

Information Packet

For Public Distribution

**For the
October 14, 2009
Board of Education Meeting**



Ann Arbor Public Schools

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Ann Arbor, MI 48104
734.994.2230

Todd Roberts, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools
robertst@aaps.k12.mi.us

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Education Trustees
From: Todd Roberts *TR*
Date: October 9, 2009
Subject: Information Update

Overall this is a light agenda. We have several first briefing items. We may also add an information report regarding the water containment project at Pioneer. The work on this project will begin in late November, so we want to update the Board and public prior to the work starting. We are waiting to hear back whether the people working on the project are available this Wednesday. If not we will have the report on 10/28. I will also provide an update on funding from the state.

First Briefing Items

The contract with Pediatric Therapy Associates (PTA) is on the agenda for first briefing. We have worked with PTA for several years and they continue to provide very good service for us. Information regarding the contract is included in the Blue Book.

The contracts for Environmental Services, Asbestos and Lead Paint Abatement, and Integrated Pest Management Services are all on the agenda for first briefing. All of these contracts were briefed by the Planning Committee this week. Information regarding the contracts is in the Blue Book.

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CALL TO ORDER

6:18 pm

ROLL CALL

Attending: Trustees Mexicotte (President), Nelson, Patalan (Vice President), Baskett

ACTION – BOARD ITEMS

Vice President Patalan, supported by Trustee Baskett, moved to hold an Executive Session of the Board to commence immediately pursuant to Section 8(b) of the Michigan Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.268(b) to consider the dismissal, suspension, or disciplining of a student. On roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0. Trustees Hollier, Friedman and Gates-Bryant absent.

ADJOURNMENT

7:06 pm



CALL TO ORDER

7:03 pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Trustee Gates-Bryant led the pledge

ROLL CALL

Present – Trustees Baskett, Gates-Bryant, Hollier, Mexicotte (President), Nelson (Secretary), Patalan (Vice President)

Absent – Trustee Friedman (Treasurer)

Present from Administration – Comsa, Allen, Simpson, Hunter, Dickinson-Kelley, Osinski (Recorder); Presenters included Ché Carter, Chuck Hatt, Michele Madden, Bill Harris, Dawn Anderson, Yolanda Bell, Donna Dishman

INTRODUCTION OF NON-VOTING MEMBER AT THE TABLE

President Mexicotte introduced Dr. Todd Roberts, Superintendent of Schools.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approved by consent.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

- Lily Au spoke about the importance of community outreach to increase student awareness of those in need.
- Bob Geier spoke about the importance over overlapping breaks with the University of Michigan.

REPORTS

Youth Senate – Thanked Trustee Baskett for responding to their letter requesting involvement in assessment of social climate and school culture. Five organizations have been identified to collaborate in the Fight Poverty in Africa Project.

Ann Arbor Parent Advisory Committee – reported the completion of our district's Disability Awareness Workshop program kit that will allow flexibility in offering this important program to schools. Johanna Mabry will serve as committee's millage contact. Workshop topics and schedules will be finalized. Next meeting will be held October 5 at 7:00 p.m. at Skyline.

Parent Teacher Organization Council – Brit Satchwell reported that teachers go above and beyond to bring the best educational experience to our students. Encouraged community to become informed about school finance and the enhancement millage which will be necessary to maintain the current program in the Ann Arbor Public Schools. Requested that parents drop a kind note to their child's teacher some time this year.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Performance** - Met on Sept. 17 to discuss partnership with Student Advocacy Center. Reviewed elementary retention policies. Will bring proposed middle school retention policy to next committee meeting along with a review of alternative programs and AYP.

The next meeting will be held October 1st at 6:00 pm @ Balas Superintendent's Conference Room. Public is welcome.

- **Planning** - Next meeting will be October 6th at 6:30 pm @ Balas Superintendent's Conference Room. Public is welcome.

INFORMATION

- Ms. Dickinson-Kelley and her team presented an update of the **Summer Learning Institute (SLI)**. This program was highly successful, doubling attendance from last year, serving over 600 students. Several unique aspects were incorporated into the program including integration of Read180 and System 44; Music and Movement for 1st grade students; weekly parent workshops; six weeks of professional development prior to SLI; weekly newsletter and summary report cards. It was noted that the program enjoyed a large turnout at Parent Night through continuous and consistent publicizing of the event.
- Ms. Hunter, along with her team, presented an update of the **Middle and High School summer school** also serving more than 600 students total in both the in-house and online programs. Middle School courses included 6th and 7th grade Read180, Math prep and MyAccess; Algebra and Biology prep were available to those students entering 8th and 9th grade. High School programs included traditional course offerings, credit recovery, 9th grade pre-teaching in Algebra and Biology and online courses. Middle school enjoyed an 89% success rate and 96% of High School students enrolled in the credit recovery program were successful.
- Larry Simpson and Bill Harris presented a review of the **Teaching & Learning Camp (TLC)** which is the professional development provided for those staff involved in Extended School Year (ESY), Rec & Ed Camps, Summer Learning Institute (SLI) and summer preschool programs. Over 180 ESY students participated in these programs.
- Dr. Roberts presented information on the **Washtenaw Schools Millage Proposal**. A millage will be on the **November 3** ballot to enhance the declining state revenue to schools. A millage proposal of this type is the only option available to address the district's projected \$15 million deficit for the 2010/11 school year. New information was shared that a proposal is currently before the state's legislators to reduce our funding by \$218 per student this year, which equates to a reduction of \$3.8 million, plus a \$350,000 reduction in preschool funding.

FIRST BRIEFING

09-031 Community Education and Recreation Catalog printing bid recommendation

Ms. Dishman presented the bid recommendation. Noted that on the board's suggestion, a 2-year option was offered in the RFP.

09-032 Adoption of Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES)

Mr. Simpson and Ms. Bell presented the request to adopt a new program to provide vocational assessments for students with disabilities. The program will be implemented in 13 classrooms, affecting approximately 130 students in resource rooms, and also will help those kids who will have difficulty with the increased graduation requirements. A target implementation date would be second semester. Any student can be eligible based on the counselor recommendation and could be used to transition to WCC. Administration will send out information directly to parents.

SECOND BRIEFING – scheduled for approval at this meeting

None

ACTION – CONSENT AGENDA – scheduled for approval at this meeting

Draft Minutes of the 9/9/09 Regular Meeting

Vice President Patalan, supported by Trustee Hollier, moved to approve the minutes from the 9/9/09 Regular Meeting. On roll call vote, the motion carried 6-0, Trustee Friedman absent.

Gift Offers

Vice President Patalan, supported by Trustee Hollier, moved to accept the gift offers as presented. On roll call vote, the motion carried 6-0, Trustee Friedman absent.

ACTION – BOARD ITEMS

Ratify AAEA Agreement

Trustee Hollier, supported by Vice President Patalan, moved to approve the agreement between the Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education and the Ann Arbor Education Association bargaining unit as recommended by the Superintendent. On roll call vote, the motion carried 6-0, Trustee Friedman absent.

MASB Voting Delegate Certification

Trustee Nelson, supported by Trustee Gates-Bryant, moved to certify MASB Voting Delegates representing the AAPS at the Delegate Assembly on 10/22/09 at the MASB Annual Meeting in Lansing: Adam Hollier, Susan Basket, Irene Patalan. Further, the Board directs the Executive Secretary to the Board, Amy Osinski, to register the Delegate with the MASB prior to the October 22 meeting. On voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Roberts read his report.

ITEMS FOR AGENDA PLANNING

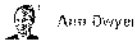
No items

ITEMS FROM THE BOARD

No items

ADJOURNMENT

10:10PM



Two Ann Arbor Pioneer High School students ace the ACT

Posted Today, 4 hours ago

6 Comments | 1 Share | 0 Likes

Many of us may prefer to forget the ACT.

But for two students at Pioneer High School, the American College Test has become a source of pride.

Spencer Johnson and Jacob Postema both managed to achieve the highest score, 36, on the test that can make or break chances of college admission. Both students excel in school and have bright futures - even if they aren't certain what that future will be.

"I don't have any idea yet," said Johnson, 16, when asked about his college and career plans.

At this point, he's considering history or political science.

With a grade point average a shade under a perfect 4.0, Johnson has his sights on heavy-hitting colleges such as Yale, Columbia and the University of Chicago.



Spencer Johnson

At first meeting, Johnson appears quiet but relaxed. These traits extend into the classroom; but according to his teachers, they give way to a seasoned intelligence and maturity.

"Spencer waits for the right moment, and then he unleashes brilliance," said Shawn Ashley, who taught Johnson in his AP English class.

Johnson said he spent about 15 to 20 hours a week on the practice test.

"I didn't really study much," he said. He did, however, use the online practice materials that Pioneer had bought for the students' use.

Jacob Postema, on the other hand, credits study aids such as the Princeton Review for helping him achieve his score.



Jacob Postema sitting in AADI garden

"I just studied that for a bit, so I knew how the test would go," said Postema, 17.

Postema also has a nearly perfect grade point average, admitting he received a couple A minuses in the past. He is considering applying at the University of Michigan, Rice, and Stanford.

Postema, like Johnson, is unsure what he wants to major in, but he's considering something in the science field.

Laurie Hochrein, Postema's former calculus teacher, credits his natural interest in learning as the catalyst for his success.

"Jake sometimes had the look on his face as though he was opening a present when he discovered a new mathematical idea," she said.

