



**High achievement by all students,
where learning is our most important work.**

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January 8, 2011

The Honorable Rick Snyder
Governor of Michigan
PO Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: Education Funding Needs Reforms Not Raids

Dear Governor Snyder:

I was disappointed when rumors emerged about a proposal that would shift the cost of community colleges and higher education from the State's General Fund onto an already unstable K-12 School Aid Fund. The K-12 School Aid Fund cannot afford to foot the bill for \$1.8 billion in new costs when it is already facing a \$500 million shortfall next year. According to the House Fiscal Agency if the full costs (\$1.8 billion) of the Higher Education and Community College budgets were shifted into the SAF, it would reduce K-12 spending by \$1,150 per student.

Universities and community colleges have the capacity to raise tuition. Community colleges can appeal for additional millages. K-12 schools are limited to spending whatever funds the state sends them. Last year, this meant a cut of \$154 per pupil for all schools and for the Farmington Public Schools; an additional cut was made of \$191 dollars per pupil when the former Governor vetoed 20J funding for districts like Farmington. Our school district was forced to cut almost \$18 million and close four elementary schools due to these continuing funding cuts from the state. Add to this loss a projected double digit increase in health benefit costs and a retirement rate increase up to 23%, and schools will be forced to make significantly more cuts that will impact the classroom. All this while Lansing delays in passing the reforms schools need to control legacy costs; while, at the same time, failing to reduce the mountains of redundant and unnecessary paperwork that causes schools to redirect precious resources outside the classroom.

The education community is on record as supporting bold proposals to ensure that all students at all levels have access to a high quality education. Reforming education funding cannot mean forcing more students to share fewer dollars. If education truly is a priority for your administration then please join with me in opposing such initiatives and work to modernize Michigan's tax code and empower schools to innovate.

Sincerely,

Susan Zurvalec
Superintendent