

***Celebrating MLK's Legacy***

**Youth Senate Research Briefing**

**for**

***Leap the Gap Solutions Forum***

**Monday, January 15, 2007**

**From the Youth Empowerment Project**

**Ann Arbor, Michigan**

# ***Leap the Gap***

**May 2005 - May 2007**

## **Mission Statement:**

To use our collective student voice to investigate and assist in the elimination of contributing factors to disparities in achievement in the Ann Arbor Public Schools.

# Goals for 1-10-07 Briefing

To engage AAPS educators & community members in:

1. Hearing student voices on achievement disparities
2. Understanding the impact of educational disparities on students
3. A review of research and analysis completed and underway
4. Assisting teens in developing Recommendations for Action

# January 2007

## Mid-Year Research Briefing

1. Data Collection: Qualitative & Quantitative
2. Participant Profile
3. Qualitative Data Analysis
4. Preliminary Quantifying of the Data
5. Understanding the Nature of the Data:  
Student Presentations
6. Next Steps

# 1. Qualitative Data Collection

## Focus Group Protocol:

- **Purpose:** To identify youth perceived Barriers & Solutions to achievement
- Spring 2005 Pilot of Focus Groups
- Facilitator training (8 hours)
- Identity based Focus Groups
- Categories of Questions for Barriers & Solutions
  - Framed and consistent
  - Personal, School, and Community
- Newsprint/audio/video recordings
- Transcripts (over 800 pages)

# 1. Quantitative Data Collection

## Quantitative Data Sources:

- Conducted an online survey among 1,000 high school students (currently being analyzed)
- Survey topics were based upon results of Focus Groups
- Use of qualitative data from Focus Groups to provide information for quantitative analysis

## 2. Participant Profile

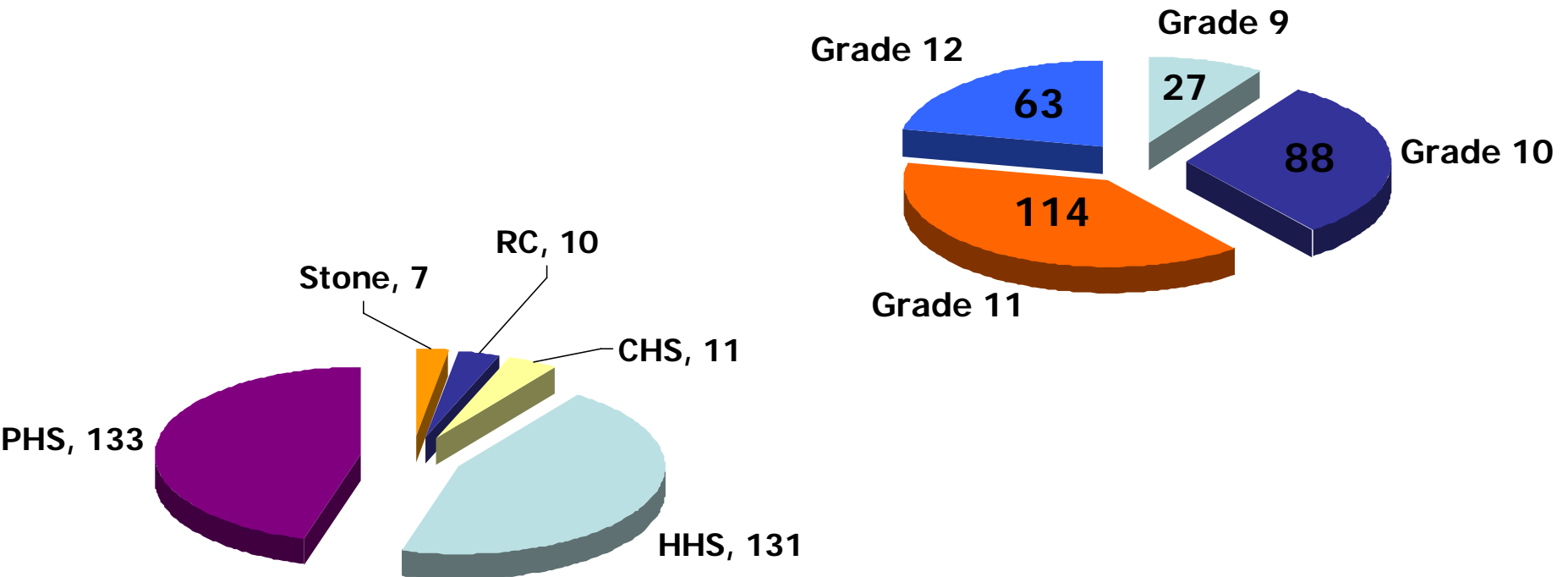
Data on student participants by:

- School
- Grade
- GPA
- Ethnicity/Race
- Gender
- Socio-Economic Status

NOTE: Focus Groups were organized based on the last three identity factors.

