



### **SYC Education Committee end-of-the-year report**

Committee members: Kian Vesteinsson, Mohamed Adan, Anna Colando, Moriah Williams, Ryan Lenea, Matt Fulle, Katya Anderson

Education is a critically important issue for almost every young person in Seattle. Over 45,000 youth attend elementary, middle, and high schools in the Seattle Public Schools District and hundreds of others attend private schools. The effects of education policy and legislation upon these students is enormous; changes dictate how well their education is funded, what that education entails, and how students are treated in schools. Education affects students to a great degree; despite this, the students themselves have almost no voice upon major decisions affecting education, neither on the school level nor the district level. Thus, the goal of the Education Committee this year has been to increase the voice of students in all areas of education, in order to give youth a chance to voice their opinions and represent themselves. In our projects this year, we aimed to further this goal.

In a continuation of a project started by last year's Education Committee, this year we nominated and saw appointed two Youth Commissioners to the Families and Education Levy Oversight Committee. We collaborated with Tre' Owe from Councilmember Burgess' office and Sid Sidorowicz of the Office for Education to work out the details of the plan; it was ultimately decided that youth would be appointed from the Seattle Youth Commission by members of the Commission to attend Levy Oversight Committee meetings as members and would report back to the Education Committee on a regular basis on the content of the meetings. On February 21, this plan was presented to the full council as Resolution 31359 (attached) and passed with no dissenting votes. Those appointed by the Commission have attended and will continue to attend Levy Oversight Committee meetings until the end of their terms as 2012-2013 Commissioners.

Next, we began to work on a project that we hoped would give youth a direct voice in their education: a survey given by teachers that would allow students to provide feedback to their teacher in order to facilitate teacher improvement. Our goal is to release a pilot program of this survey at the end of this school year at Nathan Hale High School, then to expand it to the rest of the district the following year. First, we met with representatives from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which had successfully run similar surveys in the past, to get their feedback on the issue. Members of the Education Committee then met with teachers at Nathan Hale to get their advice (attached) on the plan; based off of that advice, we began a survey process that would solicit student feedback on the process through a form (attached) administered to Hale students. The form was given to students on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, and on May 29<sup>th</sup>, the project will be presented to Nathan Hale's Student Council, and to the Professional Development Team at Nathan Hale on May 30<sup>th</sup>. Currently, we plan on releasing the survey in June of 2012.

In the future, the Education Committee hopes to further its current goal by continuing projects started this year and beginning new projects.



### **SYC Environment Committee end-of-the-year report**

Committee members: Ilani Nurick, Megan Warshaw, Celina Jackson

The environment is an extremely important issue that is perhaps the most difficult issue to face and attempt to fix. The environment committee feels it is of the utmost importance to teach kids of the dangers of continued damage towards the environment and of ways to help protect our world. Today's students are tomorrow's leaders and if we want the future leaders of the world to care about the environment, they must be educated now. For this reason we feel it is critical to introduce a system of composting in Seattle Schools where students can actively be involved in helping the environment. Even just throwing compost in a compost bin is a visible and active way for students to become more connected to the natural world and learn about the challenges and solutions that face us today involving the environment.

Over the course of this year we have arranged a composting system at Ingraham High School that will come into effect at the beginning of the next school year. This will involve compost bins at regular intervals throughout Ingraham near garbage bins to avoid garbage going into compost bins. It will also include a pickup of the compost and will involve students overseeing the bins to help other students get their waste into the right place. While this program may not appear to be significant, changing the habits of our school age kids even one school at a time can make a huge impact in the future. During this year the environment committee has worked closely with Dick Lily, Veronica Fincher, and Rina Fa'amoe for help and support to begin the composting program.

The biggest struggles for the environment committee have been getting in touch with the right people; finding a teacher willing to support and help run the program; and finding a group of dedicated students to watch the bins during lunch, explain to people how to use them, and help get more students involved. We overcame these issues mostly through trial and error (trying something and seeing what worked and what didn't). After a long search of being referred to teacher after teacher we eventually found a great teacher to help support the program. The group of students was mainly other environment enthusiasts and friends willing to help a buddy out.

It's important to keeping our goals realistic; we will try to extend this composting program to other schools in the city that lack a functioning compost program. The program should have regular bins available in strategic places throughout the school and rather than a compost bin in a hallway there should be an attempt to group all three types of bins together, so garbage doesn't end up in a compost bin or vice versa.



### **SYC Transportation Committee end-of-the-year report**

Committee members: Chetan Chandrashekhar, Thomas Kovacs, Rafael Regan

Transportation is not necessarily the first thing you think of when dealing with youth issues, but we get a large number of comments from students regarding the issue. We have tried to improve the transportation system for students in two ways: improving services and increasing access to reliable information. These are both big priorities for us as young people are highly dependent on transit.

