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Muskegon County Schools: Competitors by night, Collaborators by day

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Our Muskegon County Schools are continually engaged in fierce competition for athletic titles or academic awards. It might appear like each school system exists only as an independent fortress, guarding its colors against all predators! Daring anyone to venture onto their turf on Friday night! Waiting patiently each week for the Mattson/Kendra predictions, the Saturday morning reviews and the new rankings ... the Eagles, Red Devils, Big Reds and the list goes on, each isolated atop their banners!

Behind these athletic scenes, throughout the week, this perception is far from reality. The educational welfare of our students becomes our first priority. Local superintendents, principals and teachers are the most cooperative and interactive in the State. Through the guidance of our LSD, our local superintendents have worked aggressively to implement countywide cooperative practices in the areas of technology, data collection, purchasing, transportation, special education, the curriculum process and grant writing. District principals and curriculum directors meet monthly to develop and share common practices. County wide professional development activities have enabled our teachers to learn the latest educational strategies. These opportunities provided them with an opportunity to interact with their grade level and departmental colleagues from neighboring districts.

The majority of county schools are not large enough to fund special education directors, consultants, or compete for various major grants. However, working as a countywide consortium, we are able to share directors and obtain significant grant monies. The intermediate school district consistently initiates a leadership role in providing each district with the supplementary services needed to provide the best educational strategies for our students. Collaboration and cooperative practices are abundant within our county.

These efforts result in millions of dollars in savings each year. As a superintendent in Muskegon County, I have enjoyed the collaborative and helpful relationships that exist between each school and within the Intermediate School District. I believe it is what sets our county and educational process apart from all others. Our cooperative model is the envy of other counties in Michigan! Our students are the real winners.

Meanwhile, its Friday night again! Time to put on the colors, defend the precious mascot! Wait for the Saturday morning paper! P.S. Go Red Devils!

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Link to Podcast: <http://www.muskegonisd.org/about/notes/editorials/>