

With Muncie schools, let's not dwell on the past

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(Photo: Provided)

Having lived or worked in the Muncie community all of my life, I refuse to believe that we should accept a destiny that we have the ability to change. That to me is the crux of the issue with regard to Ball State University's willingness to assume responsibility for Muncie Community Schools.

I am a graduate of both MCS and Ball State. My parents were both Ball State graduates and retired MCS teachers. As a high school senior in 1978, I started at MutualBank through the MCS Cooperative Office Education program; in 2003, I became CEO.

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The success of MutualBank, which was founded in Muncie in 1889, is intimately linked to the success of the communities we serve. Having participated in economic development activities, I have seen firsthand that a critical element to the vibrancy of a community is public education. I understand the challenges that MCS faces, however I am troubled by the lack of public communication regarding the high quality of education that currently exists within MCS. While there are outstanding teachers and talented students at MCS, a historic satisfaction of being satisfied with a public school system with financial difficulties and declining enrollment is simply unacceptable.

Solving the problems at MCS requires that we do not dwell on the past. As a community, we must focus on seeking all resources available to create the best environment possible to ensure that Muncie is a desired destination for its citizens to work and live. Creative and unique solutions must be pursued with MCS and I believe we have that in Ball State's willingness to assume responsibility for its success.

We are fortunate to have a world-class university in Muncie with a proven record of providing outstanding educational experiences to all. The impact of Ball State can be seen throughout our community. The proposed relationship between Ball State and MCS offers an unprecedented opportunity to change the trajectory of public education in Muncie by creating an outstanding public school system.

No doubt, the conflict around this issue comes from many who have true passion on the issue. There are obviously those who believe that the school system should continue to be managed the way it traditionally has been managed. I believe the results speak for themselves. Something different is in order, and BSU is an alternative that deserves community support.

I am bullish on Muncie. Initiatives like BY5 and the focus of our outstanding United Way on early childhood education, and now the opportunity to leverage Ball State resources, makes me believe that fundamental positive changes can take place in Muncie.