



**Pacific Research Institute Study Asks:
Are Michigan Middle-Class Public Schools Performing Well?**

Many may not be as good as parents think.

March 18, 2015, San Francisco – The Pacific Research Institute (PRI), a non-partisan, think tank, today announced the release of a ground-breaking study on the performance of students in predominantly middle-class/non-low-income public schools in Michigan. “Not as Good as You Think: Why Michigan Parents Should Be Concerned about Their Local Public Schools,” found that among 677 regular public schools that qualify as predominantly middle-class/non-low-income, in 316, or nearly 47 percent of the schools, more than half of the students in at least one grade level failed to meet or exceed proficiency on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) and the Michigan Merit Exam (MME). The poor performance of these schools was largely centered in mathematics. The study, which used 2012-13 testing data, was authored by Lance T. Izumi, Senior Director of Education Studies at PRI with Alicia Chang.

Also, among the predominantly non-low-income 677 regular public schools in Michigan, 534, or 79 percent, have at least one grade where students performed below the average performance of schools with students of the same income status on a MEAP or MME exam.

The study looks at regular public schools where one-third or fewer of the students are classified as low income. The study provides school-by-school data on the proficiency rates of students on the MEAP and MME exam.

“The findings of the study clearly demonstrate that parents in poor, urban neighborhoods aren’t the only ones who should be concerned about their children’s schools,” said Mr. Izumi. “The results should cause middle-class parents to rethink their views on the quality of their neighborhood public school, and consequently, to open their minds to other education options, choices, and policy changes that would allow their children to escape underperforming schools and attend better-performing alternatives,” he added. The study recommends that Michigan lawmakers consider school-choice options such as education savings accounts and tax-credit programs, which have been enacted in other states.

“Increased choice for parents of all income levels, therefore, should be the guiding principle for Michigan policymakers. Too many children in Michigan, including from many middle-class families, are going to underperforming schools. They have an inherent right to be able to attend a better school, whether public or private,” Mr. Izumi said.

#

“Not as Good as You Think: Why Michigan Parents Should be Concerned about Their Local Public Schools” by Lance Izumi with Alicia Chang is available at www.pacificresearch.org. An interactive page allows visitors to view the results for a particular school. To arrange an interview with Lance Izumi, contact PRI’s press office at 415-955-6110 or email Laura Dannerbeck at ldannerbeck@pacificresearch.org or Rowena Itchon at ritchon@pacificresearch.org.