

# Student survey winding down

## Results will target achievement gap

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As Miatta McCrummady read the comments about achievement in the Ann Arbor school system from Hispanic students, she realized two things - they had issues she didn't know about and at the same time, their issues interconnected with her opinions and issues.

McCrummady, who will be a junior at Pioneer High School this fall, is part of a group of students hoping to bring those concerns to the forefront.

"We will put them in (our report) and they will be heard, directly from the source," she said. "It's important that someone hear our voice."

McCrummady is a member of the Youth Empowerment Project team called Youth-Powered Solutions to The Achievement Gap that is working to develop a set of recommendations on how the Ann Arbor school district can narrow the achievement gap.

The achievement gap is commonly discussed as the difference between test scores, grades and drop-out rates between white and minority students. The group spent the last year running 30 focus groups of students and then developing an almost 60-question survey.

About 1,000 students have already completed the survey. Doctoral students at the University of Michigan are compiling the data.

The survey isn't shut down yet.

The team is looking for another 400 students to take it over the summer. The survey can be accessed at [www.aaps.k12.mi.us/youthsenatesurvey](http://www.aaps.k12.mi.us/youthsenatesurvey). The survey will be available until Aug. 4.

The survey takes about 35 minutes to complete. It asks questions ranging from ranking factors that hurt achievement to who students would seek out to get help if they were having trouble at school to how much students think

their teachers care about them.

While the data from the completed survey is being analyzed, the high school students are pouring over the comments at the focus groups to find common themes and issues.

Those are being compiled.

In the fall, reports will begin to be wrapped up. The team then will hold a series of workshops to go over the material in the late fall or early winter before presenting formal recommendations to the school board. The goal is to hear directly from the students about the issue.

The students themselves are eager to hear what other students were saying.

Sharice Bryant, who will be a senior at Huron High School this fall, also wants to see changes.

She said one theme coming through the results is the need for better communication.

"Nobody really tells each other what's going on," she said. "Teachers don't tell students. Students don't tell parents.

"The achievement gap is a whole bunch of stuff that could be solved with a lot of communication."

McCrummady believes progress can be made to reduce the achievement gap.

"I wanted to see what people had to say, to make sure I'm not the only one thinking these things," McCrummady said. "I feel there needs to be change. It won't be in my time, but as long as there's change, that's OK."

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