

40,344 children enrolled in state college tuition plan

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Hard-core University of Michigan fan Christopher Mack, 13, is one step closer to attending his favorite university, because parents and grandparents enrolled him and more than 40,000 children like him into the Michigan Education Trust.

"We've set the pace for creative financing for education," said Gov. James Blanchard at a news conference Friday in the downtown branch of Standard Federal. He called response to the prepaid tuition program "overwhelming."

Christopher, a student at Royal Oak's Keller Junior High School, sported a Michigan Wolverines sweatshirt at the news conference and was one of six young people enrolled in the MET program who was greeted by the governor.

"I like the sports program," Christopher, a basketball, football, wrestling, hockey and baseball fan, said of U-M.

Gretchen McKissack of Detroit said the program was the only way she could afford to send her son, Carl, 9, and daughter, Mary, 7, to college. She said she hoped they would attend U-M.

"I don't know what I would have done," she said. "Now that I've enrolled them in MET, I'm going to keep on top of them and make sure they do their homework."

A total of 40,344 Michigan children are enrolled in the program, representing an investment of \$265,111,849. The number far exceeded the 3,000 children used as an estimate when the program was designed.

When the program was announced, the state received 82,495 applications during a five-day application period in August.

Parents, grandparents and others had until Nov. 30 to pay up to four years' tuition for any child at any of the state's 15 public universities and 29 community colleges. The cost of entering the program varied with the child's age.

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**GRETCHEN MCKISSACK,
Detroit mother of two**

Blanchard praised state Treasurer Robert Bowman as the "point man and architect of this program. He was wise enough to find a way to do it."

Bowman said the Treasury Department will analyze the MET program over the next two months for locations and ages of the children enrolled. At that time, he said, state officials will know when to offer the program again.

AP contributed to this report.