

## Larkin: Require students to finish 12th grade

By Ken Abramczyk • OBSERVER STAFF WRITER • September 19, 2010

State education officials, lawmakers, school superintendents, principals and teachers all look for ways to improve K-12 performance.

Joe Larkin believes preschool education should be made permanent and that students should be required to finish the 12th grade.

“There’s so many benefits in getting children started early that it is an investment in the future for them,” Larkin said. “We do not have a requirement for our teenagers to finish high school and they can drop out as early as age 16.

“We should have a requirement that they finish 12th grade. Kids who drop out become involved in crime and other malfeasance. Just education as a society, we all know it, is one of our most important things.”

Larkin believes educated residents are part of an infrastructure Michigan needs. “That will help create and bring jobs to Michigan,” Larkin said.

Kindergarten is offered by every school district in Michigan, but there is no statute mandating it, Larkin said.

But Larkin doesn’t want to require further preschool programs for 3 and 4-year-olds because of the condition of the state’s economy. “If we all had what we had 10 years ago (budgetwise), there would be a very good argument for that,” Larkin said.

Larkin said he could only speak about the value of his education. “I was fortunate enough that my father has provided me with an excellent education, and not everybody unfortunately can have the benefits of what I received, but I would love for t here to be a very good minimum, that this is what every child should be able to obtain, and we have requirements that they do that. I would say definitely kindergarten, it’s already there, so we might as well make it mandatory.”

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