When asked their advice for future ACT takers, both students stressed de-stressing the test.

"It's not that hard if you know what the test is all about, which is why books like [the Princeton Review one] are helpful," Postema said.

"People worry way too much about these things, I think," shrugged Johnson.

Ann Dwyer is a freelance writer for AnnArbor.com. Reach the news desk at news@annarbor.com or 734-623-2530.

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Ann Arbor teachers ratify new contract without pay raise

Posted: 5:57 p.m. September 18, 2009

0 - 15 Comments. [Comment Now](#)

The Ann Arbor teachers' union ratified a new two-year contract with the school district, union President Brit Satchwell said this afternoon.

Union members voted Wednesday and Thursday.

Preliminary counts show 800 union members voted yes, Satchwell said. The union has 1,200 members total. Satchwell didn't know Friday afternoon how many teachers voted against it or how many total teachers voted.

The contract is the first in district's history to not include a pay raise. However, many teachers will still be paid more this year than last year due to step increases tied to education and years of service.

The contract covers the 2009-10 school year and the 2010-11 school year. It did not set a pay rate for next school year, largely because the district's finances are still unsettled. The district and union will have to return to negotiations to set those raises.


The district doesn't know how much per-pupil funding it will get from the state this year - nor does it know if county voters will approve a 2-mill tax in November that would bring \$11 million a year to the school for the next five years.

The contract still has to be ratified by the school board, which could vote as early as Wednesday night.

In addition to teachers' pay, the 80-page contract sets the school calendar for this school year and next and details other changes for teachers.

Prescription drug co-pays will be going up. But the amount of money the district contributes for teachers' health care also will go up. Teachers can choose how they want to spend that money. If they opt for the most-expensive plan offered, they'll have to pay part of the cost. If they choose the lower-priced HMO, they'll get money back from the district.

David Jesse covers K-12 education for AnnArbor.com. He can be reached at 734-623-2534 or at davidjesse@annarbor.com.

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Tags: Ann Arbor school district



Vote

OTE

Let police sort out the facts in fight involving Skyline High School students

Posted: 6:00 a.m. September 20, 2008

5 Comments. [Comment Now](#)

Can't we all just get along?

Sometimes, unfortunately, we can't?

But when an ugly incident does occur, the community has to be willing to let the facts sort themselves out before responding to it as a hate crime.

We do not pretend to know exactly what occurred when an argument involving two or more high school students on a bus escalated into violence after they were dropped off.

That's for Ann Arbor police to sort out, and they're looking into it. Their investigation can not only bring out the facts, but also provide a cooling-off period for an incident that - while indeed serious - may prove less alarming than the over-heated reaction that followed.

The Michigan chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations issued a press release after the incident saying that the fight was started by ethnic insults against a 16-year-old girl who suffered cuts and had her Islamic headscarf pulled off. It has asked for the incident to be investigated as a hate crime.

Reports of the incident also led to strident conversation on the Web site of AnnArbor.com, and left some parents concerned for the safety of their children in school and asking whether the Ann Arbor school system is doing enough to encourage tolerance and deal with ethnic and racial tension.

It would be a mistake to under-react to a fight that reportedly involved five to seven students of different races and ethnicities, and that left one girl injured. But over-reaction is not the answer either.

We share the sentiment of Richard Kinsey, the retired Ann Arbor police detective who now writes a blog for AnnArbor.com and urged the community to "take a step back" and let authorities complete their investigation.


This may have been a dispute between two or more students that boiled over into more. It may have been a bullying incident. It may have had racial overtones, or it may be that ethnic insults were uttered in anger, but the fight was precipitated by something else.

One thing that does seem clear in retrospect is that this was not a school-related incident, although the students involved attend Skyline High School. The school district has taken disciplinary action against the students and is offering conflict mediation. Those actions are appropriate, but this does not look like a case where the school could have prevented the incident, or that the school environment is unsafe.

We also encourage the community not to second-guess the actions of the bus driver, who thought the dispute had been quelled before the students involved were let off the bus. Throwing blame in every direction is not what's needed here.

From what we've seen so far, this incident has been taken seriously by the schools and by police. When all the facts are known, it will be clear what the appropriate response is.

In the meantime, it's best to simmer down, and reserve judgment. We're concerned, and the community is concerned, but it's time to let cooler heads prevail here.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Ann Arbor's parking rules are convoluted and unfriendly

Posted: 7:22 a.m. September 20, 2009

5 Comments. [Comment Now](#)

Recently I came back to my hometown of Ann Arbor for a trip to the Farmers Market and Kerrytown, right across the street from my former high school. I had my 11-year-old daughter with me and enjoyed sharing with her my love for my hometown. The feeling in the air is so different from anywhere else I have ever been and one I have missed dearly. One problem though: confusing parking rules led to a \$25 ticket.

I parked in my old high school parking lot (Community High School). I read the signs. This was in the middle of the week before school started. My understanding from what I saw was that if you were a student you needed a permit to park there. Well, it wasn't during the school year and I'm no longer a student. Then there is the parking meter so I put money in it.

When I got back, my meter had run out, so I wasn't surprised to see a ticket. What surprised me was what I got a ticket for: parking without a permit. See parking without a permit is \$25. Expired meter is only \$15.

When paying my ticket I asked for clarification on why I got the ticket. The officer told me that during the week you have to have a permit to park there whether school is in session or not. On the weekend you have to just pay the meter.

That's the most convoluted parking rules I've ever encountered! I used to live in this town and I went to that school. This type of paid parking arrangement does not match the spirit of the hometown and high school I remember.

- Valentina Sparkman (Melnychuk)

Dearborn Heights

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[Tags: opinion, parking tickets](#)

Ann Arbor teachers OK contract

BY DAVID JESSE
DavidJesse@AnnArbor.com

The Ann Arbor teachers' union ratified a new two-year contract with the school district under which they will forgo a pay raise this year.

Union members voted Wednesday and Thursday, and the results were released Friday afternoon.

Preliminary counts show 800 union members voted yes, union President Brit Satchwell said. The union has 1,200 members. Satchwell didn't know Friday afternoon how many teachers voted against it or how many teachers voted.

The contract is the first in district's history to not include a pay raise. However, many teachers will still be

paid more this year than last year because of step increases tied to education and years of service.

The contract covers the 2009-10 school year and the 2010-11 school year. It did not set a pay rate for next school year, largely because the district's finances are still unsettled. The district and union will have to return to negotiations to set those raises.

The district doesn't know how much per-pupil funding it will get from the state this year — nor does it know if county voters will approve a 2-mill tax in November that would bring \$11 million a year to the school for the next five years.

The contract still has to be ratified by the school board, which could vote as early as

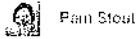
Wednesday night.

In addition to teachers' pay, the 80-page contract sets the school calendar for this school year and next and details other changes for teachers.

Prescription drug co-pays will be going up. But the amount of money the district contributes for teachers' health care also will go up.

Teachers can choose how they want to spend that money. If they opt for the most-expensive plan offered, they'll have to pay part of the cost. If they choose the lower-priced HMO, they'll get money back from the district.

— David Jesse covers K-12 education for AnnArbor.com. He can be reached at 734-623-2534 or at DavidJesse@annarbor.com.



Pam Stout

Peace and Paper Cranes: Sending my son to Hikone

Posted 3:36 pm September 25, 2009

1 Comment | 1 Like | 0 Dislike

In a few short weeks, I'll be putting my eighth grade son on a plane to Japan for the experience of a lifetime. He's traveling as one of twelve middle school student ambassadors to our sister city of Hikone. Over the course of a couple of weeks, he'll stay with a Japanese host family, attend a Japanese middle school, march in Samurai costume in a city parade, meet dignitaries, and do all sorts of exciting things. Prior to that, we'll be hosting a Hikone student in our home.



Amidst all of the fundraising, language practice, cultural courses and sushi feasts is the project of folding 1,000

paper cranes to present at the Children's Peace Monument in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. The monument was erected in memory of girl named Sadako Sasaki who contracted leukemia after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima during World War II. During Sadako's illness, she believed that folding 1000 paper cranes would make her wish for wellness come true. As her health declined, she changed her wish to world peace, and when she died, her school friends rallied to erect the Children's Memorial Park in her honor. Her story is told in the book *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*. Today, the paper crane has become a symbol for peace, and visitors from around the world present about ten million origami cranes at the monument as a peace offering. Our kids will be part of that tradition.

Right now, for Austin, the paper folding project is one more thing to do. He knows it is significant, but as a middle schooler immersed in the here and now, it's not that easy to grasp. He's honored to be selected, and he's busy bonding with classmates, adjusting to eighth grade homework and saving for an ipod to take on the plane. He's mostly excited to meet his new friends, practice his Japanese, try the food and check out the high-tech (or low-tech, sometimes) toilets.

As a parent, I know my eighth grade son is going to get a lot. I know what a huge opportunity this is. I know he will be changed by the experience. I know that when he can navigate in a foreign country, I won't be able to clip his wings at home. I know he'll have so many stories to share, there won't be time for him to tell me everything. Some of those he'll keep to himself, and that's part of growing up.

So I pick up a piece of the pretty paper and make my own wish for these young ambassadors: for health, for safety, for friendship, and yes, for peace.

Here, one fold at a time, is where it begins.

Click here for more information on the Hikone-Ann Arbor Educational Exchange.

