



REPRESENTED: A STUDENT-LED AGENDA FOR INCREASING TEACHER DIVERSITY IN DELAWARE

A YOUTH ADVOCACY COUNCIL REPORT



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The Youth Advocacy Council is Delaware's first statewide forum for high school students to learn about education policy and lead our own campaigns to improve Delaware schools.

From left to right:

Siawaa Antwi, Friere Charter School Wilmington, Junior

Madeline Schneider, Sussex Tech High School, Senior

Alphina Kamara, Mt. Pleasant High School, Senior

Sascha Bretzger, The Charter School of Wilmington, Sophomore

Naheem Watson, Mt. Pleasant High School, Sophomore

Marco Ortega, William Penn High School, Junior

Alexander Sharpe, Appoquinimink High School, Junior

Elijah Jones, The Tatnall School, Sophomore

Kunoveno Haimbodi, Cab Calloway School of the Arts, Senior

Introduction



Background

In 2017, DelawareCAN: The Delaware Campaign for Achievement Now partnered with local education advocate Gabrielle Thomas as she launched the Youth Advocacy Council (YAC). The YAC is Delaware's **first statewide forum for high school students to learn about education policy and lead our own campaigns to improve Delaware schools.** We were founded to address a problem Gabrielle noticed in her work in policy and with youth development: Although we, as students, are the primary customers of the education system, there are scarce authentic opportunities for us to shape the education policies that impact our schools.

As students we spend eight hours a day, 180 days a year in school. That's 1,440 hours per year sitting in classrooms, engaging with teachers and learning new material. It's safe to say that we are experts in the educational experience. Yet we are rarely given a formal platform or organizational body through which we are able to address our concerns. Students deserve a seat at the table and the YAC gives us the tools and platform to make our voices heard.

This report, *Represented*, discusses that priority—increasing the racial diversity of Delaware's teachers.

As the first cohort of the YAC, we were selected from a statewide pool of applicants in June 2017. After a few sessions together we further defined our mission as follows: **to prioritize and empower student voices in a way that adapts to the times and holds the community accountable to our overarching vision of equity.**

We spent 10 months learning about education advocacy, exploring structures of governance within local and state education agencies, analyzing current education policies, interviewing members of the local community to understand priorities and interfacing with practitioners and policymakers (including Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester, the current and a former Delaware Secretary of Education, the former President of the State Board of Education, legislators, school district leaders, educators, etc.). We gathered research, conducted listening tours, drafted amendments to legislation and partnered with local leaders to analyze existing data.

In the process, our group defined a set of advocacy priorities and selected a top priority that would form the focus of our cohort of the Youth Advocacy Council.



This report, *Represented*, discusses that priority—increasing the racial diversity of Delaware’s teachers—and outlines our policy agenda to help Delaware move forward in this area. We believe it is imperative that in a state where more than half of students are considered students of color, our teaching workforce is representative of the diversity of students in our classroom. We also believe our state can and should achieve this goal while ensuring that our diverse workforce is also of the highest quality. *Represented* is our path forward.

Our Recommendations

- ***Recommendation 1:*** Local school boards and state leaders should enact policies that require districts to set annual, three-year and five-year goals for increasing teacher diversity, reflect on root causes and biases in their current processes and publicly report on strategies implemented each year to reach the goals.
- ***Recommendation 2:*** Place a greater emphasis on recruiting students of color and teachers of color into the state’s new teacher preparation pathway (Teacher Academy) and evaluating the program’s impact.
- ***Recommendation 3:*** Make school-level data on teacher diversity easily accessible to the public to raise awareness about successful schools and schools in need of improvement.
- ***Recommendation 4:*** Make data on teacher diversity in Advanced Placement courses accessible to the public.
- ***Recommendation 5:*** Create a program in partnership with Relay Graduate School of Education-Delaware to prepare and recruit teachers of color.

