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## **State shortchanges local public schools**

*Published in "The Muskegon Chronicle" on May 4, 2009*

Whether or not you have children, all of you have an interest in public education. Many of your tax dollars go to funding education. The future of our society rests with the students of today.

Public education should work to ensure every child reaches his or her potential. Not only is it the right thing to do morally, it is the right thing to do to ensure the best future for our children and our community.

The State of Michigan disagrees. Two years ago, the State decided that the baseline for education funding should be \$8,400 per student. Not one district in Muskegon County receives \$8,400! The State has determined that our students, your children, are only worthy of receiving \$7,300 to \$7,800. Apparently, your children are not that important to the State.

The State provides some districts with more than \$12,000 per student. It would appear the State deems some students as more important, more worthy.

The State will argue these numbers are historical, dating back to 1994. They will say they are working at improving the situation. In a very small way that is correct. What is equally correct is that our State government has no real interest in making the difficult decisions that will fix this problem in a timely manner. The improvements they have made are sporadic and puny.

There are many factors necessary for a quality education. Not all of them depend on money. However, with enormous differences in funding, differences must exist in the education delivered. To illustrate, Muskegon Public Schools operates on a \$63,000,000 budget. If we received \$12,000 per student like some districts, we would have a budget of nearly \$86,000,000. Can anyone in our State government seriously argue it is possible to deliver the same quality education at \$63,000,000 as it would be at \$86,000,000?

Children served by the school districts in Muskegon County are expected to make do with the economical version of education, while some other children are provided a more richly funded education. That additional funding allows some children to have access to more programs, resources, and experiences.

Every parent wants the best education and the best future possible for their child. Every school district in Muskegon County works very hard every day to provide our students with the best education possible.

The State holds our students to the same standards as those students served by districts they fund at much higher rates. The State Constitution guarantees all citizens the right to equal treatment from their government. The only people that don't seem to understand or care about this problem are those who serve us in Lansing.

If you have concerns with this situation you could ask your representatives the following questions:

- Why has this situation been allowed to continue virtually unchanged for the last 15 years?
- As my representative, what is your view on the issue?
- What are you planning to do to look after the educational needs of our children?

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**Link to Podcast:** <http://www.muskegonisd.org/about/notes/editorials/>