>Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance:</b> Advocates for trail development and connectivity, encouraging active transportation and outdoor recreation.	Lisa Brown lbrown@mitrails.org	Supports trail development and connectivity to promote active transportation and outdoor recreation opportunities for students and community.

***g. Incorporating Community Input***

DPSCD completed a survey of student families in 2024 as the start of planning for this project and hosted a public meeting to review survey results and discuss preliminary concepts. For this grant, DPSCD hosted an in-person meeting on January 21, 2026, to present the ABCA and the EPA Brownfields grant application to the community and solicit feedback. As part of the cleanup process, DPSCD plans to hold two public meetings at the school: one prior to the start of cleanup and one following its completion. Meetings will be announced through key community partners, social media, and physical notices posted in a major newspaper. The first meeting will outline the cleanup plan, gather community feedback, address any concerns, explain potential environmental impacts, discuss how residents will be protected during abatement, and provide a project schedule. The second meeting, held after remediation is complete, will present how the community was safeguarded during cleanup, share any new findings, and update attendees on redevelopment progress. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed throughout the project to ensure transparency and community involvement. The DPSCD project manager will track public comments and work with the team to incorporate feedback, and provide responses, ensuring community input is meaningfully integrated into decision-making and the feedback loop is closed. All meetings will be held in person. For residents who prefer alternative forms of engagement, meeting notices will include contact information for DPSCD staff and an option to request virtual meetings. DPSCD will ensure accessibility by providing translation services if needed and selecting venues that are fully handicap accessible.

**(3) TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS**

**a. Proposed Cleanup Plan**

The proposed cleanup plan is based on the ABCA to mitigate potential exposure to arsenic- and lead-impacted soils. The primary objective is to mitigate exposure risks to students, staff, and the community while reducing long term maintenance. This will enable DPSCD to safely implement site improvements such as outdoor classrooms, play areas, and gardens. The selected cleanup alternative involves excavating 18 inches of contaminated soil across accessible areas. Approximately 38,550 square yards of surface area will be impacted resulting in the removal of an estimated 19,280 cubic yards of contaminated soil. Tasks include soil removal and

disposal at a licensed landfill, installing demarcation barriers, backfilling with clean soil, and reconstructing paved surfaces (parking lots, sidewalks). This approach balances effectiveness, cost, and resilience while minimizing disruption to school operations. Work will be scheduled during summer months to reduce exposure risks and school disruptions.

All cleanup activities will be performed by a licensed environmental contractor under oversight of a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) and in compliance with Michigan Part 201 and EGLE guidance. Dust suppression, air monitoring, and worker protection will be implemented throughout the project. Excavated soils will be transported to an approved landfill for disposal. The estimated cleanup duration is 12–16 weeks.

**Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs**

**b. Project Implementation, c. Anticipated Project Schedule, d. Task/Activity Lead, e. Outputs**

DPSCD is requesting \$3,918,490 to complete cleanup activities at the Priest School. DPSCD is not using grant funds for personnel costs, participant support costs, or subawards and will perform grant management as an in-kind service. Because of this, no administrative or indirect costs are associated with the grant funding.