# School & Grade

Focus Group participants from five AAPS high schools in grades 9 to 12.



**Total Students: 292**

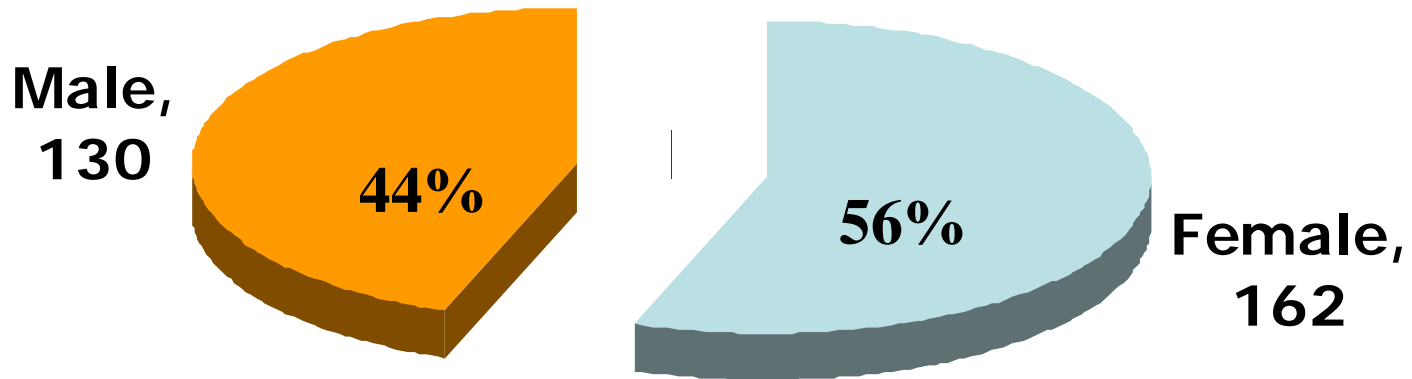
# Ethnicity/Race

Proportion of six respective populations that participated in Focus Groups.

<u>Identity Group</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>% of own Population</u>
African American	104	11%
Euro American	92	3%
E. Asian & S. Asian	34 & 29	10%
Middle Eastern	15	11%
<u>Latino/Hispanic</u>	<u>18</u>	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>292</b>	

# Gender

Number of male and female Focus Group participants.



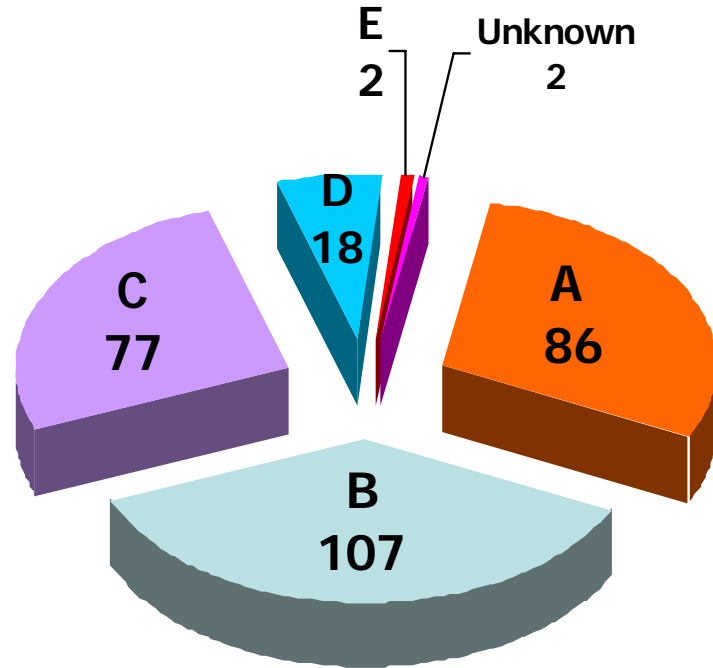
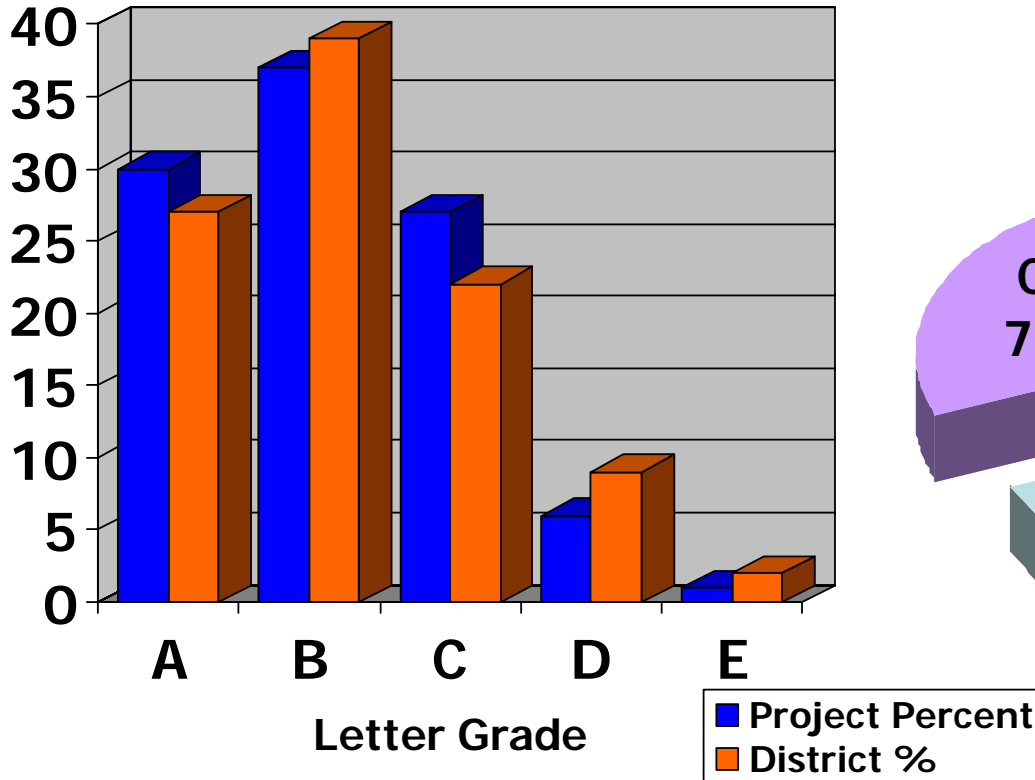
**Total Students: 292**

