Minority students continue to get shortchanged... 

Dear Editor: It comes as no surprise that the Madison Metropolitan School District Minority Student Achievement Program is under sudden attack (as reflected in a series of stories in Sunday’s Wisconsin State Journal).

Many parents of children of color realized some time ago that the programs at their schools have often been of benefit to all students. However, in my opinion, the programs have not been a benefit to minority students.

Time and again, in meeting after meeting, district officials have denied minority parents the right to have their children receive the help they need. Minority students have been denied access to programs that are available to others. I believe that the time has come for parents to take a stand for their children.

Many parents of children of color have taken it upon themselves to educate our children. They have chosen to distribute those materials, or even textbooks, irrespective of the outcome.

School costs up, but is quality?

Dear Editor: I am writing in an effort to increase spending for public education in Wisconsin. The school year is over and it is time to begin thinking about how we will finance the Minority Student Achievement Program.

Rather than relying on studies to frame some money in public education, how about asking the impact of the Minority Student Achievement Program on education in Wisconsin? I have a good feeling that our students in our school system benefit from these programs.

Annual spending for public education in Wisconsin has more than doubled in the past 12 years. The average student is 12 years old and is already aware of the impact of the Minority Student Achievement Program. He or she may even have a chance to participate.

In light of this trend, it would be useful to know how the approximate $16.7 billion in state and federal funding has increased any objective measures of academic achievement. We can all boast of our state’s educational successes. Have state dropout rates decreased? Are high school graduates better equipped to go on to college or to work? Has the money been spent? How much research has been conducted in this area? How do kids feel about this new educational investment in public education?

These are the questions that need to be answered before Wisconsin revokes its minority achievement in the name of a new, fiscally oriented agenda. We need to know if the money is being spent in the right way. Too often those in authority have taken it upon themselves to have the power to make changes, simply because alienated, frustrated and rejected students are making troublesome demands.

Rather than studying ways to decrease funding, we need to begin thinking about how we can increase spending for public education. The Minority Student Achievement Program is a good place to begin.

Steve Baas

How to reach us...

Dear Editor: From a reader, relatives, friends, school friends, and others.

Please direct letters to the editor and community news at the Capital Times, Madison, Wisconsin.

George Alexander

Wisconsin needs death penalty

Dear Editor: The Purdue case recently was reported—on the streets, in the newspapers, on television. Much was heard about its impact on public opinion. It is a case that has created a lot of anger in Wisconsin.

The Democratic Party at its recent convention came down on the side of death penalty. We are not in agreement.

I don’t think that what happened in Purdue is a matter of life or death. When he stated at Gettysburg, "... and that government of the people, by the people, for the people,. . ." he meant that the United States of America is a government of the people, by the people, for the people.

The American people have decided the issue of death penalty. I do not think that the people of Wisconsin are ready for death penalty.

If the people of Wisconsin are ready for death penalty, why has the Legislature not passed those laws? Is there some reason why the people of Wisconsin are not ready for death penalty?

Steve Baas

Serb coverage has critical gap

Dear Editor: A look at United Nations records shows serb coverage was so low that most reports would have been unanswerable. The Serbs are not on the map in the UN.

The government of Serbia and Montenegro has been selling the world a bill of goods. A look at what they are willing to sell and what they are not willing to sell will show you what is not being sold.

The Serbs have a special problem. They are not on the map. The United Nations has no country in the area.

When I telephoned Belgrade’s U.S. embassy, the staff member couldn’t tell me whether Belgrade’s response to the American attacks on Serbia was positive or negative. I just don’t know.

The important thing here is that the American government is not bombarding Serbia, maybe even the lesser part of the country. Belgrade’s— and the capacity of Serbia’s response to the American attacks has not been put to the test.

Peter Blankenheim

San Francisco