<b>Task 1: Programmatic</b>
b. Project Implementation: <b>EPA Resources:</b> None. <b>Non-EPA Resources:</b> Program management, fiscal grant management, quarterly reporting (QR) and work package updates in ACRES, federal financial reports (FFRs), federal requirement monitoring (BABA, Davis-Bacon, etc.), QEP and licensed cleanup contractor procurement, final grant reporting.
c. Anticipated Project Schedule: QEP will be procured in months 1-6 of cooperative agreement start, cleanup contractor will be procured in months 12-18 of cooperative agreement start allowing for cleanup during the summer months when school is out. Quarterly reports will be submitted within 30 days after quarter. FFRs will be completed within 30 days of fiscal year end. ACRES will be updated as tasks are completed.
d. Task/Activity Lead: DPSCD with QEP assistance
e. Outputs: 16 QRs, 1 QEP, 1 cleanup contractor, 4 FFRs, updated work package in ACRES, 1 final report
<b>Task 2: Community Outreach</b>
b. Project Implementation: <b>EPA Resources:</b> None. <b>Non-EPA Resources:</b> DPSCD will complete two public meetings, social media posts, and work with its PTA to announce the grant award.
c. Anticipated Project Schedule: First public meeting will be held in months 12-18 of cooperative agreement start and before cleanup begins. 2 <sup>nd</sup> public meeting in months 25-28, within two months of cleanup completion. Social media posts beginning at grant announcement and regularly during cleanup.
d. Task/Activity Lead: DPSCD
e. Outputs: 2 public meetings with notes, social media posts
<b>Task 3: Cleanup</b>
b. Project Implementation: <b>EPA Resources:</b> Finalize ABCA; Develop QAPP for TCLP sampling. Develop health and safety plan. Develop bid specification document; cleanup of contaminated soils with QEP oversight – includes excavation, hauling, disposal, and backfill, site restoration, final reporting, develop Due Care Plan for submittal to EGLE <b>Non-EPA Resources:</b> QEP and cleanup contractor oversight
c. Anticipated Project Schedule: Finalize ABCA months 6-9. Bid Specification development by QEP in months 6-12. Health & safety plan in months 18-20. Cleanup in months 20-24. Final report in months 24-28 within 60 days post cleanup. Due care plan in months 28-32.
d. Task/Activity Lead: QEP (technical expertise) & Contractor (technical expertise) with DPSCD oversight
e. Outputs: 38,000 square yards of school property ready for redevelopment, volume of impacted material disposed of at an approved landfill facility and replacement with clean fill. 1 final ABCA, 1 set of bid specifications, 1 health & safety plan, 1 site-specific QAPP, 1 final report, 1 Documentation of Due Care Compliance report

**f. Cost Estimates**

DPSCD is applying for a \$3,918,490 brownfields cleanup grant. No direct or indirect administrative costs will be charged to the grant. DPSCD is not seeking funding for personnel costs. This grant will not use participant support costs or subawards.

All costs are taken directly from the ABCA that was developed by an environmental consultant. Tonnage and square yardage rates were estimated based on other cleanup projects in Detroit.

**Cleanup: \$3,918,490:**

• **Contractual: \$96,730**

- Project manager time to finalize ABCA, develop bid specs, bidding assistance, drafting of final report and due care plan for operations and maintenance for submittal to EGLE. 100 hours at \$150/hour = **\$15,000**

- Field staff cleanup oversight. Cleanup is estimated to take 72 days based on five trucks hauling 34 loads per day. 72 days x 8 hours/day = 725 hours at \$90/hour = **\$62,250**

- QEP vehicle for daily oversight for 72 days at \$90 per day = **\$6,480**

- Laboratory costs for TCLP sampling for waste disposal = 10 samples at \$1000 per sample = **\$10,000.**

• **Construction: \$3,821,760**

- Excavation, hauling, disposal, backfill costs are estimated at \$80 per ton based on the average rate in the Detroit area. Excavation of 28,920 tons of contaminated soil to 18 inches = **\$2,313,600.**

- Site restoration costs include grading, seeding, repaving of parking areas calculated at \$80 per square yard for 10,890 square yards = **\$871,200.**

- Contingency: A 20% contingency is included in the cost estimate due to the time between the cost estimate and actual work, inflation, and unknown economic trends. Total contingency is **\$636,960.**

		Project Tasks (\$)	
Budget Categories		Cleanup	Total
Direct Costs	Personnel	-	-
	Fringe	-	-
	Travel	-	-
	Equipment	-	-
	Supplies	-	-
	Contractual	\$96,730	\$96,730
	Construction	\$3,821,760	\$3,821,760
	Other	-	-
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>		<b>\$3,918,490</b>	<b>\$3,918,490</b>
Indirect Costs		-	-
<b>Total Budget</b>		<b>\$3,918,490</b>	<b>\$3,918,490</b>

**g. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results**

The program manager will conduct monthly reviews of the remediation project to monitor progress and ensure compliance with key milestones. In the event of any delays, DPSCD will coordinate with the EPA project officer to implement corrective actions and maintain the project timeline. DPSCD will track and report project outputs, outcomes, and other metrics in its quarterly reports and within the ACRES system. ACRES will be regularly updated both during and after the grant period to ensure comprehensive documentation of all activities, outputs, and outcomes. Deliverables, including the final ABCA, QAPP, bid specifications, and the final abatement report, will be submitted to the EPA project officer for review and approval. Specific outputs are listed in the table below. Metrics are tied to work plan tasks.