# Grade Point Average

Distribution of GPA among Focus Group participants.

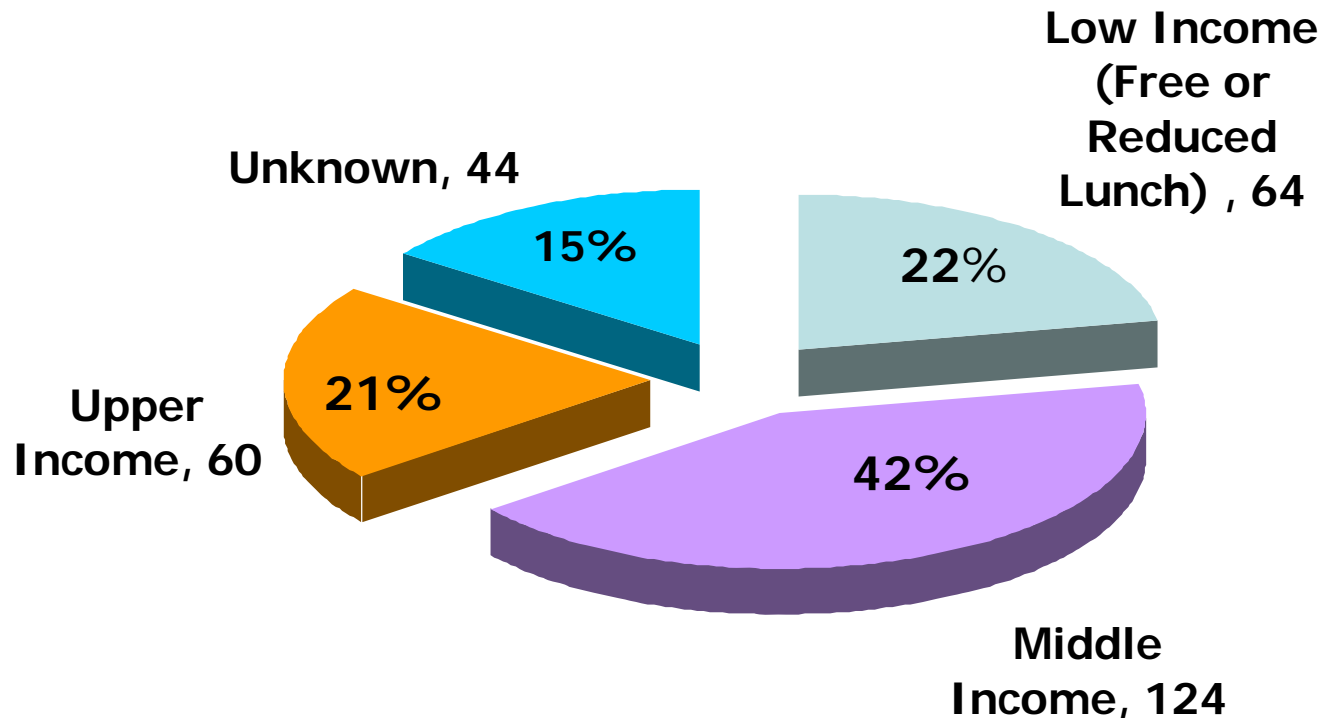
## Project GPA Numbers

Project & District GPA Percentages



# Socio-Economic Status

Distribution of income levels represented by Focus Group participants.



