



A Civic Enterprise of the YOUTH EMPOWERMENT  
PROJECT

202 E. Huron, #101  
Ann Arbor, 48104 MI  
Call: 734.761.3005  
Fax: 734.761.3820  
www.youthempowerment.com  
senate@youthempowerment.co  
m

## **4-28-10 Report to the School Board**

**Good evening Trustees and Dr. Roberts. I am Nikila Lakshmanan, a Sophomore Senator from Community.**

### **DISTRICT UPDATES**

#### **Join Us, May 16<sup>th</sup>, Mark Your Calendars!**

Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, is the Annual Fight Poverty in Africa Walkathon as well as the YEP and Youth Senate sponsored End-of-the-Year Picnic, with games and awards! Walk to support TOSTAN, a non-government organization operating in Africa, and help us celebrate the power of the youth!

#### **New Teen Yellow Pages & YEP Web Site**

The 2010-2011 Interactive Edition of the *Teen Yellow Pages* is available at [www.youthempowerment.com](http://www.youthempowerment.com), our web site which is being totally revamped as we speak. Check out the progress over the next few weeks to see the new interactive features we're adding! For example, you'll be able to link directly to and from each high school's web site and the Teen Yellow Pages.

#### **High School Failure Rates and Achievement Solutions Teams Update**

Please see the attachment for an update on the numbers we last presented regarding both PHS and HHS failure rates. We have also requested data for Huron that reflects the total number of failing grades in the same time periods. We have requested the AAPS Research Office to review and assist us with analyzing what this information means for our purposes of increasing the number of teens we can work with in Achievement Solutions Teams and what additional info should be considered. The staff in the Research Office soon will help us with evaluating our data but did say the numbers both schools reported don't match the numbers from the Office's report which show more students with at least one failing grade.

#### **Schoolwork, Not the Budget**

Walk the halls of any of the 4 Ann Arbor public high schools this month and you'll hear one thing, repeated over and over again – rumors about the current financial state of the school district. These whispers have been mounting for a long time now but the bubble burst a short time ago, when the news about the teacher layoffs hit the high school grapevines. Frantic pleas to save certain untenured teachers mixed with heated debates about the future of our schools with so many teachers gone. This may have been the worst time for these high impact changes to be going on; just as we hit the home stretch of the school year around the time when we make course selections for next year. This is not a time where students can afford to be anxious or

**-OVER-**

unsure. This is a time when we are expected to make critical decisions and focus on our schoolwork and exams, not the district's financial issues. We understand that changes, and cuts, cannot be averted. If we knew more and all at once, we could face these changes better, make the decisions that need to be made and, if asked, offer our input to you and our school administrators as well. The following report from Community is a good example of some student concerns.

### **The Current State of Community High School in Ann Arbor Public Schools**

After interviewing students and faculty in each grade we found that many CHS students are deeply concerned about whether or not bus services between high schools will be provided next semester. The opportunity to take classes and participate in extracurricular sports at the larger high schools is a privilege deeply valued by the student population at Community. Split enrollment gives students the chance to build versatility of character as they adapt to different learning environments. Many students at Huron, Pioneer and Skyline also value the intellectual freedom they can experience by dual enrolling at Community. The withdrawal of such a privilege will be a great blow to students across the district who have been willing to venture out of their comfort zones to begin with.

Many students are also preoccupied with whether certain well-known extracurricular activities at Community such as Model UN, Mock Trial or Jazz Band will be affected. The laying off of excellent teachers will deeply affect the learning process for students. The fact that the State of Michigan is offering early retirement to balance the budget will cause many experienced teachers to retire and fresh, young teachers to take their places. Students are concerned that there will not be enough experienced teachers mentoring new teachers. In the end, the additional laying off of many excellent teachers without tenure will also negatively affect the quality of education in AAPS. In smaller, closely knit schools such as Community in particular, the laying off of young teachers without tenure as well as the early retirement of older teachers will have a deeper affect.

