



# MUSKEGON HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2603 Leahy Street • Muskegon Heights, Michigan 49444 • Phone 231-830-3207 • Fax 231-830-3564

January 5, 2012

Dear Muskegon Heights Families:

As the New Year begins, you may wonder what the future holds for Muskegon Heights Public Schools. I want to assure you that while you may notice several needed changes within the district, our focus will always be helping your children learn.

The first change comes with the retirement of Superintendent Dr. Dana Bryant effective December 31, 2011. After serving Muskegon Heights' schools for 20 years, Dr. Bryant decided that he would sacrifice his job to allow as much funding to stay with the students as possible. His family also asked him to retire as they watched the physical and mental strain of leadership take a toll on his health. The Muskegon Heights Board of Education asked me, in my role as the superintendent of the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District (MAISD), to step in for a short time to work with them, the school staff, the MAISD staff, the Michigan Department of Education, the Department of Treasury, and the Governor to help stabilize the financial picture in the district and continue to work on the academic goals given to us by the state and federal governments.

Over the past few years less money from the State of Michigan, fewer students, and the rising costs of so many services and products have combined to put our district in some real financial difficulty. MAISD staff will work with Muskegon Heights staff to find ways to help put the district on better financial ground.

A second change is that Principal Jesse Starr has retired from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary. Marvin Nash will serve as the interim principal until a new principal is hired.

There are many dedicated teachers, school leaders, and support staff members who will continue to serve your children and improve their academic success. But we cannot do this alone. Every parent and community member must work to make sure every student is in school every day. We must be models for our children, letting them know that education is the key to success in life. We must set high expectations for every child that attends MHPS. To be a Muskegon Heights Tiger requires everyone's best, every day!

While the newspaper and TV reports have pointed out the significance of the financial difficulties that we and many other school districts are facing, they rarely report on the great things happening every day in our classrooms. After serving 38 years in education, I can assure you that some really good things are taking place every moment of every school day. Many people are working hard to help our school district become an even greater place for kids to learn and grow. In the coming months I believe our parents and students will see positive changes.

Know that as I work for the Muskegon Heights Public Schools, and continue to serve the MAISD and other schools in Muskegon County as well, I welcome your questions, ideas, and/or concerns. Because the needs of my job cause me to be in many places throughout the day, the best way to reach me is through email at [dsipka@muskegonisd.org](mailto:dsipka@muskegonisd.org) or by phone at (231)767-7201. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best wishes for 2012! Go Tigers!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David L. Sipka".

David Sipka, Interim Superintendent  
Muskegon Heights Public Schools