



# YAE'S LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Students deserve a voice in their own educations. Often school systems revolve around what adult administrators and teachers believe is best for students, without ever asking for student input. We understand that academic success is a priority, but what about the many students in such need of mental health support that they can't focus on classwork? What about the fact that many of us do not see ourselves in the school curriculum, or, even worse, suffer microaggressions from teachers and other students because of our racial or gender identities? Are we learning and working together in ways that actually prepare us for the careers that are ahead, or are we subjected to old ways of teaching and being expected to conform? Many of us have teachers so focused on the test that they seem to forget that there are human beings—with talents, passions, and interests—sitting in front of them. Without attention to these issues, how academically successful can we ever really be?

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In the current pandemic, we have seen schools change drastically to sustain learning, so what better time than now to revolutionize schools in a way that brings our voices to the forefront?

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**If you are a student who has ideas or an adult ready to listen, contact us—the WNY Youth Alliance for Education (YAE)! Founded by the UB Graduate School of Education, YAE is made up of more than 100 6th-12th graders from across WNY who are committed to making a difference in their schools.**  
**(<http://ed.buffalo.edu/about/community-outreach/youth-alliance-for-education.html>)**