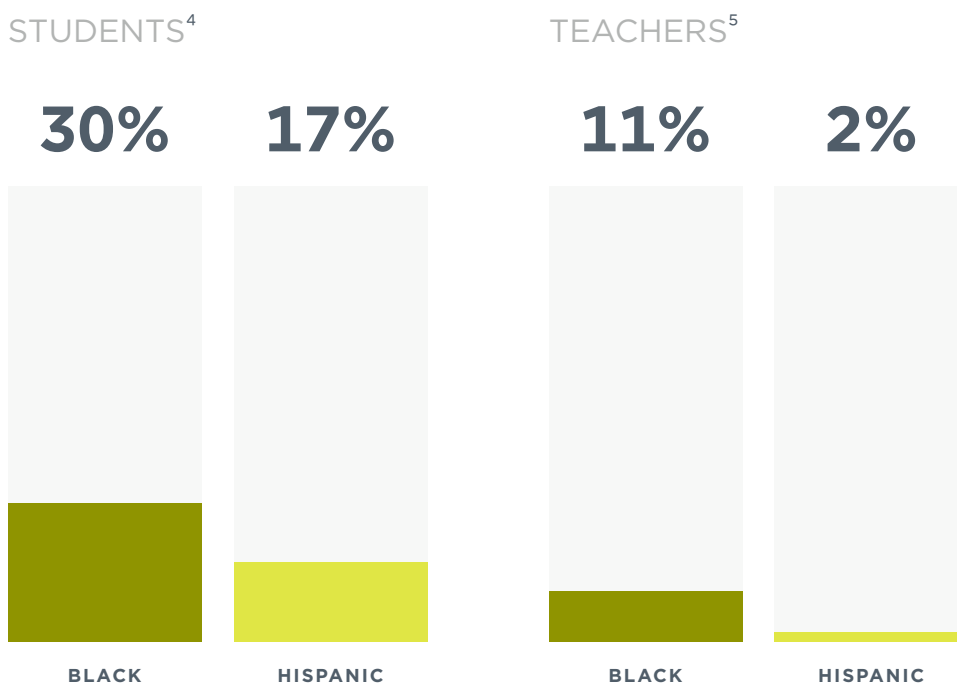
Why Teacher Diversity?

Of all the issues members of the YAC proposed this year—ranging from increasing access to advanced courses, the need for higher-quality college advising, special education supports and rethinking teacher tenure—why did we decide to focus on teacher diversity?

First, our world and our state is changing and we believe in order to prepare for an increasingly diverse world we need to see racial diversity represented in the teaching workforce. Nationally, while black students comprise around 13 percent of all school-aged children, black teachers represent just about eight percent of all young teachers; and while Hispanic students comprise around 24 percent of all school-aged children, Hispanic teachers represent just about nine percent of all young teachers.¹ Delaware’s student and teacher demographics tell a similar story.

Yet, studies show that students of all races desire a diverse teaching population in their classrooms.²⁻³ This is not to be confused with a call for diversity for the sake of numbers or diversity without attention to quality. We do not believe these two goals are at odds. Students need teachers of the highest quality and we also need a teaching population with the same rich diversity we see in the student population.

FIGURE 1 **STUDENT AND TEACHER DIVERSITY, 2016-17**



1 David Figlio, "The importance of a diverse teaching force", Brookings Institution, November 16, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-importance-of-a-diverse-teaching-force/>.
2 Anya Kamenetz, "Study Finds Students Of All Races Prefer Teachers Of Color", NPR, October 7, 2016, <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/10/07/496717541/study-finds-students-of-all-races-prefer-teachers-of-color>.
3 Hua-Yu Sebastian Cherng, Peter F. Halpin, "The Importance of Minority Teachers: Student Perceptions of Minority Versus White Teachers", October 2016, Educational Researcher, Vol. 45 No. 7, pp. 407-420, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.3102/0013189X16671718>.

4 Delaware Department of Education, "State Student Information", Winter 2017, <http://profiles.doe.k12.de.us/SchoolProfiles/State/Student.aspx>.
5 Delaware Department of Education's Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Branch, "'The Set': Racial Diversity in DE's teacher and school leader workforce Data Briefs", June 2017, <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib/DE01922744/Centricity/domain/37/the%20set%20monthly%20data%20briefs/The%20June%202017%20Set%20-%20Racial%20Diversity.pdf>.

We also decided to focus on teacher diversity because there is a growing body of research that shows it has positive effects for students—especially students of color.