- **Transit information in schools:** Over the course of the year, we have worked on various projects to give students easy access to schedules and maps within school. Our biggest problem has been creating a system that is self-sustainable, and doesn't require constant upkeep on the part of the commission. We first posted bus schedules and transit alerts on panels near the doors at Ballard High School to give students information about their commute before they left school, but were unable to find a way to make sure they were constantly updated after we graduated. We eventually created brochures that explain the transit system to each school and provide sources for further information. We are adding these to school websites, and getting them to schools for their freshman information sessions and packets.
- **Real-time arrival at Central:** We've been working to get a kiosk at Seattle Central Community College. This will be accessible to many of the running start high school students who commute from all over the city.
- **Schedule fixes:** Students have often complained about bus schedules that don't align properly or overcrowded buses to and from school. We found an error in Metro's schedules that was causing some of these problems at Ballard. Metro was running extra service on route 15 in accordance with last year's bell schedules. In the process of fixing this error we found that there was no mechanism whereby Seattle Public Schools was telling Metro about its future bell schedules early enough for Metro to change its schedules accordingly. Seattle Public Schools from now on finalizes school start and end times by May 26<sup>th</sup>. This gives Metro sufficient time to adjust schedules for the June service change and make sure bus arrival times align with school start times.
- **Lobbying for Delridge West Seattle Connection:** In an effort to make transit work as well as it can for youth, we've lobbied to solve one of the biggest hiccups in West Seattle service, the lack of a bus that connects the upper Admiral area with Delridge. As part of the largest service change in Metro's history, the route 50 will start providing service between Delridge and

Admiral. This will help kids who live in Delridge move to and from school without having to transfer farther south, or even in downtown.

We plan to build on some of these projects in the future, and start work on new project. We are looking at how to make Metro's transit alerts system easier to sign up for. We are also trying to improve accessibility to Orca Cards for young people. Currently, only students living outside of a two mile radius from their schools have access to cards and the process for those living closer than 2 miles to obtain them is confusing. Misplaced or damaged cards are inconvenient to replace. Our goal is to integrate a system of card purchase with school websites.

We have attached some of our transit information brochures long with this document.



**SYC Youth Homelessness Committee end-of-the-year report**  
Committee Members: Celina Jackson and Megan Warshaw

**Goal**

This year we created the Youth Homelessness committee out of a desire to learn more about an issue that is under the radar for many people, hard to relate to personally, and misrepresented by stereotypes. In order to become tomorrow's leaders in an effective way, youth must understand the systemic causes of homelessness and what it really looks like. Our goal for this year was to impart all this information in a relatable way to high school students, as well as call their attention to the resources and volunteer opportunities out there.

**Planning Meetings**

We planned an after-school forum at Garfield High School in order to educate students on the issue of youth homelessness. In order to prepare, committee members attended the ROOTS' Ropes homeless youth training, conducted research on youth homelessness, and facilitated two planning meetings with community homeless youth providers and Marci Curtin, our policy advisor from the city's Human Services Department. Based off the two planning sessions, we created a curriculum for an after school forum at Garfield.

*Homeless youth agencies who participated in the planning and implementation of the forum: Neighborcare Health's 45th St. Clinic, Catholic Community Center's University District Youth Center, YouthCare's Orion Center, Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets - including three homeless youth - and Therapeutic Health's Central Youth and Family Services.*

**Accomplishments**

We organized and executed a forum after school at Garfield on April 12, 2012 as a pilot for future forums (see attached forum curriculum and evaluation results). We also created a flyer with volunteer opportunities for minors, which we handed out at the forum. (see attached volunteer flyer)

**Lessons Learned & Next Steps**

We were pleased with the overall success of the forum. However, we could have done more promoting through social media and looked into offering extra credit from teachers in order to get more students to attend. We also could have better managed our time at the forum by making more strict time limits for the activities and reducing the number of service providers at the forum.

In the next year, we want to put on more forums, including another at Garfield. We are considering holding a forum in a classroom so that we have a large group to participate. We would also like to hold forums at other schools or at one of Seattle's community colleges (Central or South). In addition to this, we intend on creating a group to volunteer with some of the service providers.



### **SYC Youth Violence Committee end-of-the-year report**

Committee members: Delannah Collins-Wright, Fleciah Njeri, Leoma James, Isaac Pearson

‘Youth Violence is very popular in the Seattle area. Did you know murders are mainly caused by youth? As a Youth Violence Committee, our goal is to build bridges between youth and police in their local community to decrease stereotypes on police and also for youth to feel comfortable talking to a police. Youth Violence Committee is a very strong committee and the reason why all of our group members joined this committee was because we found youth violence an interesting topic to do research on and help in creating a difference in our community. Also a couple of our members actually could relate to a scenario one of their friends/family have recently experienced. Moreover, we really enjoy working as a committee together because we are all strong members and we each equally pitch in on helping plan events, etc. We plan to start noticing a change in youth violence over a few years therefore we do a lot of outreach outside of SYC.

‘Over the past year in the youth violence committee, we have been to many different high schools such as Rainier Beach, Cleveland, Garfield, Franklin, and Bishop Blanchet. While we were visiting these schools we hosted a discussion with these students to receive and give feedback on how we can decrease youth violence and seen their different perspectives on police. In addition, we have worked with Chief Diez and he has helped us with contacting police officers from different communities to ask them to come speak to the youth so that they can build bridges. We had two events , one of the events was hosted at Rainier community center . While the other was at Garfield teen life center. Basically we did a quick introduction and explained what Seattle Youth Commission does , then we sat a police at table with a group of kids and just asked each other questions and had a discussion for an hour. Then we wrapped up by having the youth fill out a survey and serving pizza.