Pam Stout parents three Ann Arbor children and muses about her adventures at BeyondJustAMom.com. She can be reached at pam@beyondjustmom.com.

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Program to teach Ann Arbor high school students basic medical skills marks 30 years

Posted: 6:01 a.m. September 25, 2008

0 2 Comments. [Comment Now](#)

Turning on a gush of water and grabbing a handful of soap, Haris Sohail was among a group of Pioneer High School seniors who were learning the correct way to wash their hands this week.

And they were taking it seriously.

Ten times around the hands. Ten times between the fingers. Ten times around the wrists and rinse.



Pioneer High School teacher Cathy Malette shows her students how to properly wash their hands during the Health Sciences Technology class. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the training program.

Even something as simple as proper hand-washing will be important when the students enter the medical field, Sohail said during class this week.

They are part of a collaborative program between Pioneer and Huron High School called the Health Sciences Program. The program is marking its 30th year of teaching high school students a basic understanding of different health skills to help prepare them for the rigors of studying for medical professions.

Sohail dreams of being a surgeon someday. And he plans to have a leg up when starting college next fall because of the class.

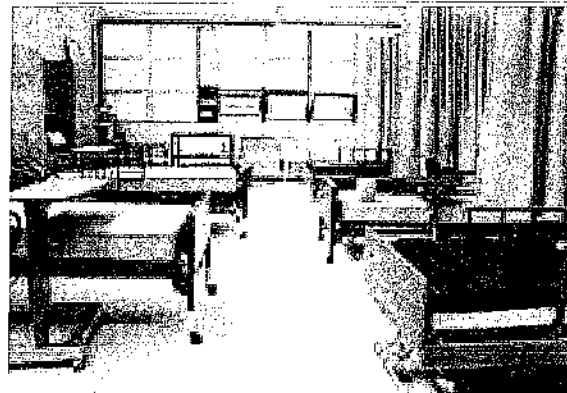
"Probably a neuro- or cardio-surgeon," he said. "I just want to help people. You get to personally see the difference you're making in people's lives [in medicine]."

The classroom itself is full of donated medical equipment, including retired hospital beds, blood pressure machines, walkers, expired IV fluid and a disabled automatic external defibrillator.

The idea is to teach the students a bit about the major systems of the body, such as the skeletal system or the nervous system - and what they'll need to know as health professionals, said Cathy Malette, a registered nurse who has taught the class for five years.

For example, after learning about the skeletal system, the students learn how to safely lift and transport patients who are unable to move, Malette said.

To get in the course, students must apply during their junior year and prove a serious interest in a health-related field. Nearly all the students have done some sort of volunteering in a medical setting, and often do extra research on their own because they're extremely motivated in the subject.



Donated medical beds and wheelchairs sit in the Health Sciences Technology classroom.

Angela Cesere | AnnArbor.com

Malette also incorporates human relations.

"So they're looking at it, not just as a science, but as a human interaction," she said.

That's not a problem for student Hannah Maxbauer, who said she wants to study to be a nurse.

Nurses might not get the recognition doctors receive, Maxbauer said. But when she visited the hospital for loved ones in the past, it was the nurses she saw helping patients while reassuring and explaining information to family members. That's what she envisions herself doing.

It's really the second semester of the course that has Maxbauer and Sohail excited. They will be sent to different clinical sites around Ann Arbor to shadow medical professionals. More than 300 clinical placements have been arranged for the students to visit for two-week rotations with doctors and departments among local universities.

They're excited about clinical placements the high school will be able to arrange with volunteer mentors for them.

"No other high school could do that," Sohail said.

That's also one of Malette's favorite parts of the year. By then, the students know how to check a patient's vital signs, they understand universal precautions and they are certified in first aid and CPR.



After Malette's classroom instruction, (from bottom to top) Anna Gankin, Llane Racelis and their classmates practice proper handwashing techniques.

9/25: Microbiology
60:0015

9/25: Bacteria
analyze


9/24: What's I
...

And they've also worked on interview and resume skills. To hear her talk, Malette almost sounds like a proud parent herself.

Angela Cesere | AnnArbor.com

"When they have their lab coats on, they rise to the occasion," Malette said. "They are so impressive."

Tina Reed reports on health and the environment for AnnArbor.com. Contact her at tinareed@annarbor.com or find her on Twitter [@TreedinAA](https://twitter.com/TreedinAA).

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Tags: Health, Pioneer High School, Tina Reed

Racism not rare even in today's high schools

Editor's note: This column by Huron High School student and AnnArbor.com contributor Alisa Lee was spurred by a recent after-school incident in which ethnic slurs were reportedly made during an after-school altercation involving African-American and Arab-American students from Skyline High School.



AlisaLee
AnnArbor.com contributor

people. A new life started when I came to high school. Biology, geometry, everything's a blur to me but this all

changes when I go to my next class: Spanish.

I'm taking non-accelerated Spanish, unlike everyone I know from my middle school. In my class, there are no friends. There are seniors, juniors, kids from my history class that I don't know. Although there is diversity throughout the school, in this class, I am the only Asian student.

Class starts, ends, and nothing eventful happen. A few weeks later, things change. Everyone's somehow noticed that I always do my homework and before class starts, they come over and ask if they can copy my work. I let them.

Then things change even more. If I leave my binder in class to go to the bathroom, people just grab my homework. They don't say thanks,

and I only exist when they need my homework.

Then a whole new level of frustration. They call me "chink." According to Urban-dictionary.com, a chink is "A term that originated during the Korean War and latter took on the flavor of a racist slur. ... A conjunction of a Chinese North Korean." They say things like: "The chink always does her homework;

the chink is the teacher's pet. I want to be in a group with the chink because she'll do all the work."

It's already bad enough that I'm being seriously offended, but I hate myself for not saying anything about it and that no one else is telling me to ignore the others. Everyone just sits, listens, and sometimes

See **First-hand**, Page A17

It was a new building. New

First-hand experience with racism changes student

Continues from A16

even laughs. I feel publicly humiliated and shocked that people would openly refer to me in a racial slur at school. I hate being in that class, but the drop/add deadline has passed, and we all know you need a foreign language to get into college. So I decide to stay even though I came to hate the class as well as Spanish.

As the year goes by, I change too. I stick my binder in my backpack and when someone asks if I've done my homework, I lie. I feel bad

about lying, but at the same time I don't. I don't want to help anyone who calls me names and laughs at me. As immature and lame as I sound, this is the only thing I can do as payback. As the end of the year approaches, I go from someone who took racial comments lightly to a person who is sensitive toward racial comments, especially when they apply to me. I can't watch a single Russell Peters clip about Koreans or any videos that parody Koreans without getting upset.

Three years later, I'm a high school senior and

I'm sharing with the whole community a story I never even shared with my closest friends. For those of you who want to know what happened later, I switched to accelerated Spanish my sophomore year. At first, my grades suffered. I struggled to keep up with my classmates, but I was lucky enough to catch up and learn and practice and love the language with the help of my teacher, Senora Bares.

What happened to me, although it was not a physical attack, was an attack nonetheless. Maybe I wouldn't be able to apply to colleges that

I am now applying to if I had dropped out of Spanish. Although I don't hold the things that I was called to my heart, through the experience, I have lost all respect for some, and I learned that people often take things past ignorance and more toward hate.

I am sharing my experience now because I understand that people are shocked by what happened at Skyline, but I'm not that surprised. Although it's not clear whether the attack was racially motivated, my conclusion is that open racism isn't rare. Maybe it's because I've experienced

it or maybe it's because I personally believe that little stereotypes and racial insults pile up to become a hate toward a race. None of us can deny that high school kids have heard and then told others the racist jokes they've heard, so although they might not be to a hate crime level, none of us should be surprised that these sorts of events happen.

Alisa Lee is a senior at Huron High School in Ann Arbor and co-editor-in-chief of *The Emery*, the school newspaper. She is also a contributor to *The Deuce* section of *AnnArbor.com*.

September 27, 2009

THE BOSS

Learning in Business by Following the Heart

By ABBY ELLIN

MY life has been punctuated by points where I followed my heart rather than my head. I grew up in Ann Arbor, Mich., and went to the alternative high school there. It was called Community High — Commie High for short — and it had an unstructured format. I spent much of my junior and senior years traveling the country in a six-member jazz ensemble.

JOSH SILVERMAN

President, Skype

AGE 40

LIVES IN London

HOBBIES Salsa dancing and theater

RECENTLY READ “Belle du Seigneur” by Albert Cohen

I went to Brown University and majored in public policy. After graduation, I was told that Senator Bill Bradley had an opening on his staff for a foreign policy specialist who was from New Jersey. I was neither, but took the interview anyway and was able to convince his staff to create a job for me.

I worked for him about two years, and what I learned helped me so much in business. In Washington, no matter how complex the issue, you have to boil it down to one page. That’s an invaluable skill for a leader.

In 1995, I decided to go to Stanford Business School. After graduating in 1997, I took a job at ADAC Laboratories, a maker of medical equipment. I learned a lot about leadership there — especially how to align a team’s efforts and goals around a common vision.

In late 1998, I decided that I really wanted to start my own business. My motivation was partly selfish; I needed an online tool to make it easier to arrange quality time with my friends and family. I quit my job in November 1998 to write a business plan and to start building the product. Everyone thought I was insane. I had no idea what I was doing. I was very “unstealth” about it, telling everyone my idea.

