



East Grand Rapids Public Schools

August 17, 2012

Dear East Grand Rapids Public Schools Families,

This letter is to inform you that on August 2, 2012, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) released their 2011-2012 Top-To-Bottom school rankings, Ed Yes Report Cards, and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) ratings for all Michigan schools. MDE created new classifications this year - Reward, Focus, and Priority. In addition, some schools received no classification from MDE. These new classifications are a result of Michigan receiving a waiver to the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act from the U.S. Department of Education.

The state Top-to-Bottom list ranks each school building in the state based on student performance in mathematics, reading, writing, science, and social studies. All public elementary, middle, and high schools in Michigan are ranked using a percentile system from lowest (1) to highest (100). To determine these percentile scores, MDE calculates an overall achievement number, a growth number, and an achievement gap number that measures the difference in scores between the highest and lowest performing students within a school. All three of these scores are then combined into a single score and compared to other public schools in the state. The chart below shows East Grand Rapids Public School rankings for 2011-2012.

School	2011-2012 Top-to-Bottom Ranking	2011-2012 Ed Yes Report Card Grade	2011-2012 AYP Adequate Yearly Progress Status	2011-2012 MDE Classification
Breton Downs	97	A	Yes	Reward
Lakeside	96	B	Yes	Focus*
Wealthy	99	A	Yes	Reward
Middle School	96	B	Yes	Focus
High School	92	A	Yes	No Classification
*Focus school with no Title I requirements				

The middle school and Lakeside elementary both received a ranking of 96 on the state Top-to-Bottom list. This ranking per MDE Top-to-Bottom documentation means: “A school with a high ranking is one that has a high level of proficiency, is improving over time, and is ensuring that all students are learning and achieving at a high level. This ranking helps provide important information to all schools regarding their performance and how it compares to other schools across the state.” Based on MDE criteria, the middle school and Lakeside elementary are doing better than 95% of schools in the state.



However, even with a ranking of 96, the middle school and Lakeside elementary were both classified as ‘Focus schools’ in need of improvement and support from MDE. The state defines a ‘Focus school’ as a school where the achievement gap between the top scoring 30% of students and the lower scoring 30% of students is greater when compared to other schools in Michigan. As a district, we take our responsibilities of educating all students seriously and, as educators, we acknowledge that we have and will always have a diverse range of learners. East Grand Rapids Public Schools has implemented multiple programs and services at the elementary, middle, and high school levels over the years to address the learning needs of our students. We review student data on an ongoing basis through our school improvement planning process to determine the learning gaps and make informed instructional and curricular decisions that support student achievement.

As a consequence of the Focus school classification and the Title I funding that we receive, the middle school will need to comply with new state requirements. The district currently allocates the limited resources we receive for Title I programs and services entirely at the middle school. One of the requirements for a Focus school that receives Title I funding is that they offer families the option of transferring to a school that is not on the state’s Focus school list. In our case, this would be in a different district, as we do not have another middle school within the district. This transfer requirement does not apply to Lakeside elementary since they do not receive Title I funding. We believe that East Grand Rapids Public Schools is providing a well-rounded education for all students K-12 and that the Focus school classification for the middle school and Lakeside elementary is unwarranted. We have attached the middle school transfer application if you wish to consider this option for your student(s). In addition, we have attached an overview of a sampling of middle school programs and services that are in place to support student achievement. We have similar programs throughout the school district that are focused on supporting student achievement.

Again, we are committed to continuing to provide an outstanding learning environment that has high standards for all students and meets their academic, social, emotional, and physical needs. In closing, as a district, we will continue to be in compliance with all state requirements; however, we have serious concerns regarding the new classification system imposed by the Michigan Department of Education. East Grand Rapids Public Schools **FOCUS** *is* and *always* has been to meet the learning needs of ALL students.

Sincerely,



Sara Magaña Shubel, Ph.D.
Superintendent



J. Peter Stuursma
Middle School Principal



Linda Kehm
Lakeside Elementary Principal



**East Grand Rapids Middle School
2012-2013 Focus School Transfer Application**

Your student may be able to transfer to the school districts listed below that have middle schools which are not identified for improvement and have open enrollment available. Please complete and return the form to the address listed below by **August 31, 2012**, if you would like your student to transfer for the 2012-2013 school year.

Transportation will be provided by East Grand Rapids Public Schools per Michigan Department of Education requirements. (Subject to certain cost limitations)

Student Name: _____

Grade Level 2012-2013: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email address: _____

Alternate school districts that have non-Focus middle schools, met AYP and have open enrollment available in the appropriate grades for the 2012-2013 school year:

Grand Rapids Public Schools
Kentwood Public Schools

You may find specific information and data on student achievement for Grand Rapids Public Schools and Kentwood Public Schools districts, by visiting the following website www.MISchoolData.org.

Please contact Peter Stuursma, at 616-974-0166 or pstuursm@egrps.org to address any questions you might have regarding the transfer process and the alternate school district options.

Mail to:

Mr. Peter Stuursma, Principal
East Grand Rapids Middle School
2425 Lake Drive SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506



EGRPS Supplemental Middle School Programs and Services that Support Student Achievement

Math Lab - support class offered to students using math data that enhances a student's foundational math skills, reviews daily lessons from core math classes, and develops effective math practice and homework skills.

Study Skills - support class offered to students using language arts data to support student's study habits, skill development, organizational work habits, and assist in balancing the multiple disciplines in the middle school.

Pre-Algebra - class offered to 8th grade students using math data from their 7th grade school year. This class provides students a full year of algebra skill development in preparation for the 9th grade algebra class which is taught using the co-taught teaching model in which two teachers are able to address smaller groups and provide differentiated lesson plans.

Title I Reading Classes - class offered using data to identify students exhibiting difficulty with reading. The course is driven by the *Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System* which is designed to identify and address specific areas of concern.

Intervention Specialist - In conjunction with the classroom teachers, the intervention specialist serves as the case manager for students identified as needing additional support. The intervention specialist monitors progress, updates staff and parents, and develops academic and behavioral plans within the student assistance team.

After School Title I Reading Class - class offered to students after school that targets identified students who are struggling with reading. This program was designed to address student needs in addition to other supports offered during the regular school hours.

Student Assistance Team (SAT) - team consisting of the intervention specialist, director of special education, school psychologist, assistant principal, guidance counselor, school social worker, and special education staff. SAT meets monthly to review student data and develop individualized interventions to meet the needs of targeted students.

Check and Connect - research based program to provide students, who struggle in school, with a mentor and safe place to provide support, feedback, assistance, homework and grade checks, as well as communications with teachers and parents.

Lunch Bunch - students are nominated to attend academic assistance sessions during their lunch period. The program is designed to address work completion and offer students additional time during the day to receive assistance.

The Why Try Program - program designed to identify and intervene with negative behaviors that are interfering with academic success. The *Why Try* program assists students with emotional difficulties and provides tools that can increase success within the classroom.

Summer Math Booster Class - summer class offered to students using math data from their 8th grade math classes. This class provides an additional "boost" to the students' math skills through a June in-class session, July online session, and August in-class session. High school teachers teach this class to build positive student relationships and effective foundational skills that must be present prior to the 9th grade algebra course.

Summer English Language Arts Booster Class - summer class offered to students using English Language Arts data from their 8th grade English classes. This class provides an additional "boost" to the students' reading and writing skills through a June in-class session, July online session, and August in-class session. High school teachers teach this class to build positive student relationships and assist students with foundational reading and writing skills.