In addition, the students would like to request as much information as is available to be conveyed as quickly as possible as finals are drawing near. It is important for students to understand how far they may broaden their horizons as they plan out the schedules for next semester. Students find it difficult to cope with the uncertainty of the financial situation while simultaneously balancing their study time and planning for the next year.

---

***NOTE: Youth Senate Reports do not necessarily represent the beliefs and opinions of the entire district student body, nor any respective high school's entire student body. The Senate Reports to the School Board are always opportunities for diverse student voices to be heard.***

---

**Thank you for listening to the Youth Senate's Report, and have a good evening!**

***Prepared by:*** Shoham Geva (SHS '13), Andrew Toader (HHS '12), Nikila Lakshmanan (CHS '12), Ryan Embree (HHS '12), Abraham Liddell (HHS '10)

***Presented by:*** Nikila Lakshmanan (CHS '12)

**Contact:** [senate@youthempowerment.com](mailto:senate@youthempowerment.com) or [senate@aaps.k12.mi.us](mailto:senate@aaps.k12.mi.us)



**Ann Arbor Parent Advisory Committee  
Board of Education Meeting  
April 28, 2010**

Good evening, my name is Mary Dooley.

As we mentioned in our last report to the Board, we are very pleased to know that Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) will be implemented in the schools. The Michigan Department of Education has written a PBS policy dated 2006 that states: “The educational community must provide a system that will support students’ efforts to manage their own behavior and assure academic achievement. An effective behavior support system is a proactive, positive, skill-building approach for the teaching and learning of successful student behavior. Positive behavior support systems ensure effective strategies that promote pro-social behavior and respectful learning environments. Research-based positive behavior support systems are appropriate for all students, regardless of age.” It goes on to state that “A positive behavior support system is a data-based effort that concentrates on adjusting the system that supports the student. Such a system is implemented by collaborative, school-based teams using person-centered planning. School-wide expectations for behavior are clearly stated, widely promoted, and frequently referenced. Both individual and school-wide learning and behavior problems are assessed comprehensively. Functional assessment of learning and behavior challenges is linked to an intervention that focuses on skill building. The effectiveness of the selected intervention is evaluated and reviewed, leading to data-based revisions. Positive interventions that support adaptive and pro-social behavior and build on the strengths of the student lead to an improved learning environment. Students are offered a continuum of methods that help them learn and maintain appropriate behavior and discourage violation of codes of student conduct.”

The AAPAC looks forward having representation on the PBS District Wide Committee and moving towards creating a systematic and effective plan that supports ALL students’ learning in school environments where individual learning needs are met.

The AAPAC is also pleased to know that the AAPS Student Intervention and Support Serves Department (SISS) will be partnering with the U of M in investigating Anxiety Reduction Interventions for both parents of children receiving special education and for teachers and staff who work with students receiving special education. We look forward

---

---

to receiving letters that will be sent to parents outlining the study details in the upcoming month. The study will be done during the time that ESY takes place this July. Ann Arbor has such a wealth of resources for students with different abilities and we encourage the BOE and AAPS Administration to continue to tap into this wealth of knowledge and tap into opportunities from universities and businesses in the area

As students with different abilities age up, one of the central concerns of parents is preparing our children to transition from High School to the working world and college. To help our children start the learning process of preparing for life after school, the AAPAC is looking forward to the full implementation of the Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES). The PAES program simultaneously provides for assessment, training and exploration in basic vocational, work skills and money management, and proper work behaviors with emphasis on comprehensive curriculum work in five basic career development areas: Business/Marketing, Consumer/Science, Computer Technology, Construction/Industrial and Processing/Production. PAES is being implemented at Huron, Pioneer, and Skyline High Schools as well as Forsythe, Slauson, and Clague Middle Schools. We look forward to further updates from SISS of the implementation of this program for the rest of the school year and into the next.

As always, we invite the public to attend a monthly PAC meeting; the first Monday of every month at 7pm in room B329 of Skyline High School. The next meeting is Monday, May 3, 2010. SISS Administrator, Larry Simpson, and Assistant Director of SISS, Bill Harris, will be coming to our meeting to discuss Extended Year Services and to answer questions. Join us and experience the difference you can make in the lives of special education students and their families.