The idea became a business called Evite. I was fortunate to meet talented co-founders (who already had the brand and some early technology when I found them). We launched the product, and it took off. In 2001, my partners and I sold the company to Barry Diller.

I'd met Shirin, who is now my wife, in late 1998, but after we started dating, we broke up for a while because I was putting in 18-hour workdays, six days a week — Sunday was a half-day — building Evite. I finally made a commitment to take off all day on Sundays. I became much more effective when I worked fewer hours. If I can't get my job done in 60 hours — five 12-hour days — then I have failed to prioritize and may be failing my team as well. I keep weekends for family.

I wanted a chance to work internationally. A friend recruited me to [eBay](#), where it assigned me to Amsterdam to prove myself by fixing an underperforming business. My diagnosis was that we were getting beaten by a competitor: Marktplaats, a local classifieds business. While traditional orthodoxy at eBay had been that auctions were a superior model to classifieds sites, my team was able to demonstrate that classifieds could become a very effective format. As a result, I was asked to start eBay's European online classifieds business.

Within three years, through acquisitions and organic growth, we succeeded in building one of the largest online classifieds businesses in Europe, a company that remains very successful. Next, I was asked to take over [Shopping.com](#), which eBay had recently acquired.

In March 2008, I became president of [Skype](#), the online calling service. We had over 480 million registered users worldwide at the end of June 2009.

So far, my family and I have lived in Amsterdam; Palo Alto, Calif.; Tallinn, Estonia; and London. I've enjoyed the chance to be an expat. But it's not easy to be the wife of someone who moves around a lot. I walk into a new job with fascinating challenges and colleagues. It's more difficult for the spouse who doesn't have a set place to go every day. I'm very lucky to have a wife who has been so supportive.

As told to Abby Ellin.

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Kickball Makes a Comeback

"It's better than watching the Lions"

BY AMY WHITESALL

SEPTEMBER 25, 2009

The red playground ball scuffs across the dirt the same way it did when you were 10, and the kicker takes a mighty running swipe at it, hoping for one of those big, arcing kicks that no one can get to – or maybe a line drive that will tattoo the ball's cross-hatch pattern onto some unlucky infielder's forearms.

It's Friday night at Veterans Memorial Park, and all four of the park's softball fields have a kickball game underway. Welcome to the big kids' playground.

Ann Arbor Rec & Ed started its first kickball league in 2005 with six teams. This summer there were 38. Team sports director Larry Dishman compares the vibe to the early 1970s, when folks of dubious athletic cred were coming out in even bigger numbers to play a laid-back, social sport called slow-pitch softball.

"You had people saying, 'Well, I can play this game,'" Dishman said. "Right now you've got largely that same type of phenomenon happening with kickball."

Twenty-eight teams signed up for the fall season, which runs through October. (Kickball, incidentally, features some of the best names in Ann Arbor recreational sports: Miracle on Dirt, We Got the Runs, Kicking Balls and Taking Names, Kick It to The Man...)

"It's a blast," said Ben Pierce, manager of The Untouchables, which on this night is opening its season against a team called Jiminy Kick It. Last fall Pierce and a buddy from work ran their own kickball league in Ypsilanti.

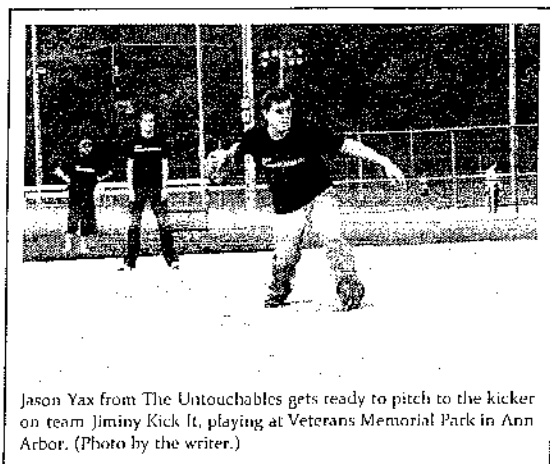
"It's competitive; you get to run around," he said. "We played like three times a week last year—This (Rec & Ed league) is even more competitive, and more fun."

Across the diamond, The Chronicle learns that most of the members of Jiminy Kick It met in preschool – their kids' preschool – Northstar Montessori in Saline. None of the kids are in preschool anymore, but they still come along on Friday night to play in the dirt by the bleachers while their parents play in the dirt between the chalked lines.

"No pressure, no outs," someone calls from the sideline as a Jiminy player sets up behind the plate, staring down pitcher Jason Yax of The Untouchables.

But of course, there's really no pressure anyway.

"As soon as somebody gets competitive, we're like, 'It's kickball.'" said Jennifer Fansler.



Jason Yax from The Untouchables gets ready to pitch to the kicker on team Jiminy Kick It, playing at Veterans Memorial Park in Ann Arbor. (Photo by the writer.)

Jiminy pitcher Rick Gilbert wanders past the bench, where coach Katie Lyons is explaining how her team mostly learns by failure, and how she got her position by default because she'd played softball in high school.

"How much are we winning by," Gilbert asks.

Lyons glances at her clipboard. "Negative two."

Now, if anyone tries to tell you kickball isn't competitive, they're lying. It's a contest. Someone wins and someone loses. It's competitive by definition.

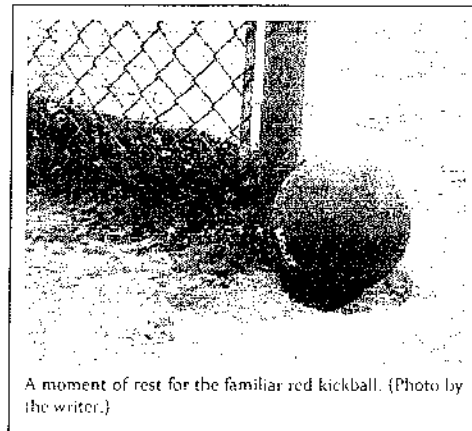
But it's not cutthroat.

"You look for the person who looks like they're not going to catch it and you aim for them," said Pierce.

OK, not too cutthroat.

Pierce says despite a certain amount of playground mentality, the people he plays with now are much better behaved than the schoolyard players of yesteryear.

So that's the benefit of 20-some years of maturity?



A moment of rest for the familiar red kickball. (Photo by the writer.)

"I remember arguing a lot (as a kid)," Pierce said. "Now we don't argue because we have the ump here to tell us to shut up."

Nonetheless, Rec & Ed recreation specialist Sean Williams says umpires clamor to work the kickball games. It's refreshingly different than small-ball counterpart.

Umpire Terry Condit has been officiating kickball games for three years. Before that he did high-level men's softball. It took him half a season to adjust to the culture shift between men's softball - with its high incidence of players who believe they're just a step shy of the major leagues - to kickball, with its high incidence of players who routinely show up late.

He worked one game last summer where one of the teams showed up with every player dressed as a superhero.

"One woman was dressed as Isis, and I had to have her take off all these heavy bracelets, and her crown," he said. "I had to make another guy take off his head because he could hardly see. Come to think of it, he wasn't walking too well, either."

(Public service disclaimer: Alcohol is not allowed in city parks. That's all we're going to say about that.)

So why kickball? Well, you don't have to be a superhero - or even an athlete - to play, for one thing. Everyone's there to have a good time, to laugh and run and wear a T-shirt with a nickname on the back. A lot of people find it's just like they remember from fourth grade - only better.

"I don't know that I ever played it as a kid," said Chris Graham, whose T-shirt bears the nickname "Stay-Puft." "So it was strange at first because I get to be athletic. That's unusual for me."

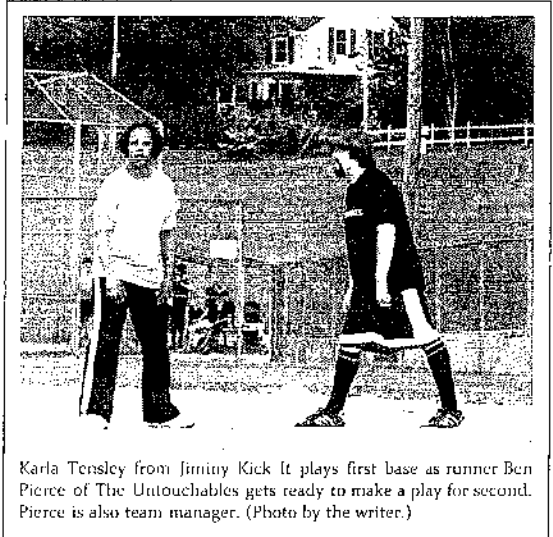
In the late innings Jiminy Kick It begins to show signs of wear. Karla Tensley, a runner in recreational real life, is stretching her right leg, trying to ease out the knot where a kicked ball hit her in the hamstring. Gilbert is sidelined with an eye injury. He sits on the bleachers, trying to shake it off.

He squints hard with his right eye, blinks, squints again.

He was playing with the kids, and one of them poked him in the eye.

A spectator watches a play not-quite-made and shrugs, "It's better than watching the Lions."

About the author: Amy Whitesall is a freelance writer based in Chelsea.



Karla Tensley from Jiminy Kick It plays first base as runner Ben Pierce of The Untouchables gets ready to make a play for second. Pierce is also team manager. (Photo by the writer.)

