



**Issue Summit:
Flint Water Crisis &
Detroit Public Schools**

On March 18th, the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce held an Issue Summit about the Flint Water Crisis and the Detroit Public Schools. I had the opportunity to serve on a panel at that session hosted by **Allie Bush** of the GR Chamber.

Participating along with me for the session was **Dan Varner**, CEO of Excellent Schools Detroit; **John Walsh**, Director of Strategy for Governor Snyder; **Ken Sikkema**, co-chair of the Governor’s Flint Water Task Force and **Dan Quisenberry** of the Michigan Association of Public School Academies.

Over 100 community and business leaders attended the session including several members of GVMC. The program involved detailed presentations on the most recent information on the situation in Flint and how the State of Michigan is responding to the crisis.

Also discussed was the current state of the Detroit Public

Schools. The Detroit system has multiple issues and very difficult challenges. There are over 12 separate organizations both the public and charter schools educating the children of Detroit.

The significant challenges surrounding the DPS and Flint will have long-term impacts on our State and the Summit did a great deal to inform the participants about these issues.

Special guests at the Summit

were students from **GVSU’s Hausenstein Center**.

Allie Bush, Director of Governmental Affairs stated in response to our collaboration efforts,

“The Issue Summit explored the tragic and complex issues facing Flint and Detroit Public Schools, but they are not unique to those two cities. The good news is that there really are no islands here in West Michigan and no one is on their own thanks to strong communication and collaboration.”