- One study reported that if “a black male student has at least one black teacher in the third, fourth or fifth grade, he is significantly less likely to drop out of high school and more likely to aspire to attend a four-year college (as proxied by taking a college entrance exam).”⁶
- Another study found that “black boys who had a black teacher during their elementary school years were less likely to drop out of high school.”⁷
- Studies also show that “black students are three times less likely to be assigned to gifted-and-talented reading courses when those students are taught by non-black teachers versus black ones.”⁸

We also know that having a teacher of color does not only benefit students of color—it can also make a significant impact on white students. Having a black teacher can debunk the stereotypes and misconceptions that are often perpetuated in the media and society.

However, with the growing amount of evidence of the benefits of diversity and the growing demand for diverse teachers among students, we do not see the type of emphasis and results that we feel is needed. Rather, we have seen a lack of intentionality in developing and implementing initiatives at the state and local levels that can help to move the needle on teacher diversity. In fact, some of our conversations with top policymakers in Delaware about this topic, left us wondering if the lack of traction was due to a lack of awareness of solutions or a lack of genuine concern about this issue.

With the many sources available that analyze the root causes of the lack of teacher diversity (including lack of district staff and resources devoted to diversity recruitment; the need for financial incentives and scholarships to attract teachers of color into the profession; bias in hiring, teacher-student assignments and teacher promotion; lack of supports and retention of teachers of color; the need for alternative routes into the profession; etc.), we decided to focus on the solutions our group developed to address this issue in Delaware.

⁶ Seth Gershenson, Cassandra M. D. Hart, Constance A. Lindsay, Nicholas W. Papageorge, “The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers”, http://conference.iza.org/conference_files/EcoEdu_2017/papageorge_n9948.pdf.

⁷ David Jackson, “The Real Reason Black Kids Benefit From Black Teachers”, *New York Times*, April 15, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/15/opinion/sunday/the-real-reason-black-kids-benefit-from-black-teachers.html>.

⁸ Alia Wong, “Why Are There So Few Black Children in Gifted Programs?”, *The Atlantic*, January 19, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/01/why-are-there-so-few-black-children-in-gifted-and-talented-programs/424707/>.

What We Recommend

RECOMMENDATION 1: INCREASE INTENTIONALITY AND URGENCY IN STATE AND LOCAL EFFORTS TO DIVERSIFY THE TEACHING WORKFORCE

Local school boards and state leaders should enact policies that require districts to set annual, three-year and five-year goals for increasing teacher diversity, reflect on root causes and biases in their current processes and publicly report on strategies implemented each year to reach the goals. The approach could be similar to the approach used in Governor Markell’s Executive Order Number 8⁹ that required Affirmative Action Reports.

There is a need for intentional, specific efforts by school districts to increase teacher diversity. Hiring diverse staff takes intentional strategies; in order for change to occur these efforts need to be concentrated and must be evaluated and adapted accordingly. As such, there is a need for a more evaluative and collaborative relationship between the Delaware Department of Education (DOE) and districts in terms of strategies that are used, and in terms of improving upon said strategies.

Districts and school are currently not required to set any goals or plans that articulate how they will diversify the teaching workforce. Nor are districts required to audit their existing recruitment, hiring and teacher placement processes for bias or gaps that lead to a lack of diversity. Despite ongoing efforts to address this issue¹⁰, the DOE has also not specified goals and articulated its plans publicly. Current diversity hiring strategies can be found in Delaware through the *Delaware Talent Practices Report* and the *Teacher Recruitment and Selection Toolkit*. However, such resources offer limited recommendations without analysis specific to each district.

⁹ Governor Jack Markell, “Executive Order Number 8 - Our continuing commitment to equal opportunity hiring standards and best practices of human resources management in the executive branch”, August 11, 2009, <https://governor.delaware.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2016/12/EO008.pdf>.

¹⁰ Council of Chief State School Officers, “CCSSO Launches Effort to Foster a Diverse and Culturally Responsive Teaching Workforce”, March 21, 2018, <https://www.ccsso.org/blog/ccsso-launches-effort-foster-diverse-and-culturally-responsive-teaching-workforce>.



