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Ball State University could manage Muncie Schools if lawmakers approve proposal

BY: [Katie Heinz](#)

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MUNCIE, Ind. -- State lawmakers are discussing a proposal that would hand over management of the struggling Muncie Community Schools to Ball State University – and it's a plan both sides seem very excited about.

Ball State University President Geoffrey Mearns said if they take over the district, one of the first steps they would take would be to stem the decline in enrollment.

“Our future is interdependent and is linked with the future of Muncie and East Central Indiana,” said Mearns.

Katie Washburn's son and daughter attended Storer Elementary School until last year. It was one of three schools that was closed because of funding issues.

Washburn's kids now attend Westview Elementary School – but because of the bussing issues and state take-over, she says she's thought about transferring her kids completely out of the district.

“We talked about it a little bit, but at this point we're very invested and I don't want to just give

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“We chose to move here and stay here,” said Washburn. “I want to make sure the people on the board are invested in the community. I want to make sure that we have a say.”

If approved, Ball State University would appoint the school board but the financial and legal structure of the district wouldn't change.

If lawmakers approve the idea, Mearns says the university would have two years to craft a plan.

“We understand for this plan to be successful it has to be the community's plan,” said Mearns. “We intend to spend the whole first year engaging the community: teachers, students, their families and developing that plan.”

The proposal has already cleared its first hurdle at the Indiana Statehouse and it now heads to the full House for consideration.

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