Activity	Details/Outputs
Project Oversight	Outputs: Management hours tracked; mobilization checklist; ≥2 community notices; submittals approved. Metrics: 100% pre-construction approvals; schedule variance ≤10%; zero OSHA recordables; 100% tailgate logs.
Community Outreach	Outputs: number of public meetings, number of attendees at meetings
Soil Excavation, Hauling Disposal	Outputs: Excavation & disposal; liner & clean fill; manifests; air/dust logs. Metrics: Alt 8: 14,000 CY ±10%; Alt 4: 37,000 CY ±10%; 100% manifests reconciled; dust < action level ≥95%; fill meets spec 100%.
Site Restoration	Clean fill placed, green areas seeded, parking lots paved; drainage improvements.
QA/QC & Documentation	Daily inspections; photos; material certifications; manifests digitized.
Measurement & Reporting	Weekly progress meetings; quarterly EPA reports; Davis-Bacon reports; final Documentation of Due Care Compliance / completion report.
Post-Construction O&M	Annual inspections; maintenance KPIs (≥95% surface good); public posting; complaint response ≤3 days.

Outcomes will include reduced exposure risks to students, their families, and neighboring residents, decreased hard spaces on school grounds, increased green space, increased shade availability, and new amenities for students, their families, and neighboring residents.

#### **(4) PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE**

##### **Programmatic Capability**

##### ***a. Organizational Structure b. Description of Key Staff***

DPSCD, the largest public school system in Michigan, operates under a centralized leadership model that supports efficient coordination among departments responsible for academic programming, operational services, financial management, and regulatory compliance. The district is led by Superintendent Dr. Nikolai Vitti and guided by an established organizational structure that clearly defines reporting relationships and accountability across all central offices, ensuring strong cross-functional collaboration. This structure is publicly documented and reflects the district's commitment to clarity, transparency, and effective operational oversight. As a district managing more than \$1.1 billion annually, including over \$340 million in federal funds, DPSCD maintains robust financial controls and a well-developed administrative infrastructure capable of supporting large-scale grant management. The district's operations are further strengthened by long-term planning frameworks such as its Facilities Master Plan, which guides maintenance priorities, environmental investments, and capital improvements across more than 120 school facilities. This planning ensures that facility-based projects, including environmental cleanup and remediation, occur within a coordinated, informed, and well-supported system.

Within this structure, the Office of Grants, Facilities Department, and Office of Finance work in close partnership to manage grant-funded projects effectively. The Office of Grants oversees compliance, reporting, documentation, and communication with federal partners, ensuring adherence to all grant conditions. The Department of Facilities provides technical leadership for environmental oversight and cleanup activities, while the Office of Finance ensures compliance with procurement procedures, financial tracking, draw requests, and federal regulations. All expenditures are tracked in a centralized financial system and require multi-level approval. A dedicated Grant Compliance Administrator reviews and approves every transaction to ensure it is allowable and necessary under federal guidelines. Together, these units maintain the systems and internal controls that support timely expenditures, proper documentation, and completion of all technical, financial, and administrative requirements associated with federal funding.

