

2014-15 York County Youth Commission (YCYC)
School Board Presentation
Feb. 23, 2015

(Title Slide-1) Good evening Mr. Chair, members of the School Board and Dr. Shandor. My name is **Kristyn Gatling**, and I attend Tabb High School. I am joined tonight by 4 of my colleagues on the York County Youth Commission or YCYC for short. They each serve on the YCYC's Student Relations Committee, which is responsible for our student surveys. Before they report to you, and on behalf of the entire Youth Commission, I want to express our sincere appreciation for giving us this opportunity to report to you and our fellow citizens tonight. And, for anyone watching this meeting who may not know, the YCYC is a 15-member, student led group of high school students that was established by the Board of Supervisors in 1983. Student applicants are selected annually by the Supervisors. Our primary mission is to help represent youth issues, concerns and suggestions to the Supervisors so that our community can be an even better place to live. We could not achieve this goal without the assistance and close cooperation of the school division, and we are very grateful for that relationship.

(Slide 2: Orientation) Incidentally, our year began with a 2-day Orientation back in August. At the beginning of it, we were welcomed by County and School officials. We want to publicly thank Mr. Manuel Dillard, the Associate Director of School Administration, for taking his time to come and speak to us!

(Slide 3: Bullet Outline) Hi, my name is **Alison Stall** and I attend York High. Our presentation tonight is in two parts. First, we will report on our first Cafeteria Mini Survey of the year, which was given in all the high schools to interested students during their lunch blocks this past December. Following that, we will mention some upcoming opportunities for high school youth.

(Slide 4: CMS Slide) The cafeteria mini surveys are short, 4-question surveys on half-sheets of paper that usually include both county and school related items. These mini surveys are inexpensive, provide quick results and do not interfere with instructional time. In designing December's survey, we received very helpful feedback from the high school principals and incorporated their suggestions.

(Slide 5: 2011-14 Avg. Sample Size) Our goal is to offer the opportunity for all students at each school to take the survey during their lunch. Many are just not interested when invited to take it, while others may just be trying to finish lunch on time! Aside from wanting to give all students the opportunity to be heard, we also want to achieve as high a participation number for the survey as possible to insure reliability of the results. Prior to this school year, the mini surveys had an average participation rate of 30% of the high school student population in the public high schools.

(Slide 6: Dec. 2014 Sample Size) We are very pleased with the sample size of the first survey this school year, which was administered in each high school during all three lunch blocks on December 8th. The survey was taken by more than 1,800 students across the county or roughly 44% of the total high school student population. This is the Youth Commission's 2nd largest cafeteria survey sample size to date. **(Slide 7: Tallying Results)** Please note that no question received this full participation. On average, about 6 percent of the surveys could not be counted for each question due to such things as: circling two items when the directions said to circle only one; a lack of clarity over which response item was marked; and, whenever a particular question was left unmarked. So, the percentages shown for each question are based on the actual number of countable respondents for that question rounded to the nearest whole number.

(Slide 8: Principals & NHS Sponsors) With only 15 members, the YCYC is not large enough to effectively administer a survey in each high school during every lunch block. But we are very fortunate to partner in this with the respective National Honor Societies at each school. We want to acknowledge the respective principals, NHS students and faculty sponsors shown here for their tremendous assistance and support. The high sample size for this survey is a direct result of their help in this project, and we are very grateful for their work!

(Slide 9: Question #1, Subject Areas) Hi, I'm **Tyler Brown** and I attend Bruton High. The first two questions focused on school subject areas. Question One asked, "**What subject do you need extra help in most outside of school?**" and students were asked to circle only one response choice. By far the highest number of respondents at 46% indicated they most needed extra help

outside of school in Math. Well behind in second place was Science with 22% and then Social Studies with 18%. Only 14% of respondents indicated they needed extra help most in English.

(Slide 10: Question #2, Subject Areas) The second question asked, “**For each subject below, circle how prepared you feel for tests/Exams/SOLs.**” The possible responses students could select from for each subject area were Very Prepared, Prepared, Not Prepared and No Opinion. For ease of viewing these results, the next slide will only show 2 columns of percentages since it will combine the first two and omit the last column for No Opinion, which averaged 6% of the respondents for each subject area. **(Slide 11: Question #2, Short Chart)** Here is the shortened slide that hopefully helps summarize these results. English is the subject that shows some separation from the others as far as how respondents felt about their preparation before taking a test, exam or SOL. Again, the first column combines the percentages of respondents feeling either “Very Prepared” or at least “Prepared” for testing in a particular subject area. 80% of the students responding felt at least a satisfactory level of preparation for English testing, and only 15% responded that they did not feel prepared for English testing. The other three subject areas all had similar results between each other, with the percentage of respondents feeling at least a satisfactory level of preparation ranging from 68-72% and those not feeling prepared ranging from 22-26%.

We are not sure whether or not these results are particularly conclusive or useful to you. Perhaps one benefit might be to help the schools in most effectively advertising for and/or placing volunteer tutors to assist students particularly in Math, as well as Science and Social Studies to some degree. Student honor societies and other organizations already contribute a lot of volunteer tutoring hours, but perhaps additional things can be done to help educate and attract other volunteer tutors if in fact the need and commitment to work with a tutor exist.

(Title Slide 12: Bullying) Good evening. I’m **Kaela Frazier** and I also attend Bruton High. Let’s now focus on the survey’s final two questions, which dealt with the issue of bullying. This

has been a major concern of the Youth Commission's since a YCYC survey over one year ago in December 2013. For some background first, here's a brief look at those results.

