# How good was your school district?
## An Empirical Assessment

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**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

*Skill*
- Using software to access and analyze census data
- Identifying independent and dependent variables
- Forming testable hypotheses using quantitative data
- Quantitative writing
- Using real world data to enhance and support key course concepts

*Substance*
- Use different data to assess and compare school districts at the local, state and national level

Instructions
- Go to http://www.mischooldata.org for information on Michigan schools. Under "Kindergarten – 12th Grade" click on "Dashboard & Accountability Scorecard".  Find your school district using the drop-down menus and click on "View Results". (NOTE:  If you attended more than one school district, select the one that you attended for the longest total amount of time).
- Spend some time exploring the data that have been compiled for your district.  You will need to decide how to summarize the quality of the school district you attended.  Identify at least 3 measures of how well your school is performing.  Justify how and why you selected these measures, as well as what exactly these measures represent (i.e. what are they actually measuring, or operationalizing).
- How does your district's performance compare with the state's average?  How does it compare with national averages?  NOTE: National data is not immediately available to you on this site.  Think about where you would go to get national-level data.  Find national-level data from at least two reliable sources (i.e. use triangulation techniques to be sure your data is reliable), explaining how and where you found this data.  How do you know the data you found is reliable?

1.  How does your district compare with the Ann Arbor and Detroit school districts?  Compare your district with each of these other districts using the performance measures you selected.  Create a table to

summarize your comparisons.  How does funding vary for each of these 3 districts (Ann Arbor, Detroit, plus your own district)?  How do the 3 districts compare in terms of socioeconomic/demographic factors (for instance funding per student, socioeconomic status of the community, etc.)?  What <u>specific</u> factors can you find to compare?  <u>Clarify</u> the factors you choose and what, specifically, they measure.  Do funding variations and/or demographic factors plausibly explain variations in school performance?  Why or why not?

2. Do you feel that your school district provided you with a good education?  Why or why not?  Do the measures you found reflect your own personal impressions and experiences?

You will be evaluated on the organization and neatness of your work, as well as the insightfulness of your assessments.  *Use tables and text formatting* (e.g. indenting, bullets/numbering, etc.) to make your ideas clear and concise to the reader.