Lines of authority and communication are clearly defined. Weekly progress meetings and monthly financial reconciliations will align technical progress with expenditure of funds. The personnel assigned to this grant bring experience and subject-matter expertise. George A. Vary, Senior Director of Site Management and the designated Project Manager, has more than 20 years of experience at DPSCD overseeing site operations, environmental coordination, facilities improvements, contractor management, and multimillion-dollar infrastructure projects. His background includes developing RFPs, managing complex vendor relationships, supervising districtwide maintenance operations across more than 200 properties, and supporting environmentally focused grant-funded initiatives, giving him a strong foundation for managing the proposed scope of work. Mr. Vary's expertise in site planning and outdoor classroom development will ensure smooth implementation of site restoration and green space enhancements. Michael A. Flowers, Senior Director of Environmental Health and Safety will assist Mr. Vary with QEP and technical oversight. Mr. Flowers brings decades of environmental health and compliance experience, including oversight of more than \$200 million in federally funded environmental programs during his prior service with Wayne County. In his current role, he oversees districtwide environmental testing, hazardous material coordination, asbestos oversight, water quality monitoring, stormwater review, and due-care inspections, all of which directly support the successful execution of environmental cleanup and compliance activities. Mr. Flowers will ensure cleanup compliance with EGLE requirements.

Additional leadership support includes Assistant Superintendent Gregory Hurst, who advises on project alignment with district operational priorities, instructional needs, and cross-departmental coordination. His perspective ensures that project activities integrate seamlessly with school operations and district goals. Principal Jermaine Kyles of Priest Elementary-Middle School will serve as a local site manager and advisor, ensuring building access, stakeholder communication, and smooth implementation at the school level. His involvement guarantees that project activities are well-coordinated on site, with minimal disruption to students and staff. Financial oversight will be provided by Kena Halliburton and her financial team, who will manage draw requests, budget tracking, and compliance with procurement policies and fiscal regulations, supported by DPSCD's well-established financial management systems. Ms. Halliburton is the Deputy Executive Director for the Department of Finance – School Budget and Grant Compliance.

**c. Acquiring Additional Resources**

DPSCD maintains procurement systems compliant with 2 CFR Part 200 to ensure timely acquisition of contractors. It posts all opportunities on DemandStar, where vendors can register for alerts and DPSCD encourages local vendor participation. DPSCD will follow EPA 560-F-24-204, dated December 2025, *Brownfields Grants: Guidance on Competitively Procuring a Contractor*. RFPs will define scope, technical specifications, and performance requirements; proposals will be evaluated on qualifications, past performance, cost, and EPA compliance. Contracts will include health and safety provisions and adherence to the approved Work Plan. DPSCD will competitively retain a QEP for technical oversight, QA/QC, and EPA reporting. In addition to formal procurement, DPSCD will leverage support from community partners identified in Section 2e and use services provided by the Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB) program as needed to support implementation, compliance, and successful project delivery.

**Past Performance and Accomplishments**

**e. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements**

**(1) Purpose and Accomplishments**

DPSCD has a proven track record of successfully managing state and federal grants. Examples are below.

**Funding Agency & Type:** US Department of Education (administered by the Michigan Department of Education [MDE]) Title I, Part A grant **Amount:** \$132,235,531: This 2025 funding is to help disadvantaged children meet high academic standards. DPSCD is on schedule to complete all grant tasks within the performance period. The grant requires MDE approval of a detailed line-item budget, regular reimbursement requests, annual performance report, and a Final Expenditure Report (FER). The grant is managed in accordance with Federal Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200) and subject to the Single Audit to ensure adherence to federal cost principles. It is also subject to MDE monitoring visits. As part of the grant DPSCD conducts annual community meetings and stakeholder engagement sessions to drive resource allocation. All expenditures are tracked in a centralized financial system and require multi-level approval. A dedicated Grant Compliance Administrator reviews and approves every transaction to ensure it is allowable and necessary under federal guidelines.

**Funding Agency & Type:** US Department of Education (administered MDE Title IV: Stronger Connections, **Amount:** \$8,263,618: This two-year grant awarded in 2024 promotes positive school environments for students and families. The funding supports initiatives, including teacher home visits, to strengthen student and family engagement. DPSCD is on schedule to complete all grant tasks within the performance period. The grant requires MDE approval of a detailed line-item budget, regular reimbursement requests, and a FER. It is managed in accordance with Federal Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200) and subject to the Single Audit to ensure adherence to federal cost principles. All expenditures are tracked in a centralized financial system and require multi-level approval. A dedicated Grant Compliance Administrator reviews and approves every transaction to ensure it is allowable and necessary under federal guidelines.