Section: Entertainment

The following terms describe the content of this article. Click on a term to see all articles described with that term: Ann Arbor Rec & Ed, kickball, recreational sports

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2 Comments

1. BY SAM NEAD
SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 AT 2:20 PM PERMALINK

Good read. I so want to play kickball now. And how can you top Jiminy Kick It as a team name!?! Sweet.

2. BY JASON YAX
SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 AT 3:55 PM | PERMALINK

I think she was referring to me about getting tattooed by a fine drive.

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Opinion

MEAP tests evaluate students' skills aptitude

Wednesday, September 30, 2009

By Shawn Lewis-Lakin (Special Writer)

The Michigan Educational Assessment Program tests will be administered to students in the Manchester Community Schools from Oct. 13 thru 29.

MEAP tests assess student proficiency in the areas of reading (grades three thru eight), mathematics (grades three thru eight), writing (grades four and seven), science (grades five and eight), and social studies (grades six and nine). State and federal mandates require that 100 percent of students participate in statewide testing, either MEAP testing or alternatives as determined by Individual Educational Planning Committees.

The MEAP tests are not timed and are administered to students in several sessions to avoid test fatigue. Test items are multiple-choice and constructed-response (essay) questions.

Results on MEAP tests are based on how students perform compared to set standards, and not against other students. Every student has an equal chance of meeting or exceeding the standards, which are established by the State Board of Education. Because student scores are based on preset standards, it's possible for every student to meet or exceed these standards, which is our goal as a district.

MEAP results are used in a variety of ways. At the student level, your child's teachers use the results to identify strengths and learning needs, and to work with you to plan ways to meet those needs.

At the school level, MEAP results are used to identify curriculum and/or instructional changes that may need to be made to better serve students. At the district level, MEAP results are used to assess district strengths and weaknesses. At the community level, MEAP results are one piece of information about the Manchester Community Schools that is reported to and discussed with parent and community groups.

There are a variety of ways that you can help your child to be successful on MEAP testing. Before the tests, please consider the following:

Talk with your child about when the tests will be given, what types of tests they are, and what the teacher has said about them.

Avoid scheduling appointments for your child that would take him or her out of a scheduled testing session.

Let your child know that the tests are important. Encourage your child to try his or her best so the results will reflect your child's learning as accurately as possible.

It is not possible to study or "cram" for MEAP tests as they assess what has been learned over time. Encouraging your child to keep up with class work is, and will be, the best preparation for any test he or she will take.

On the day of the tests encourage your child to relax and to feel positive about testing.

A good night's sleep and a good breakfast always help performance.

Be sure your child is at school on time.

When your child returns home, ask about the testing and how he or she thought everything went. Support your child's best efforts with encouragement and praise.

*Review your student's test report. Test score reports will be sent to you by the school district as soon as the district receives them from the state.

Ask your child's teacher, principal or counselor to review test reports with you.

Discuss the scores with your child. Point out areas where your child has demonstrated strength, and areas where he or she may need help.

Attend parent-teacher conferences (Nov.12-13) to share and receive information from your child's teacher.

Your child's classroom teacher and building principal are available to answer questions you may have regarding MEAP testing. Parents can also contact Superintendent Shawn Lewis-Lakin at slewis-lakin@mcs.k12.mi.us.

MEAP test dates

Oct. 13: Reading (session one)

Oct. 15: Reading (session two)

Oct. 20: Math

Oct. 22: Science, social studies and writing.

Oct. 14, 19, 21: Test-specific makeup testing.

Oct. 26-29: Any subject make-up testing as needed.

URL: <http://www.heritage.com/articles/2009/10/05/opinion/doc4ac38f87e66b0832561009.prt>

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Ann Arbor Journal > News

Program would help disabled students with career path

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

By Lisa Allmendinger, A2 Journal

As part of its goal for individualized learning opportunities for all students in Ann Arbor Public Schools, the Board of Education got an overview of a program that would assist students with disabilities discover a career path.

The Practical Assessment Exploration System, called PAES, in conjunction with another program that is already in place, would assist students develop realistic employment goals.

The \$136,000 program would be paid for by stimulus money.

PAES will provide a "holistic, comprehensive vocational evaluation program that offers students with disabilities the opportunity to develop realistic employment goals through a better understanding of their personality, interest, skills and abilities," according to a report from Larry Simpson, administrator for student intervention and support services.

It would be used at Huron, Pioneer and Skyline high schools, and Forsythe, Slauson and Clague middle schools, Simpson said.

He said students with disabilities have an increased risk of dropping out of high school, which schools across the country are trying to prevent.

It would benefit more than 200 children in the school system.

The program takes into account a student's strengths, preferences and interests, and gives children a better understanding of skills and abilities, among other things.

It has a one-time cost and Simpson would like to start the new program during the second semester of the school year.

The board is expected to vote on the proposal Oct. 14.

Lisa Allmendinger can be reached at lallmendinger@heritage.com or at 1-877-995-NEWS (6397).

URL: http://www.heritage.com/articles/2009/09/30/ann_arbor_journal/news/doc4ac2a0edcd06e552341488.prt

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Cuts in state funds could hit schools

\$218 per pupil cut would be 'devastating'

By Lisa Allmendinger
A2 Journal

A possible \$218 per pupil cut proposed by the state of Michigan as it attempts to balance its budget would have devastating effects on the Ann Arbor Public Schools.

State Rep. Pam Byrnes, D-52nd District, estimated in a House update that the reductions under consideration by the state would mean a loss of \$3.56 million to the Ann Arbor schools.

The education cuts are part of deliberations as the state tries to come up with a balanced budget that showed a \$2.8 billion deficit as this paper was on deadline.

The state was supposed to adopt a balanced budget by Wednesday.

These potential mid-year reductions in per pupil revenue from the state come after all school districts already have adopted a budget for the year.

The teachers' union and Board of Education last week ratified a two-year contract, which includes a pay freeze for the first year, but reopens that option of the contract in the second year.

Superintendent of Schools Todd Roberts said Friday that he wasn't sure what the state's final reductions would be, but the district has reduced its costs

by about \$16 million during the last four years.

About 70 positions were eliminated, the middle school program was restructured, some employees were "self-funding" health and dental insurance benefits and the district contribution to employees was capped.

The district has consolidated services with the county, and reduced property and liability costs to reduce costs, he said.

The school district also has reduced legal expenses and contracted services' costs, Roberts said.

With personnel costs accounting for about 85 percent of the school district's operating budget, Roberts said a proposed deficit of \$15 million would mean the elimination of 219 full-time positions, if the district doesn't use any of its fund balance.

Roberts gave a presentation to the Board of Education explaining the county-wide school millage on the Nov. 3 ballot.

"The only option under the law is a regional enhancement millage," he said, while pushing the proposal that will ask voters to approve 2 mills for five years.

If approved, the millage would benefit all 10 school districts in the county, he said.

The millage will generate about \$30 million per year, which includes about \$11.2 million for the Ann Arbor Schools.

For a home valued at \$300,000, with a taxable value of \$150,000, it means \$300 in additional

10/1/09

Ann Arbor
JOURNAL

A2

classes, art, music, physical education and technology;

■ Maintain extracurricular opportunities such as athletics, drama and other clubs;

■ Maintain services such as transportation, maintenance and custodial.

Lisa Allmendinger can be reached at allmendinger@heritage.com or at 877-995-NEWS (6397).

SCHOOLS

FROM PAGE 1-A

taxes each year.

Roberts said passage of the millage would:

■ Maintain reasonable class sizes;

■ Maintain critical programs such as advanced placement

PLEASE SEE SCHOOLS/3-A

On the run

By Tom Costello

Stacy, his sister, sisters, and others, are going to run for breast and lung cancer. It's the first time they've done it together. They're going to run for the first time together. They're going to run for the first time together.

The race is for the Southern Michigan Cancer Society. It's the first time they've done it together. They're going to run for the first time together.

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Three-year-old Dylan Gregory, 3, rides on his father's shoulders during the annual Run-A-Thon.



John Creal, a fourth-grader at Lavton Elementary, joined the annual Run-A-Thon.

Three-year-old Dylan Gregory, 3, rides on his father's shoulders during the annual Run-A-Thon.

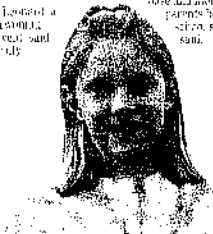
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Peyton Walters (left) and her sister, Avery, join boys Gabrielle and Cassandra DeMott for the eighth annual Run-A-Thon.

MARQUETTE



Photo by Lisa Almeida
Anthony Samu and his
son, Hope, participated
in their first Lawton
Elementary Run-A-Thon.
STORY, PAGE 3-A



David Jesse AnnArbor.com Staff

Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti school districts post gains in student enrollment

Posted: 4:41 p.m. October 1, 2009

6 Comments. [Comment Now](#)

The jubilation was evident when administrators in the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti school districts reported their official student count today.

That's because their districts bucked recent trends and added students in Wednesday's count, which translates into extra money for budgets under siege by a proposed \$218 per pupil funding cut from the state.

Wednesday's count is vital for funding for districts, which receive money for each student enrolled. That money makes up the bulk of each district's revenue.

The state uses a formula to come up with the total number of students enrolled; it takes 75 percent of the total from Wednesday's count and 25 percent from the previous spring.

Wednesday's numbers aren't final for 10 days.

Not every traditional school district gained students.

The biggest loss came in the Willow Run school district. The already-reeling district dropped to 1,738 students, which is 102 students fewer than budgeted for.