We would like to see local school boards and the DOE (or Delaware General Assembly) require this type of intentional and transparent process. This process should also ensure the DOE assesses local strategies and provides recommendations based on best practices across the state and country.

Red Clay Superintendent Merv Daugherty has expressed interest in working toward such a goal. The district could be a great place to model this given their board recently approved a racial equity resolution.¹¹

¹¹ Red Clay Superintendent Merv Daugherty, conversation with Youth Advocacy Council member Kuno Haimbodi, November 2017.

RECOMMENDATION 2: INCREASE DIVERSITY WITHIN HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER PREPARATION PATHWAYS

Place greater emphasis on recruiting students of color and teachers of color into the state’s new teacher preparation pathway (Teacher Academy) and evaluating the program’s impact.

Introduction to teaching pathway programs at the high school level could play a key role in increasing teacher diversity. As of June 2017, the DOE launched a new academy for high schoolers considering a career in education. The academy, a new addition to Delaware’s Pathways to Prosperity program, is now implemented at 15 different high schools: Seaford, Woodbridge, Cape Henlopen, Indian River, Laurel, Sussex Central, Polytech, Milford, Caesar Rodney, McKean, Appoquinimink, Middletown, William Penn, Smyrna and Dover. Intended to build a pipeline of high-quality students transitioning to the teaching profession, it consists of three years of classes, each of which was developed in collaboration with teachers, DOE staff, higher education representatives and more.

We have learned that the success of the program is determined by academic achievement, technical-skill achievement, pathway matriculation and equity. Graduation rate and placement rate (continuing education and employment) beyond high school are also considered. Currently, “a major focus of the pathway is to increase underrepresented populations in the education workforce. We provide training for educators instructing the pathway on gender equity, micro-messaging, diverse learners, and cultural competence. As we review implementation data, more specific strategies are taken to address gaps in both student performance and equity.”¹²

¹² Luke Rhine, Director of Career and Technical Education/STEM Initiatives at the DDOE, email communication with Youth Advocacy Council, February 16, 2018.



However, the majority of teachers who teach in this program are white teachers and there are no available reports on the percent of students of color enrolled in this pathway. In an effort to ensure greater intentionality from the DOE, the YAC suggests a longitudinal study that follows students in this pathway through college to see: (1) if they actually pursued education/teaching and (2) if/when they matriculated from an education/teaching program.

We ask that, in addition to collecting key data on demographics of the students' enrolled, that a pre- and post-survey be delivered each year. Within the pre-survey, we suggest qualitative questions around why students chose to enroll in this pathway. Similarly, we request an exit survey should any student, particularly students of color, decide to leave the academy. This will help policymakers understand the root causes of attrition. We would also like to see the teachers who run these pathway programs partner with the DOE to identify students of color who would be good at teaching, and then pair them with mentors, provide college preparation courses, cover half of their college tuition and provide them with teaching jobs post-graduation, as is being accomplished within the Boston School District.¹³

13 Lauren Camera, "States to Prioritize Hiring Teachers of Color", U.S. News & World Report, March 28, 2018, <https://www-usnews-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2018-03-28/states-to-prioritize-hiring-teachers-of-color?context=amp>.

RECOMMENDATION 3: INCREASE TRANSPARENCY OF SCHOOL-LEVEL RACIAL DIVERSITY DATA

Make school-level data on teacher diversity easily accessible to the public to raise awareness about successful schools and schools in need of improvement.

Teacher diversity statistics are not easily accessible. Due to the lack of availability of these statistics, the public is not entirely aware of the lack of teacher diversity that is plaguing Delaware schools. Policymakers and the public should also be able to easily recognize which schools are most successful in attracting a diverse staff and the schools that need improvement. This will foster accountability and learning across schools and districts.

The YAC recommends the DOE include information on staff diversity prominently in its new school report cards. This data should be reported in a user-friendly way, by which the information can be easily located and interpreted. Without this data being accessible to the public, it is hard for community members to recognize the problem at hand and form an opinion on the issue. It is also impossible for us to learn from schools who are successful at recruiting a diverse staff.