(Slide 13: Bullying Ques. #1, Dec. 2013) A year ago, students were asked **"What type of bullying do you experience most living here?"** Response options included Cyberbullying, Verbal Harassment and Physical abuse which were further described. A student could also indicate they did not experience any bullying living here. One important finding seemed to be item "d" at the bottom. Some 58% of the respondents reported not experiencing any bullying living here. While very encouraging, that also meant that over 40% of the respondents had experienced some type of bullying. Though a comparatively small 5% indicated they had experienced physical abuse, aggression and/or intimidation, it represented about 95 students among those surveyed, or an estimated 200 or so students in the County's high schools.

(Slide 14: Bullying Ques. #2, Dec. 2013) The 2nd bullying related question from December 2013 asked students, **"How widespread is the problem of bullying in our community?"** Combining the bottom two responses first, 63% of respondents said that it was not that bad of a problem or no problem at all. Combining the top two response choices shows that 37% indicated that bullying was at least a fairly bad problem if not a serious one. Perhaps a fair summary is that things could definitely be worse here, but there is also a lot of room for improvement.

(Slide 15: Bullying Definition) Encouraged by last year's YCYC and the Board of Supervisors to follow up on this issue this year, we addressed it again in the survey conducted about 2½ months ago in December 2014. The term "bullying" was defined in this way on the survey form: *"Questions 3 and 4 are about bullying. **Bullying**' can take place in different ways, but always tries to hurt or dominate another. It is often repeated. It can include: **cyberbullying** (thru social media), **verbal harassment** (aggressive put downs, threats, sexual comments), or **physical abuse, aggression and intimidation.**"*

(Slide 16: Question #3, this Year's Survey) Question 3 from this year's survey, asked students, "What would you normally do if you witnessed or experienced bullying? (Read all choices first; then circle *as many* as you would *normally* do):" These results show the incidence for the various responses mentioned by students taking the survey. One statistic that stood out was the fact that 23% of respondents said they would probably ignore a bullying incident if they witnessed or experienced it. Perhaps many were imagining a single incident and/or something relatively minor in scale. And, though 41% of the respondents said they would tell their parents and/or a staff member at school about a witnessed or experienced bullying incident that leaves almost 60% of respondents who would possibly not report a bullying incident. Perhaps they also imagined a minor incident, had a stigma about "ratting" on someone or possibly a concern of only making things worse if they reported it. Whatever the reasons why totals for reporting bullying are not higher, it is probably safe to say that students could use additional information and support inside and outside of school to help reinforce the importance of letting caring adults know about bullying when they are the brunt of it themselves or witness another being subjected to it.

(Slide 17: Question #4, this Year's Survey) Question 4 this past December asked students, "How well does administration handle bullying in the school? (Circle one)." Clearly, all bullying does not take place in our schools, and social media abuses sadly make bullying a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week problem for some. But this particular question does focus on the perceived handling of bullying issues within the high schools by the school administrations. As you can see, a fifth of the respondents indicated they had no opinion of how well administration handles bullying. A total of 15% believed that administration handled bullying quite well with another 37% feeling that the administration generally handles bullying okay. Just over a fourth of the respondents feel that administration is not handling bullying within the school very well.

(Slide 18: Community Prevention) The Youth Commission is now considering a variety of ways to help reduce bullying and support its victims and would welcome the opportunity of perhaps collaborating with the schools, YMCA and other organizations.

(Slide 19: OYA) Hi, my name is **Haven Gardner** and I attend Hampton Roads Academy. In closing, we want to mention some upcoming opportunities for students. First, a reminder that as of this meeting on February 23, there are still a few days left to nominate deserving high school students living in the county for one of the 2015 Outstanding Youth Award Scholarships, sponsored annually by the Board of Supervisors and Youth Commission. These recognize exceptional character and achievement in four different categories: Community Service, Compassion, Courage and Overall Achievement. Anyone can nominate a student for one of these awards, and nominations must be received at Parks, Recreation and Tourism by this Thursday, February 26. We are very thankful that each year a member of the School Board serves on the selection committee for these awards.

(Slide 20: YCYC Applications) We also want to encourage any current 8th thru 11th grade students who live in the county to consider applying for next year's Youth Commission. Those applications are due at Parks, Recreation and Tourism by no later than March 18. Interested students and their parents are invited, but not required, to visit the YCYC's next monthly meeting on Wednesday, March 4 at 6:00 p.m. in the Yorktown Library.

(Slide 21: Town Hall Mtgs. Bruton) Surveys are only one way in which we hope that students will share their opinions and concerns. **(Slide 22: THM York)** Another is coming up during the last week of April when the Youth Commission sponsors the 12th annual Town Hall Meetings in each of the high schools. **(Slide 23: THM Grafton)** These feature between 80 and 100 selected students in each school meeting with a member from the Board of Supervisors and a member from the School Board to discuss student questions and concerns in a face to face setting with elected officials. **(Slide 24: THM Tabb)** We want to thank the School Board for your participation each year in these meetings and thank your principals and their staff members for helping to coordinate these as well.

(Title Slide-25) In closing, detailed information and downloadable forms for the Outstanding Youth Award nominations and for applying to serve on next year's Youth Commission are available online at the Youth Commission's website at www.ycyc.info. If anyone has a question relating to the commission, please call the Parks, Recreation and Tourism office at 890-3500.

Kristyn: Mr. Chair, that concludes our presentation and we would again just like to thank the School Board and Dr. Shandor for this opportunity to report to you and our fellow citizens tonight.