Combine that with the proposed per-pupil funding cut, and Willow Run will have to cut \$1,143,884 from this year's budget. The district was already more than \$2 million in the hole entering the year.

The loss of students also triggers a provision in a state-mandated deficit elimination plan that will force the closure of an elementary school next school year. The district closed one elementary school at the beginning of this school year.

Also dropping students was Saline, which had budgeted to be flat, but lost 30 students, Superintendent Scot Graden said.

Lincoln also appeared to lose students, Superintendent Lynn Cleary said in an e-mail to

AnnArbor.com. She said the preliminary district count shows a loss of 60 students.

"Obviously, we are watching what our legislators are going to do with the school aid budget, so it's difficult to make decisions on the future of this year," Cleary said in the e-mail.

"We are also waiting to have our district audit to see where we stand as well. As you know our teachers and support staff, transportation and non-affiliates have taken concessions for this year which helped tremendously in balancing the budget. If the state makes the cuts that have been tossed around, then we will have to look at every program that we offer and look to find ways to reduce once more."

In Ypsilanti, the extra 37 students over last year likely resulted from the district's schools-of-choice program, which allows for students from neighboring districts like Willow Run to attend Ypsilanti schools.

In Ann Arbor, officials budgeted for a gain of 50 students over last year, district spokeswoman Liz Margolis said. But they ended up with 68 additional students, meaning an overall gain of 18 students.

"That's good news," Margolis said. "We're very pleased."

The district saw its largest growth in the high schools, Margolis said.

The district isn't sure why the growth occurred - whether it's new students moving into the district or students who were attending private or charter schools coming back to the district.

Other districts like Dexter saw growth, but not as much as they budgeted for.

Superintendent Rob Glass said in an e-mail that the total count was 3,642, which is an increase of seven students over fall count 2008. But that's less than the 25 students they budgeted for, which means a loss of \$100,000 to \$140,000.

"Here's my larger worry: We also based our preliminary budget on a zero increase in per-pupil funding," he said in the e-mail. "If the previously proposed \$218 per pupil pro-ration materializes, that will be a much greater problem - a shortfall of about \$800k. However, this is still up in the air pending an agreement on the state budget. By the time this gets resolved at the state level, we will be 1/4 of the way into the school year, with students in classrooms, and very little room to maneuver in terms of ways to make cuts. A very unfair situation in which to place schools."

Local charter schools also grew, but still face funding challenges.

For example, Al Waters, director of Honey Creek Community School, saw his school increase by 23 students.

"While these numbers show a net increase in state funds, they do not address the cost of an additional teacher and the rent for an additional classroom," he said. "I'd also like to point out that an important facet of Honey Creek Community School is our small class sizes. Our average class size is 18 students, so because we are receiving fewer dollars for fewer students, the proposed cuts have a greater affect on our ability to meet the unique needs of each student. Our funding challenges are compounded by the fact that as a public charter academy we do not receive any local funds and will not receive any additional funds if the ISD millage increase passes. The proposed foundation grant cuts further exacerbate the inequitable nature of PSA funding."

David Jesse covers K-12 education for AnnArbor.com. He can be reached at davidjesse@annarbor.com or at 734-623-2534.

Share this post

Tags: Ann Arbor schools, Ypsilanti schools

More Info:

Wednesday's school count

Published by [Google Docs Report Abuse](#) — Updated automatically every 5 minutes

Traditional school district	2008-09	2009-10	Change
Ann Arbor	16,421	16,489	68
Chelsea	2,603	2,563	-40
Dexter	3,635	3,642	7
Lincoln	n/a	4,752	n/a
Manchester	1,274	1,238	-36
Milan	2,534	2,596	62
Saline	5,479	5,449	-30
Whitmore Lake	1,227	1,212	-15
Willow Run	n/a	1,738	n/a
Ypsilanti	3,888	3,925	37

Sheet1

To see historical enrollment data, click here to go to the Washtenaw Intermediate School District's page.

6 Comments:



Ryan J. Stanton AnnArbor.com Staff

Don't worry, that woman in swimming goggles just wants to keep Ann Arbor's Mack Pool from closing

Posted: 2:17 p.m. October 1, 2009

4 Comments. [Comment Now](#)

If you see a woman wearing swimming goggles around town on Saturday, don't be alarmed.

We're told she's an ordinarily mild-mannered librarian who has decided to raise awareness about the threat of Ann Arbor's Mack Pool closing.

Her identity is still a mystery to us, but word on the street is she'll be setting up a table outside the People's Food Co-Op on Fourth Avenue with swimming gear, pool information, posters and portents to draw attention to the issue. An tipster tells us she intends to be noticed, and her background in drama should ensure her success.

The fate of Mack Pool has been uncertain in recent months as city officials pondered closing it due to budget constraints. The City Council recently appointed several members to a newly formed Mack Pool Task Force headed up by Council Member Carsten Hohnke, D-5th Ward. The group's goal is to work with city staff to develop a self-sustaining financial plan for the indoor pool.

Council Member Christopher Taylor, D-3rd Ward, said he was chosen to serve on the task force because of his background with the city's Park Advisory Commission and City/School Committee. He thinks the pool can be saved.

"If we didn't think it was capable of being saved, we wouldn't be doing the hard work to save it," Taylor said. "There are school representatives on the task force, and we are all working together toward the common purpose of saving the pool."

The city's proposed budget for fiscal year 2011, which will be considered by City Council in May, currently recommends closing the pool.

The total cost of operating the pool in the city's current fiscal year budget is \$224,513. However, only \$122,100 in revenue is projected, meaning it will require a \$102,413

general fund subsidy.

That's a deficit city officials say can't continue to occur as the city confronts even bigger fiscal challenges. The city is projecting millions of dollars in shortfalls next year due to continually increasing costs and the current economic crisis that's resulted in state revenue sharing cuts and declining property tax revenues. The city administrator earlier this year proposed a two-year budget plan that calls for reducing general fund expenses by 10 percent to prevent illegal deficit spending.

The Mack Pool Task Force is working with Ann Arbor Public Schools, a significant user of Mack Pool, to explore cost sharing options and ways to maximize use of the pool. The group is examining options for increasing revenues and reducing costs.

The task force's findings are expected to be presented to the City Council in February and will be considered for inclusion in the fiscal year 2011 budget.

"So far we have divided up essentially into revenue and expense teams and brainstormed as to what possible solutions we can come to to decrease the general fund subsidy of the pool," Taylor said. "We are still in the creativity phase, trying to determine what is achievable and possible."

Mack Pool, located on Brooks Street near the intersection of Seventh and Miller, offers public swimming and swimming programs in a six-lane, 25-yard main pool attached to a children's pool. It serves about 4,000 city residents who make about 30,000 visits a year, according to the city.

Supporters say the pool provides important amenities not offered at other facilities, including a handicapped-accessible ramp to the pool and capacity to host year-round indoor programming.

Other members of the Mack Pool Task Force include:

- Scott Rosencrans, a Park Advisory Commission member.
- Lynden Kelly of the A2QUA swim group.
- Ed Sketch, a Mack Pool neighbor, season pass holder and regular lunch time lap swimmer.
- Nell Stern, Dawn Ducks annual pass holder.
- Kristin Burgard, Masters Swimmer, A2QUA Swimmer, and regular swimmer.

- Chris Murphy, Synchronized Swimming group.
- Randy Trent, AAPS Administration.
- Sara Aeschbach, AAPS Community Education and Recreation.
- Naomi Zikmund-Fisher, principal of Ann Arbor Open School at Mack.
- Jayne Miller, the city's community services area administrator.
- Colin Smith, parks and recreation manager.
- Dan McGuire, parks and recreation supervisor.
- Kevin McDonald, assistant city attorney.

Ryan J. Stanton covers government for AnnArbor.com. Reach him at ryanstanton@annarbor.com or 734-623-2529.

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Tags: Ann Arbor City Council, Mack Pool

4 Comments:

Let's close the city's foolish policy of purchasing parcels of land (or rights of first refusal) outside of the city limits.
That would free up some funds!
A greenbelt is almost complete from Olsen Park all the way to the Dixboro Dam.



Arboriginal

Posted 3 days ago

(Flag this Post)

I am sad to hear that they are thinking about closing Mack Pool. I had my swim lessons there as a young child, and went there for many other special events. I hope they keep it open, I would like to take my kids there during the Winter to practice their swim lessons.



RhondaM

Posted 3 days ago

(Flag this Post)

Ann Arbor Journal > News

Ann Arbor students raise money for trip to Japan

Friday, October 2, 2009

By Lisa Allmendinger, A2 Journal

While their classmates dress up for Halloween, a dozen eighth- and ninth-grade Ann Arbor Public School students will be boarding a plane to Japan.

The two-week trip is a special 40th anniversary celebration of the sister city relationship between Ann Arbor and Hikone, Japan.

Their sizzling excitement was almost as loud as the food being grilled inside the school's Mongolian Grill Sept. 29 during a fundraiser for the trip.

The student ambassadors will stay with a host family for a week and attend a local school and then travel to such places as Hiroshima, Kyoto and Miyajima while staying in hotels, said Larry Dishman, coordinator of the program.

Each student pays about \$1,400, unless eligible for a scholarship, and raises about \$600 during a series of fundraisers.

Two Ann Arbor teachers or administrators travel with the students.

