

FIGHT TO SAVE OUR SCHOOLS AND SAVE OUR NEIGHBORHOODS!

MARCH & RALLY AT DAY SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF, Mon, Mar 12 @ 4pm
4555 John C Lodge Fwy. Detroit, MI 48201, at the Lodge and Forrest

Join BAMN and organize youth-led direct mass action:

KEEP ALL DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS OPEN!

Use State Surplus Funding to Restore DPS!

Restore Dr. King's Dream for America in Detroit!

Equal, Quality Education for ALL Black, Latina/o, other minority and poor White Students!

Unite the Black and Latina/o communities in a common struggle to determine our shared destinies. Build the new youth-led independent integrated civil rights movement!

When We Fight We Win!

The students of Detroit have the power to defend our schools and our city from the racist attacks of Roy Roberts, Mayor Dave Bing and Governor Rick Snyder. To do this **we must be more determined to keep our schools open than they are to close them.**

Roy Roberts was sent to Detroit by Gov. Snyder to dismantle what remains of our public school system, level more of our neighborhoods and drive poor black families out of Detroit. To defeat this racist attack on our schools and our city the youth of Detroit must show that we are prepared to organize mass direct actions like the youth of Birmingham, Alabama did in 1963, to break the back of the old Jim Crow segregation. This is our time to take to the streets, to march, sit-in and walk-out; to assert our power and our refusal to be stepped on or pushed back any longer. The bigger, broader and bolder our struggles and confrontations, the more we shift power to our side.

As young people we're told we are too young and inexperienced to make decisions for ourselves and our society, but we are confronted by tough decisions every day and we get through each trial. We learn through each one of our struggles and we've become stronger through each fight, keeping our heads up through it all. No one knows better than us what these schools mean to us, or has more to lose from their closure. The confidence, resourcefulness and optimism that we learn together in our school, side by side, always looking out for one another through the good times and the tough ones, has taught us that we can win. Unlike everyone else, our fear of what our lives will be like if we *don't* fight, is far greater than our fear of fighting to win. This is exactly why it took young people to win the struggles of the last civil rights movement and why it *must* be *us* in the lead if we are to win this time.

To win, a new generation of proud, bold and angry Latina/o and black youth must step forward and lead!

In 2006, Latina/o communities across America announced to this nation that a new and powerful force is poised to lead all of the oppressed in our common struggle for equality and justice. Latina/o youth of Southwest Detroit and the rest of the nation showed the way. When undocumented immigrants were

threatened with a proposed racist anti-immigrant law, students organized mass walkouts and Detroit saw its largest civil rights demonstration since Dr. King came to Detroit in 1963. We won because our enemies were afraid of the organized power of our numbers.

Our only mistake then was that we STOPPED marching. After we won our initial victory, nearly every adult--principals, teachers, parents and priests, urged us to return to school and put our faith in the politicians. That is a failed policy and if we are to win the battle to save our schools we must ignore any advice we hear urging us to be patient, to wait, or to limit our actions to whatever those currently in power would find acceptable.

We desperately need Latina/o and black students to step forward and organize our community to rise up again. All our current so-called self-anointed leaders are fighting to lose. They fear the anger and potential militance of young people more than they fear the destruction of public education or our city. Most say the opposite of the truth. Syrupy patronizing, white liberals who claim they must lead because "people in Southwest are too scared to fight," really mean that they are terrified of unleashing the power of Detroit's Latina/o community. Those that claim Detroit is broke know that there is a large state surplus but that the rich and powerful want to starve Detroit to death. The establishment "community leaders" claiming that the best way we can protect democracy in our city is by instituting the cuts ourselves, are our enemies. BAMN and those who stand with us are the only force in the city prepared to speak the plain truth about racism and fight to win. We must grow and build a new leadership for our city that can be a model for the country.

Unity is the Key to Victory: Divide-and-Conquer is Our Enemies' Best Strategy to Win

Detroit, like every other city now, has large and growing Latina/o and immigrant communities. Black Detroiters should see this development as positive, something like fresh battalions coming to the rescue. We need fresh and energetic new forces in this city to counter the despair and pessimism that is too prevalent. The growth in numbers and power of our Latina/o communities offers the greatest hope for placing Detroit's destiny back in the hands of our city's black and other oppressed communities.