**Funding Agency & Type:** US Department of Justice (DOJ) COPS Hiring Program, **Amount:** \$750,000: This 2023 five-year grant is to hire law enforcement officers to support the community through relationship building and mitigating safety risks, creating safe and accessible spaces. DPSCD is on schedule to complete all grant tasks within the performance period. The grant requires semi-annual performance reports, quarterly financial reports, and a final expenditure report. It is managed in accordance with Federal Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200) and subject to the Single Audit to ensure adherence to federal cost principles. The DOJ provides significant oversight, resulting in regular communication between the district and the agency. All expenditures are tracked in a centralized financial system and require multi-level approval. A dedicated Grant Compliance Administrator reviews and approves every transaction to ensure it is allowable and necessary under federal guidelines.

**(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements**

<b>Funding Agency/Fund Type</b>	<b>Compliance</b>
US Depart. of Ed MDE Title I, Part A grant	DPSCD has submitted a detailed line item budget with each reimbursement request and one annual report. It is in compliance with all grant terms and conditions.
US Depart. of Ed MDE Title IV: Stronger Connections	DPSCD has submitted a detailed line item budget with each of its reimbursement requests. It is in compliance with all grant terms and conditions.
US Department of Justice COPS Hiring Program	All semi-annual performance reports have been submitted on time as well as the quarterly financial reports. It is in compliance with all grant terms and conditions.



## Threshold Criteria

### (1) Applicant Eligibility:

- a. Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) is a General Purpose Unit of Local Government and is eligible to apply for EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant funding.
- b. DPSCD is not exempt from federal taxation under section 501(c)(4).

(2) **Previously Awarded Cleanup Grants:** The site has not received funding from a previously awarded EPA brownfields cleanup grant.

(3) **Expenditure of Existing Multipurpose Grant Funds:** DPSCD does not have an open EPA brownfields multipurpose grant.

(4) **Site Ownership:** DPSCD is the sole owner of the site.

### (5) Basic Site Information:

- a. Site Name: Priest Elementary-Middle School
- b. Site Address: 7840 Wagner Street, Detroit, Michigan 48210

### (6) Status and History of Contamination at the Site:

- a. Hazardous Substances or Petroleum Contamination: Hazardous Substances
- b. Operational History and Current Use: The property has been used as a public-school building and grounds since 1924.
- c. Environmental Concerns: Environmental concerns include arsenic-impacted fill and soils in areas historically disturbed by dumping, construction, demolition, and fill placement activities.
- d. How Site became Contaminated: The contamination resulted from a combination of: Prior to development, portions of the land were affected by historic fill placement, likely to fill in a former clay mine. Contaminated soils are found across the site with no specific disbursement pattern.

(7) **Brownfields Site Definition:** The site is: a) not listed or proposed for listing on the National Priorities List; b) not subject to unilateral administrative orders, court orders, administrative orders on consent, or judicial consent decrees issued to or entered into by parties under CERCLA; and c) not subject to the jurisdiction, custody, or control of the U.S. government.

### (8) Environmental Assessment:

Mutiple environmental assessments have been completed at the site. These investigations identified up to 12 feet of soil and fill material containing bricks, wood, and other miscellaneous debris with concentrations of lead, arsenic, and benzo(a)pyrene exceeding residential cleanup criteria.

- a. Phase I ESA dated January 17, 2001
- b. Phase II ESA dated May 7, 2001
- c. Subsurface Investigation Report dated September 19, 2001
- d. Phase I ESA dated November 4, 2025

**(9) Site Characterization:**

c.i.: DPSCD is not eligible to be enrolled in the State voluntary response program because no such program or equivalent oversight program exists. A letter from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy is attached.

c.ii.: An Environmental Professional has certified that site characterization completed to date is sufficient to support the proposed remediation activities. Existing environmental assessments provide adequate information regarding the extent and nature of impacts to initiate cleanup work.