**Total Students: 292**

### 3. Qualitative Data Analysis

- **Theme reductions** for each Focus Group for definition of data were done by Focus Group facilitators
- **Core barriers** were generated by common themes that emerged from the Focus Group data
- Data is organized according to **Personal, School, and Community** Barriers and Solutions to achievement

### 3. Qualitative Data Analysis (continued)

- **23 youth-defined core barriers** emerged from collating the Focus Group Data
- There are **seven dominant core barriers** identified by all of the identity and focus groups
- Five more of the core barriers were identified by a majority of the groups
- The remaining 13 are strong as well, providing tremendous opportunities for insight into the challenges youth are facing

# 3. Qualitative Data Analysis (continued)

- Verification process
  - Students have been very involved in maintaining the integrity of the data collected for reflecting a broad spectrum of youth experiences
- Consistent methodology
  - definition of objectives
  - outline of methods
  - documentation of information, date, participants
  - a minimum of two young people, plus a minimum of one trained adult involved in each step or session
  - members of respective identity groups included in the analysis AND review of corresponding data

## 4. Quantitative Data Analysis

- Pattern identification has begun for how **core barrier** statements vary in frequency and intensity of student experiences reflected in the data collected from identity-based Focus Groups conducted in winter 2006
- Comparative pattern data (from both fall & winter 2005-2006 sets of Focus Groups) will be available in spring 2007
- The survey data is being analyzed by a U of M professor and doctoral students

## 5. Understanding the Nature of the Data: Student Presentation

- *Leap the Gap* student briefing presentations are composed of sample quotes corresponding to the dominant **core barriers** defined by youth from the Focus Groups
- Today we are presenting examples for **7 out of 23 total core barriers**
- At the MLK Day Forum on Solutions (Monday 1-15-07), youth and adults will work on solutions to these 7 core barriers

## 5. Understanding the Nature of the Data: Student Presentation (continued)

- As with the focus group questions, core barriers are organized based on student experiences with Personal, School and Community barriers and solutions to achievement
- \* Core barriers marked with an \* are represented in data from all Focus Groups
- + Core barriers marked with a + are represented in data from the majority of the Focus Groups

## 5. Understanding the Nature of the Data: Student Presentation (continued)

### I. Barriers—Personal

A. \*Negative peer influence

B. \*Stereotyping or lack of cultural understanding from peers

## 5. Understanding the Nature of the Data: Student Presentation (continued)

### I. Barriers—School

A. \* Lack of encouragement and support from from teachers, counselors, administrators, ALL STAFF, (contract limitations and limited time during school)

1. \* *Limited level of relationship between students and staff*
2. \* Inaccessibility, lack of interest, unrealistic expectations, feeling unwanted, limited info from counselors

## 5. Understanding the Nature of the Data: Student Presentation (continued)

### I. Barriers—School

- B. \*Lack of understanding and sensitivity for cultural factors (religion, gender, ethnicity, race, youth culture, income)
  - 1. +Stereotyping and discrimination
  - 2. +Lack of respect for students from many staff
  - 3. +Lack of respect for youth culture
  - 4. Teachers uninformed of challenges facing immigrant students

## 5. Understanding the Nature of the Data: Student Presentation (continued)

### I. Barriers—School

E. + Lack of structure and firm standards  
(counter-productive or ineffective policies)

1. Weak external structures

2. Impact of large school population

3. Insufficient teacher accountability;

District not holding all staff accountable

## 5. Understanding the Nature of the Data: Student Presentations (continued)

### I. Barriers—Community

- A. \*Lack of information and access to resources and opportunities
- B. \*Stereotyping by adults (stores, police, media, others)
  - 1. *Low receptivity and respect from adults & media*

## 6. Next Steps

- Continue to analyze the survey and Focus Group data for more quantitative information
- Teen Think Tanks on solutions and recommendations
- Youth-Adult *Leap the Gap* Forum on MLK Day (1/15/07)

## 6. Next Steps (continued)

- Adult Advisory Teams (1/07 – 5/07)
  - Personal, School, Community
  - Assist student Think Tanks on developing **Recommendations for Action** (1/07 – 5/07)

## 6. Next Steps (continued)

- Students present **Recommendations for Action** to School Board Trustees and administrators in Spring 2007
- Students present **Recommendations for Action** to the community in Spring or Fall 2007 (Forum or Summit)
- Form Youth-Adult Action Teams to follow-through with Recommendations in 2007-2008-2009