"I think it's an incredible opportunity," said Zoe Koosis, mother of Aviva Gordon, who will go on the trip.

She said the preparation for the trip to Japan was excellent. The students commit to meeting twice a week throughout the summer until they leave, she said.

"The Japanese language teacher is really preparing them," Koosis said, adding that the students had sacrificed a lot of summer nights to go to class.

Before the trip, the students sample Japanese food, learn basic Japanese expressions and learn about the country's culture and family life.

Christian O'Keefe, an eighth-grader at Forsythe Middle School, said she was looking forward to both living with a family and traveling.

"I'm excited about seeing Hiroshima," she said.

Each student made 90 origami cranes to bring with them on the trip, O'Keefe said.

"I'm super excited to go and I've been taking language and culture lessons all summer to know what to expect," said

Rachael Kerr, a freshman at Skyline High School.

Aviva Gordon, an eighth-grader at Clague Middle School, said the students were leaving on Halloween and returning Nov. 13.

She and Kerr were outside the restaurant encouraging people to eat there as part of several fundraisers planned for the trip.

"It's the 40th anniversary of the sister-city relationship between Ann Arbor and Hikone," Gordon said, adding that students usually go to Japan every two years, but because 2009 is special, Hikone had invited the Ann Arbor students this year.

The fundraiser at the Main Street restaurant also drew support from celebrity servers such as radio personality Lucy Ann Lance; Todd Roberts, superintendent of Ann Arbor Public Schools; Ingrid Sheldon, former Ann Arbor mayor; and Jerry Clayton, Washtenaw County sheriff, to name a few.

Austin Stout, an eighth-grader at Tappan Middle School; Maekong Koral-Knighton, an eighth-grader at Ann Arbor Open School; and Chinonye Uche, an eighth-grader at Slauson Middle School, said they were looking forward to eating shrimp tempura when they were in Japan.

Koral-Knighton said she was looking forward to experiencing daily life in a Japanese family, while Stout said he couldn't wait to see the Hikone castle.

Maria Torres, an eighth-grader at Slauson Middle School, said she was excited to go to Japan. She looks forward to trying the food and living in a home that's very different from what she's used to living in in Ann Arbor.

Exchange students from Hikone are expected to arrive in Ann Arbor for two weeks Oct. 5 and a picnic is planned for host families and their guests at Gallup Park Thursday.

Lisa Allmendinger can be reached at lallmendinger@heritage.com or at 1-877-995-NEWS (6397).

URL: http://www.heritage.com/articles/2009/10/05/ann_arbor_journal/news/doc4ac654442c07c311883139.prt

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Linsey Maughan

Gray Panthers, Ann Arbor school officials discuss environmental education

Posted: 6:53 p.m. October 2, 2009

2 Comments | 14 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1

How much can one child do to stop global warming?

A lot, believe the Gray Panthers of Washtenaw. And so they took it upon themselves to get a closer look at exactly what the Ann Arbor Public Schools are teaching in terms of environmental education, and what Ann Arbor's schools are doing to become environmentally friendly.

The group, which is a national organization that works for "social and economic justice and peace for all people," met with representatives of the Ann Arbor School District on Saturday morning at the University of Michigan Turner Senior Resource Center to have the discussion.

"We're all interested in what our children are learning about climate control and how global changes affect our youth," said Barb Clarke, a Gray Panther member.

Present on behalf of the Ann Arbor School District were superintendent Todd Roberts, Ann Arbor Public Schools physical properties director Randy Trent, Lakewood Elementary environmental education teacher Dave Szczygiel, and Huron High School physics teacher Stephen Schaffer.

Roberts explained that the Ann Arbor Public Schools belong to one of few districts in Michigan that still offer an environmental education program.

"Nationally, with the way funding for education is right now and the economy overall, many districts that had environmental education programs have long since had to stop them, along with art and music as well," he said. "I think that says a lot for the Ann Arbor schools to maintain this commitment. I think it speaks well to the values of this community."

Environmental education is offered to students in kindergarten through eighth grade not only via in-class discussion, but also through field trips at each grade level.

"We want to give them a positive experience outdoors so that it builds (their interest in environmental education)," said Szczygiel, citing the example of the first-grade field trip to study animals outdoors at the Kensington Nature Center in Milford, where children have the opportunity to feed wild birds such as chickadees and woodpeckers directly from their own hands.

Over the past 40 years, the wild birds have been trained to land on visitors' hands and receive food. This bonding experience with nature is a fond memory that children can take with them as they grow older, Szczygiel said.

"They learn how to explore the outdoors with a purpose."

As students move up in grade level, other field trips themes include life cycles, pond habitats, geology, terrestrial habitats, astronomy, recycling, winter survival and urban hydrology. For their astronomy lessons, students need not leave Ann Arbor schools, as the district owns an impressive planetarium that they upgraded in 2003.

"It is one of the most state-of-the-art planetariums in the country right now," Schaffer said.

At the high school level, student field trips continue, and courses include biology, chemistry, physics, geology and earth science.

But Ann Arbor Public Schools aren't simply telling students how to be environmentally friendly -- they are also practicing what they teach. Skyline High School, which opened in 2008, has received state and national awards for its green construction.

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we saved over \$200,000 doing that. I sent 100 the Gray Panthers. Every piece of cardboard, scrap metal, (etc.) - we recycled every piece of material that we could."

Ann Arbor schools are also going green in other ways. During the 2007-2008 school year, they recycled over 400,000 pounds of paper.

"We're looking at what you do with a switch, and that piece of paper you throw away," Trent said.

The schools are also all using a green cleaning product now, and have, over the course of the past couple of decades, gradually implemented more and more energy conserving features. Among many other changes, lamps have been replaced by reflectors, CO2 controls for middle and high school gyms and auditoriums have been upgraded, vendmisers (which regulate power usage) have been installed in pop machines, and water conservation measures have been installed on many faucets, toilets and urinals.

All in all, the Gray Panthers seemed impressed by what they learned about the public schools' efforts to go green.

"They don't just inform the kids, they lead by example, and that's what touched me so much," said Odrle Hagonot Haber, a board member for the Gray Panthers.

Longstanding Gray Panther and board member June Rusteri agreed, saying, "They did a tremendous job - (Ann Arbor schools) are so unique in the country."

Superintendent Roberts invited the Gray Panthers to get involved in supporting in the district's environmental education program by making a donation, helping with activities, or by coming along on class field trips.

"It is heartening to us that a group such as yourselves would come to us to say that you want us to do more of it."

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2 Comments:

Everything that can be done to reduce energy usage and eliminate waste should be a priority for all people. If you look at what goes into your household trashcan you will probably see that it is primarily food packaging. The recycling program here in Ann Arbor is something we should utilize and be proud of. I am just tired of people making the assumption that the future of the planet is at stake. If global warming is happening it is more the result of the sun than anything man can control. The Gray Panthers should take up the cause of helping the homeless or feeding the hungry and leave "social and economic justice" to the lies in Washington.



Posted 25 hours ago

(Flag this Post)

Wonderful story!



Posted 12 hours ago

(Flag this Post)

Showing 2 Comments. [Comment now](#)

UPDATED: Washtenaw County prosecutors: Assault involving Skyline High student was not a hate crime

Posted: 1:50 p.m. October 6, 2009

25 Comments. [Comment Now](#)

Washtenaw County prosecutors said today they found no evidence of a hate crime in the Sept. 8 fight that injured a 16-year-old Muslim girl who attended Skyline High School.

Chief Deputy Assistant Prosecutor Steve Hiller said four Skyline High School students will be ordered to appear in juvenile court on undisclosed charges. He would not discuss the ages, genders, or ethnicities of those who will be charged at this point.

"There will not be any ethnic-intimidation charges from this investigation," he said. "Suffice it to say, we did not feel there was evidence to justify any ethnic intimidation charges."

Hiller said today a review of the Ann Arbor Police investigation into the incident ended last week. Four teens ages 16 and under are expected to be charged.

Letters explaining the charges and juvenile court process are expected to be mailed to students this week.

Dawud Walid, head of the Michigan chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said the organization is curious to see who will be charged in the "assault" case and what the charges will be. He has not yet talked to the 16-year-old girl's family about the latest development in the investigation.

"I'm sure that the family will be disappointed and they believe there was some ethnic motivation behind it based on some alleged statements with regard to them being Arab," he said.

Investigators interviewed about a dozen students who either witnessed or participated in the brawl that occurred near the North Maple Estates apartments at about 3:30 p.m. Sept. 8. The confrontation started on a bus leaving the high school and escalated when the driver dropped off a few of the students.

Detective Sgt. Brian Jatczak said the charges involve two physical altercations stemming from the same incident.

Hiltner and police investigators wouldn't discuss how the fight started and who was involved.

According to initial reports, a 16-year-old Muslim girl needed six stitches after a group of other students allegedly attacked her and pulled off her hijab, or head scarf, while shouting racial slurs.

Attorney Nabih Ayad, who is representing the girl, maintains she was "jumped" because of her ethnicity or religion.

The girl left Skyline High School and enrolled elsewhere because of the attack, he said.

"There's no doubt in my mind that this case is clearly a hate crime case," he said. "We were waiting for the Washtenaw County Prosecutor's Office to do the right thing. Unfortunately, they didn't."

The Michigan Department of Civil Rights has not received any formal allegations of discrimination in the case, said spokesman Harold Core.

"It's just something that we're still monitoring at this point," Core said.