The untapped power and reemergence of struggle in Detroit's Latina/o community is what Roy Roberts and the powers-that-be fear the most. Latina/o and immigrant communities have the optimism of those who see their best days as lying ahead rather than in the past. The politicians and the self-anointed, sellout leaders of the black, Latina/o and Arab communities have worked hard to keep Southwest isolated and Detroit poor neighborhoods segregated, divided and at odds with each other. Joint struggle and unity in action are the only way to overcome our fears and prejudices. We must break down the carefully constructed walls that separate Detroit's black and Latina/o communities. For this to happen youth must lead. We are the only force in society that believes that integration and equality can be realized. We alone eagerly anticipate the next march, the next occupation or walkout. Students and youth love the excitement of direct action, crave more and bigger struggles and feel alive and deeply human when we are asserting the enormous power we possess.

Walk out ,occupy your school, take direct action and build the new movement to win!

Students proved our power in action last year, during the last round of proposed closings, when students from Catherine Ferguson Academy for Pregnant and Parenting Teen Mothers (CFA) occupied their school to keep it open. When CFA students heard their school was slated for closure, they joined BAMN. CFA students, when planning their occupation of their school in BAMN, knew that the only way they could lose was if they got up and left the school under their own power. Utterly determined, four CFA students occupied and linked arms (while supporting protesters defended them from outside the school) knowing that their actions were speaking louder than any great speech or appeal to those currently in power to save us. And they knew they spoke for all of Detroit's youth.

When CFA students were handcuffed, pulled out of their school by police, chanting at the top of their lungs together with the protesters surrounding the school, they felt free for the first time in their lives. The surrounding community turned out in anger to defend the young women they now saw as the heroes of Detroit, and the police, in fear, released everyone before they ever saw the inside of the jail and all charges were dropped. One CFA student occupier said afterwards, "Yeah, I'd do it again. I'd do it a thousand times."

Now it is time to do just that.

Some of us have been waiting for this moment, waiting for our chance to do something great. At schools like Detroit Day School for the Deaf, our families made sure we were enrolled there because they were serious about fighting for our futures. In Southwest Detroit, many parents came to this country for the first time for the education it could provide for us. We must take up our parents' fight and raise it to the next level, by not only fighting for ourselves and our families, but for everyone in our school and our city. Our parents may or may not understand, but only we can do this. Through the power of our actions we have the chance to speak the loudest by speaking for everybody.

Southwestern High School, Maybury, Detroit Day School for the Deaf and many of the other schools on the closing list are the best, most needed and most integrated in the city. In Southwestern High School many of us that would otherwise get lost in the shuffle in a larger, over-crowded school are able to get the help we need to learn. Maybury Elementary has one of the only Bilingual English/Spanish language programs, teaching us not only the language skills we need to succeed but also instilling us with confidence in who we are and giving us the respect we deserve. Students travel from all over Detroit and the surrounding suburbs to get to the program at Detroit Day School for the Deaf.

But our schools are more than a collection of one-of-a-kind programs; they are places that provide us with basic human dignity and respect, where we get to discover who we are as young people, and what we believe in, and to fight for it. Because of all this, we have the unique opportunity to unify and lead the entire city and at last to shatter the old divide-and-conquer strategies used to carry out each year of school closings and to attack our city.

This is our moment! Join BAMN and join the fight to save our schools, our city, and build a new civil rights movement strong enough to defeat this New Jim Crow being imposed on our city. We know what will happen to us if we *don't* fight, but if we *do* fight, taking up this challenge to lead our generation, we have the power to make our city into the place we know it can and should be! A place where the needs of everybody in Detroit come before the enrichment of a few billionaires and their politicians so we can finally have the unrestrained freedom to become the people we want to be and make our world into the world we want to live in.

<i>Detroit Schools proposed for closure:</i>
Detroit City High – Credit recovery and vocational training for students at risk of dropping out
Day School for the Deaf – Only school of its kind from Detroit to Flint, specially designed for deaf students.
Jemison – School of Choice focused on math & science
Kettering High and West Wing – Houses special education program for severely disabled students
Ludington - Beloved magnet middle school program
Mason - Only elementary school left in a neighborhood where 90% of students walk to school
Maybury, Logan, Parker, Barton, and O.W. Holmes – All neighborhood elementary schools in Southwest where most students walk to school, critical bilingual programs for immigrant students
Southwestern – Pride of southwest Detroit, most integrated neighborhood high school in the city
Robeson Early Learning Center – Only early childhood program in the neighborhood
Crockett - Specialized technology and career programs
Finney – Robotics, and more Fine Arts students participate in annual DIA student exhibition than any other school