RECOMMENDATION 4: MAKE AP TEACHER DIVERSITY DATA PUBLICALLY ACCESSIBLE

Make data on teacher diversity in Advanced Placement courses accessible to the public.

Through our research (and with the support of Senate Majority Whip Nicole Poore) we were able to learn that in the 2017–18 school year, there were 376 individuals teaching AP courses in Delaware. Out of those 376 people, only 19 were black or Hispanic.¹⁴ The severe lack of AP teachers of color leads to students of color becoming less likely to be elevated and encouraged to take these upper-level classes.

To learn more about this issue, the YAC interviewed black teachers at Appoquinimink High School and found that none of them are AP certified.¹⁵ This is consistent with research that shows “non-white teachers are often placed in hard-to-staff schools, given the most challenging students and have limited access to teaching more advanced classes.”¹⁶ Students of color interviewed at Appoquinimink High School school also reported that they may have been more likely to enroll in an AP-level class if they had a teacher that looked like them.

As these data are made available, the YAC recommends the creation of a task force within the DOE to work to address the inequities that are revealed.

¹⁴ Senate Majority Whip Nicole Poore, in-person conversation with Youth Advocacy Council, December 4, 2017.

¹⁵ The College Board recommends that AP teachers hold a bachelor’s degree or higher in the area they teach or in a related field. For example, in addition to a teaching degree, an AP biology teacher would also hold a bachelor’s degree in biology or another scientific field. Based on the College Board guide for AP teachers, an AP teacher should have at least three years of teaching experience as well. AP teachers must also be certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (College Board 2018)

¹⁶ Lauren Camera, “States to Prioritize Hiring Teachers of Color”, U.S. News & World Report, March 28, 2018, <https://www-usnews-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2018-03-28/states-to-prioritize-hiring-teachers-of-color?context=amp>.

FIGURE 2 INDIVIDUALS TEACHING AP COURSES IN DELAWARE, 2017-18

Only five percent
are black or Hispanic



RECOMMENDATION 5: CREATE SCHOLARSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN MORE TEACHERS OF COLOR

Create program in partnership with Relay Graduate School of Education-Delaware to prepare and recruit teachers of color.

Another root cause of the lack of teacher diversity can be traced to the well known fact that the teaching profession is not known for its high rate of return. According to the National Education Association (NEA), in school year 2016–17, teachers in Delaware earned an average salary of \$59,960, and an average starting salary of \$41,415.^{17–18} Meanwhile, as of 2014, people who earned a master’s in education had average student loan debt of \$50,000.¹⁹ It does not come as much of a surprise then to find that many students of color are deterred from pursuing this career path.

To combat these two major obstacles, the YAC proposes partnering with the Relay Graduate School of Education (Relay GSE) and the DOE to prioritize funding for students of color interested in pursuing a teaching career. Similar to Delaware’s SEED program at the undergraduate level²⁰, we recommend providing a scholarship that would incentivize prospective graduate students of color to apply for a residency program that with Relay. Applicants must complete a bachelor’s degree to be eligible. Since the total cost of the Relay GSE program is \$18,000 for two years, but teachers get AmeriCorps credits for participation in the residency, the out-of-pocket cost in a given year is no more than \$3,250. We recommend piloting this scholarship opportunity for 10 prospective students the first year, then 20 students every year after that. Therefore, the total amount of scholarships requested from the DOE would be \$32,500 and then \$65,000 in subsequent years. This would offset the financial burden for enrolled students, especially since residency costs are paid out of pocket.

17 National Education Association (NEA), “Rankings & Estimates: Rankings of the States 2016 and Estimates of School Statistics 2017”, May 2017, <http://www.nea.org/home/2016-2017-average-starting-teacher-salary.html>.

18 National Education Association (NEA), “2016-2017 Average Starting Teacher Salaries by State”, <http://www.nea.org/home/2016-2017-average-starting-teacher-salary.html>.

19 Anna Kamenetz, “Teachers With Student Debt: The Struggle, The Causes And What Comes Next”, NPR, July 16, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/07/16/536488351/teachers-with-student-debt-the-struggle-the-causes-and-what-comes-next>.

20 University of Delaware, “Student Excellence Equals Degree (SEED) Scholarship”, <http://www.education.udel.edu/aa-in-ete/seed>.

