



**Ann Arbor Parent Advisory Committee
Board of Education Meeting
January 6, 2010**

Good evening, my name is Eric Macks. My 5 year old son, Evan, was diagnosed with Prader-Willi Syndrome at birth, and this school year has begun kindergarten at Lawton Elementary school. Our son has made a smooth transition from an ECDD classroom at the preschool to Lawton, and we feel, again this school year, the Ann Arbor schools have provided our family with a comprehensive team to address Evan's developmental needs. We really appreciate the attention and work performed by the preschool and Lawton Staffs to ensure our son's accommodation into his classroom and his new school building. Evan's genetic syndrome could lead to potentially life threatening situations at school, and therefore we were very grateful and excited to be given the opportunity to train the entire Lawton staff about Evan's special needs just prior to the start of the school year. Evan's teacher, Laurie Moore, the school psychologist, Jenni Zimmer, and the school Nurse, Debita Graham in particular have provided great leadership at addressing our sons needs, and together with our principal Ruth Williams have been very supportive. Evan has made great strides developing his speech, and many other skills and is doing well attending kindergarten within a group of "typically developing" peers.

The AAPAC would like to thank Judy Coucouvanis, Clinical Nurse Consultant and Nurse Practitioner at the University of Michigan Department of Psychiatry workshop, for giving and presenting our December workshop on "Helping your child get along in the world: *Strategies for social success.*" We appreciate her time and expertise in the area of helping to develop social skills in our children, who are challenged in this area of everyday life due to manifestations of their diagnoses. We feel fortunate to have so many resources available in the Ann Arbor area, and we encourage the AAPS to continue to tap into their knowledge and expertise.

Our next workshop will be given by AAPS's own Chuck Hatt on "Read 180" on Thursday, January 21, 2010. Flyers will be sent out with time and location. "Read 180" is one of the reading programs offered to children in the AAPS who need extra assistance in learning reading skills. We look forward to learning more about this program and how successful it has been for students so far. This workshop is free to all parents, caregivers, staff, school administrators, and Board of Education Trustees! We encourage you all to attend and we look forward to seeing you there!

The Ann Arbor Parent Advisory Committee wants to recognize that we know that this 2010 will be very challenging for the AAPS staff, administration, and the Board of Education Trustees. The upcoming Budget Forums that have been scheduled this month will give citizens, and students, opportunities to brain-storm ideas that can help the AAPS meet its budget challenges. The discussions that occur at the forums will address areas where cuts may need to occur. The ideas that will come out of these forums could bring about innovations that can help our children learn in even more effective ways. Because Special Education services are mandated by federal law and are reimbursed at an 80% rate by the WISD, which we know that the AAPS is committed to following, it would not benefit AAPS to make cuts in SISS services. The parents of children with special needs have much experience in thinking “outside the box” with the challenges our children face each day and the AAPAC encourages these parents to take part in these forums. The AAPAC welcomes the opportunity to, and is committed to, being a part of the discussions with administration and trustees to help keep AAPS a strong learning environment for all of our children.

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. Since we have already had our January 4th meeting, we invite you to the next meeting is February 1, 2010. Yolanda Bell, the SISS Transition Coordinator will be present to speak about the transition process from high school to college or vocation for students with special needs. 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.