Thank you for your time this evening.

---

Board of Education Meeting 4/28/2010  
PTO Council Report

(Slide 1)

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen of the Board, Dr. Roberts, and Ann Arbor community members. It is my pleasure to be here and represent the Ann Arbor Public Schools PTO Council. I am Rebecca Wan, the Corresponding Secretary of the PTO Council.

Tonight I am going to share with you the milestones we the PTO Council have achieved thus far in the 2009-2010 school year and the goals we are moving towards. We continue to be dedicated to our mission of excellence in our schools through communication and advocacy among the PTOs across the district, the district administration and the Board of Education.

(Slide 2)

The PTO Council is comprised of representatives from PTOs and PTSOs across the Ann Arbor Public School district. This year we are very proud to have achieved representation from 89% of Ann Arbor Public School PTOs, an increase of 49% from two years ago. Our goal is to have 100% representation in the next school year. You can contact your school PTO to become a representative to the PTO Council. The PTO Council Executive Board will have 3 vacant seats that will need to be filled for the 2010-11 school year and any PTO Council rep or co-rep is eligible for nomination or self-nomination. The open seats are for Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and Board of Education Representative. Elections take place May 17 at our monthly PTO Council meeting held at 7pm at the Balas Administration Building. It is essential that all of our schools provide a representative at the May 17 meeting. We are looking forward to having another strong and active year supporting our PTOs and the school district.

(Slide 3)

The PTO Council Advocacy Committee is working within Washtenaw County educating parents, informing elected representatives and connecting with groups across the state. Here is a snapshot of what we are communicating:

(Slide 4)

Education is essential to economic development. The workforce and

entrepreneurs of the future require great schools not only to train and inspire them but also to retain them here in Michigan. Businesses need a stable, well-educated community. Forcing districts into bankruptcy will have tragic consequences for economic development in our state.

It is essential for our legislators in Lansing to develop a stable, sustainable funding model for schools. It is our legislators' responsibility to manage the state's revenue stream to meet the needs and priorities of the state. We want our legislators to understand that education is a top priority for us as voters.

In addition to making these points, the advocacy committee is taking action in a tangible way.

(slide 5)

The committee is available to talk to your PTO and community groups and working with groups across the state with a similar mission.

Members of the advocacy committee have already begun meeting with House and Senate candidates. The advocacy committee initiated these invitations to meet all House and Senate candidates in Washtenaw county, and thus far the committee will be meeting with Jeff Irwin, Pam Byrnes and Christine Green. Jeff Irwin is a candidate in the 53<sup>rd</sup> District race for the state House of Representatives and is currently serving on the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners. Pam Byrnes is leaving her House of Representatives seat in the 52<sup>nd</sup> District to run for State Senate in the 18th District, and Christine Green, an Ann Arbor area attorney, is contending for the seat being vacated by Pam Byrnes.

(Slide 6)

The advocacy committee is open to all parents and staff of the Ann Arbor Public school district. If you would like to join, please contact Donna Lasinski at [ptoc.a2advocacy@gmail.com](mailto:ptoc.a2advocacy@gmail.com).

(Slide 7)

On May 24th, from 5-7 PM we will be joining together with WCASE (Washtenaw County Association of School Employees) along other groups to participate in a state-wide rally, an event that you may be hearing more about from Brit Satchwell, president of Ann Arbor Education Association. The PTO Council urges all parents to attend this family-friendly event in support of stable, school funding. Many diverse groups are converging on

this important issue and across the state of Michigan these groups are holding rallies simultaneously on this same date to tell their communities that now is the time to provide stable, sustainable funding for education. More information will be available on our website: (Slide 1 again)  
<http://www.aaps.k12.mi.us/ptoc>

Just as a reminder, the PTO Council will be meeting again on Monday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at the Balas main conference room.

Thank you for your attention.