Police and prosecutors wouldn't discuss whether the girl could also be charged for having a role in the incident.

The case was publicized regionally after the Michigan Chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations demanded state and federal authorities investigate the matter as a hate crime.



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Pioneer High School vs. Huron High School pie eating contest

Posted: 11:38 p.m. October 7, 2009

6 Comments. [Comment Now](#)



The Pioneer and Huron high school football teams faced off in a five-on-five pie eating contest at Whole Foods on Wednesday night. The players devoured pies to bring attention to Breast Cancer Awareness Month in advance of their Friday night, cross-town rivalry game.



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Tags: [Huron High School](#), [Pioneer High School](#)

Life

4-H members share interests at open house

Wednesday, October 7, 2009

By Lisa Altmendinger, Heritage Newspapers

Grace Iverson, Mitchell Salke and Gillian Golden of Ann Arbor demonstrated how biofuels work with an experiment that combined yeast, corn syrup and water.

Samantha and Allison Ballairs of Munith talked about their rabbits.

Molly Buis of South Lyon practiced her suturing technique on a board made for such activity.

The demonstrations were part of an open house Sunday at the MSU Extension Service offices that provided visitors with a glimpse of the variety of club interests.

"This is a good time to get started in 4-H," said Jackie Martin, 4-H Extension educator. "Although youth can join any time, fall is the time that clubs are gearing up."

There are 60 in all in the county.

It was the first time the Washtenaw County 4-H hosted an open house as a kickoff to National 4-H Week, which ends Oct. 10.

On display were the traditional clubs that focus on small animals or farm animals, there was is a new one called Hot Shot Riflery Club based in Lodi Township that focuses on archery and shooting, while another club explores career opportunities such as veterinary medicine.

With its motto head, hearts, hands and health - the four H's - there was also a booth devoted to healthy eating and offered visitors a chance to sample different kinds of apples while showing test tubes of fat content found in everyday foods.

Ashley Thomas, a junior at Ypsilanti High School and Shannon Bater, a junior at Chelsea High School, both 4-H ambassadors, demonstrated germ awareness while offering up healthy treats.

"A lot of kids say, 'I don't eat apples,'" Bater said, "so we're giving them a chance to sample several kinds to show how good they are."

Nearby, Nicholas Recker, also of Ypsilanti, a member of Renegades 4-H Club, which meets in Lodi Township, demonstrated what non-point source water pollution looks like.

As he poured water on a non-porous model, it showed what happens to the liquid.

Iverson, a freshman at Pioneer High School; Salke, a sophomore at the same high school; and Golden, a junior at Community High School, said their Urbaneers Science 4-H Club was based in Ann Arbor, and had about six members.

They explained that after the yeast, corn syrup and water was combined in a bottle, a balloon was placed over the open end and was blown up by the release of carbon dioxide and ethanol.

Buis, a member of the Washtenaw County 4-H Veterinary Science Club, said members of her club -- about 25 strong -- focused on career exploration and took numerous field trips around the state.

The Bellairs sisters brought Miiff, a Holland lop rabbit, as well as Pineapple, an English angora rabbit, and Parrot, a Polish rabbit.

For more information about Washtenaw County 4-H, call Martin at 222-3877 or the main line at 997-1678.

Lisa Allmendinger can be reached at lallmendinger@heritage.com or at 1-877-995-NEWS (6397).

URL: <http://www.heritage.com/articles/2009/10/08/life/doc4accc27aa29a7148650438.prt>

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School district environmentally conscious

Published: Thursday, October 8, 2009

No comments posted.

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Michigan *Gear*

By Lisa Allmendinger, A2 Journal

Each year, before the Ann Arbor Public Schools has an unexpected pest or other environmental problem, Randy Trent, executive director of physical properties, issues bids for competitive pricing.

Should a bee problem or potentially hazardous asbestos or lead paint situation arise, the schools will be ready to handle it -- and not pay emergency costs, Trent told the Board of Education's planning committee.

He told board member Irene Patalan -- the only one of three members of the committee at the meeting -- "that the district is being as environmentally conscious as possible."

Trent said there were 3.5 million square feet of buildings, 3 million square feet of roofs and 2.5 million square feet of mechanical and tunnels in the district's buildings.

Patalan told the six high school students who attended the meeting that the schools regularly test the indoor air quality in the buildings.

Trent told the students that the district has 33 buildings, the oldest dating back to about 1910 and the youngest was Skyline High School, built several years ago.

"In both the old and new buildings, things need to be maintained," Patalan told the students.

Lisa Allmendinger can be reached at lallmendinger@heritage.com or at 1-0877-995-NEWS (6397).

Students celebrate Walk to School Day, call attention to new crosswalk at intersection

Published: Thursday, October 8, 2009

By Lisa Allmendinger, A2
Journal

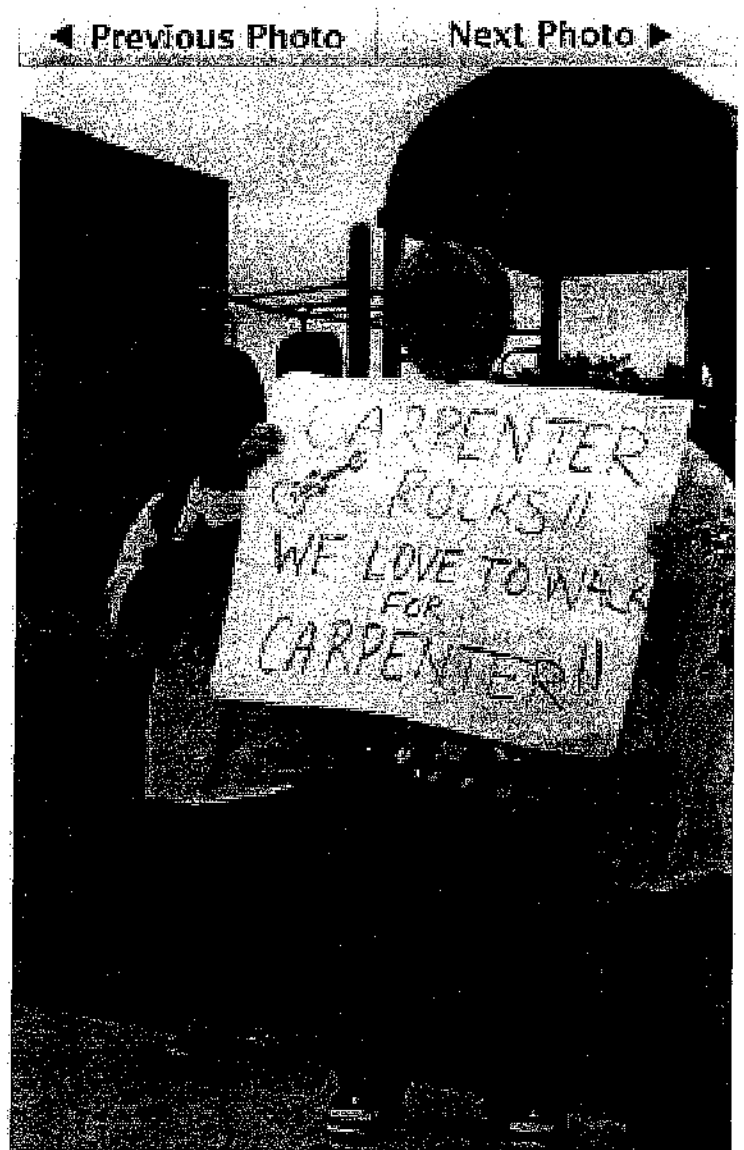
Anton Ferguson, a second-grader at Carpenter Elementary School, said it best with a homemade sign.


"Carpenter Rocks!! We love to walk for Carpenter," it read.

Anton made the sign in honor of both National Walk To School Day Oct. 7, and, more importantly, the completion of a new cross-walk at a dangerous intersection near the school.

The intersection at Packard and Dalton roads was the site of three pedestrian injuries when students were hit by cars in the last five years.

"It was something that was recognized six years ago when I came to Carpenter," said Ron Collins, the school's principal, crediting Annette Ferguson, a member of the Carpenter Elementary School Safe Routes to School Team since its formation, as a driving force for the changes.



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Ritchie Coleman, Pittsfield Township's Department of Public Safety's community coordinator, said between 40 and 75 children cross at the site and he's been working toward improving this new intersection since November 1990.

"We didn't have sidewalks on the east side of Dalton; there were no walkable paths," he said.

Crossing guard Isiah Harrison said the new intersection was wonderful because before this new crosswalk was installed, the students had to cross two roads.

A new crosswalk was added on the west side of the intersection, while the crosswalk on the east side of the road was removed.

In addition, new crossing signs and a mounted traffic signal with countdown numbers was installed.

"It's pretty great," said Cindy Walton, who said she walks with her children to school whenever they can. They live almost a mile away.

The \$11,860 improvement was a collaborative effort between representatives from school administration, staff, parents, Pittsfield Township elected and safety officials, the Washtenaw County Health Department, the Washtenaw County Road Commission, FedEx, U of M and St. Joseph Mercy Health Systems.

"It was nice to see it continue to evolve into a success story," Coleman said.

In fact, a group of eight fourth- and fifth-graders at Carpenter also got involved voicing concerns about the safety of people crossing Packard from two nearby apartment complexes.

About 25 percent of the 330 students walk to school in good weather while about 3 percent ride bikes.