These scholarships would help to create a direct pipeline between the teacher preparation programs at the high school level and simultaneously relieve prospective candidates of the burden that comes with substantial debt.

To ensure the efficacy of this effort, we recommend the DOE track the success of students receiving this scholarship for the two years they are in the program and then for three years after.

We also recommend that high school students be incorporated into this initiative. We envision students being part of the selection process for the scholarships and then writing letters of recommendation for teachers of color who have excelled in the program. We believe that having students who can attest to their abilities will make it all the more likely that teachers will see the value in this work and persist in the profession for many years. Ideally, the high school students involved at the beginning would also work with Relay's staff to observe trainings and ensure teachers are creating classroom environments that adapt to the times.

FIGURE 3 **TEACHER SALARIES VS. STUDENT LOAN DEBT IN DELAWARE**

AVERAGE TEACHER
SALARY, 2016-17

\$59,960

AVERAGE STARTING
TEACHER SALARY,
2016-17

\$41,415

AVERAGE STUDENT
LOAN DEBT FOR
GRADUATE DEGREE
IN EDUCATION, 2014

\$50,000

Youth Advocacy Council Testimonials



Marco

“The YAC has helped me develop and understand the power of my voice as a young Latino and as a scholar at William Penn High School. Throughout my time at the YAC, I have learned the many problems that students and teachers of color face in our current education system including the ‘giftedness’ and ‘college access’ gaps. I’ve learned many tactics and levers to use when trying to make a change within my community. Before I was a part of the YAC, I was a student who didn’t know the power of my voice or what I was capable of doing. I always thought that in order to make changes you had to be someone powerful. The YAC has transformed me by helping me realize the true power of my voice and that anyone with the resources, skills and passion is able to make a change.”



Alex

“The YAC has allowed me to gain opportunities to realize how impactful my voice can be, especially as a man of color and in my public school which I attend. I have learned about several problems affecting public schools and how the board of education has become somewhat stagnant in solving these major issues. Before the YAC I didn’t see many of the issues plaguing our school district, either, but now I see how the issues affect me and the people around me.”



Siawaa

“This program has really helped me gain clarity on my passion! I love advocating and standing up for what’s right, especially for low-income kids like myself. I really think I’m going to become a teacher or work for the DOE one day because, well, they seriously need me.”



Kuno

“The YAC has allowed me to gain the ability of identifying the most effective policy levers to utilize for change, to better communicate with peers and professionals/leaders and to better organize my thoughts into words.”



Elijah

“The YAC trains high school students to make substantive changes in their schools. During a trip to the legislative hall, I saw the legislative process in action and met policymakers. I was able to ask questions such as, ‘How important are kids and their voices when you vote on a certain bill?’ Overall I have really enjoyed the YAC and I now see that there are lots of decisions made for kids without kids involved. I want to make that change.”



Cyntiche

“Before the YAC, I never had much of a say in the education that I received. I remember how in ninth and 10th grade I fought to change the problems that I saw at my school, but my voice was never actually taken seriously. When joining the YAC, I got to experience how the political part of the educational system works. I got the opportunity to attend a board of education meeting for the first time. I also got to meet Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester as well as many others. The most amazing thing I got to do was pick my own issue to advocate for, and create my own way to do it. Teacher diversity is an issue that has always been pushed to the side, but the YAC has found a way to make this a popular topic again. In my opinion, the greatest thing the YAC has done is give a voice to people who are usually in the backseat.”

Get Involved with the YAC

Learn more about the YAC

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CONNECT WITH OUR MEMBERS: Come speak with our member advocates to help demystify the policy process, get feedback and generate new ideas based on advocates' experiences for improving Delaware's schools.

JOIN FOR A TRAINING SESSION: We meet monthly with educators, students and community advocates. Join us!

PARTNER ON EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS: We cannot do this critical work alone. Give us a call or shoot us an email. We would love to share what the YAC is up to and how we might be able to partner together.

MAKE A CONTRIBUTION: Give to the YAC today to help bring more students to the policymaking table. We support these events, meetups and campaigns with donations big and small from advocates like you!