**(10) Enforcement or Other Actions:** There are no known ongoing or anticipated environmental enforcement actions related to the site.

**(11) Sites Requiring a Property-Specific Determination:** The site does not need a Property-Specific Determination.

**(12) Threshold Criteria Related to CERCLA/Petroleum Liability:** The site is contaminated with hazardous substances.

a. Property Ownership Eligibility – Hazardous Substance Sites

ii. Exceptions To Meeting The Requirements For Asserting An Affirmative Defense To CERCLA Liability

(1) *Publicly Owned Brownfield Sites Acquired Prior to January 11, 2002*

Information on the Property Acquisition

(a) How property was acquired: The property was acquired by DPSCD as part of the establishment and expansion of the Detroit public-school system. There is no tax or deed history indicating a commercial purchase; the property became part of the district's holdings through governmental authority.

(b) Date of acquisition: The site has operated as a public-school property since 1924.

(c) Disposal timing: All disposal of hazardous substances at the site occurred before DPSCD acquired the property.

(d) DPSCD affirms it has not caused or contributed to any release of hazardous substances at the site.

(e) DPSCD affirms it has not, at any time, arranged for the disposal of hazardous substances at the site or transported hazardous substances to the site.

**(13) Cleanup Authority and Oversight Structure:**

a. Cleanup Oversight: Michigan does not operate a Voluntary Cleanup Program. To ensure adequate oversight of the cleanup, DPSCD will procure an environmental professional and Michigan-licensed remediation contractor conduct, manage, and oversee the cleanup. Cleanup will comply with Michigan Part 201 requirements and EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant standards.

b. Access: No access to adjacent or neighboring properties is anticipated for the proposed cleanup.

**(14) Community Notification:**

a. Draft Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA): A draft ABCA (dated December 5, 2025) was made available for the community to comment on with the draft application.

- b. Community Notification Ad: Community notification was made in the Michigan Chronicle – January 14-20, 2026 announcing intent to apply for a cleanup grant and invited the public to comment on the draft grant application and draft ABCA. The ad also announced a public meeting being held on January 22, 2026 at Priest Elementary-Middle School.
- c. Public Meeting: An in-person meeting was held on January 22, 2026 at 9:00 AM at the Priest Elementary-Middle School.
- d. Submission of Community Notification Documents: Attached are copies of the draft ABCA, newspaper ad that demonstrates solicitation for comments 14 days prior to application submittal to the EPA, meeting sign-in sheet, and meeting summary including comments and responses.

(15) **Contractors and Named Subrecipients:**

- a. Contractor: Not Applicable
- b. Named Subrecipients: Not Applicable



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY  
REMEDIAION AND REDEVELOPMENT DIVISION



PHILLIP D. ROOS  
DIRECTOR

January 6, 2026

VIA EMAIL

George Vary  
Detroit Public Schools  
1601 Farnsworth, Building C  
Detroit, Michigan 48211

Dear George Vary:

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) acknowledges that the Detroit Public Schools plans to conduct the cleanup of a brownfield site and is applying for an FY26 EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant.

The Detroit Public Schools has developed an application requesting site-specific federal Brownfields Cleanup funding for the Priest School Site located at 7840 Wagner Street, Detroit, Michigan. EGLE confirms that this property is a "facility" in accordance with Part 201 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended.

EGLE affirms that the Priest School:

- i. Is not eligible to be enrolled in the State voluntary response program because no such program or equivalent oversight program exists.

If you need further information about this letter or other assistance regarding EGLE's brownfield programs, please feel free to contact me at the number below or by email at [SmedleyR@Michigan.gov](mailto:SmedleyR@Michigan.gov).

Sincerely,

Ronald L. Smedley  
Federal Brownfield Coordinator  
Brownfield Assessment and Redevelopment  
Section  
517-242-9048

cc: Paul Owens, EGLE  
Dan Gough, EGLE