

STATE SENATOR • HANSEN CLARKE • 1ST DISTRICT

# Clarke Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Apr 20, 2009

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## Clarke Proposes Massive Restructuring of Detroit Public Schools to Save Students, Avoid Shuttering Schools

*Proposal would maintain existing facilities, update curriculum and class structure, extend school year, and add performance incentives for students and teachers*

LANSING - State Senator Hansen Clarke (D-Detroit) announced a new proposal today that would tackle the education crisis facing Detroit Public Schools and its students while using current facilities to avoid school closures. The plan will reorganize failing schools to develop smaller, innovative schools, preserve existing school buildings to house community services, extend the school day and year, and offer performance incentives for students and teachers.

“We need to stop warehousing students in large, impersonal school buildings with overcrowded classrooms and instead develop smaller, innovative schools and classrooms that will prepare all students for college,” said Clarke. “It is appalling that only 20% of African American males currently graduate from Detroit Public Schools, and that’s a problem that affects the economy and our communities as well. We need to offer the personal attention and mentorship necessary to make sure that students aren’t falling through the cracks and dropping out.”

Senator Clarke will introduce legislation on tomorrow, Tuesday, April 21, that would institute the following reforms for Detroit Public Schools, to be implemented by the next academic year beginning in September 2009:

- **Curriculum Reform:** Transform failing schools into small, student-centered college preparatory schools.
- **Morals-Based Instruction:** Teach values and ethics as part of the curriculum.
- **Student & Teacher Incentives:** Provide financial incentives for students based on their performance in classes essential to graduation, and for teachers based on improving student achievement, engaging in professional development, and improving student and school employee attendance.
- **Community Use of Buildings:** Preserve school facilities and grounds to educate and train adults, provide after school recreation and tutoring, and offer health and social services, including municipal programs and libraries. Special emphasis should be given to encouraging the use of school facilities to train parents in skills needed for available, hard-to-fill jobs in the Detroit area.
- **Extended School Calendar:** Promote more instructional time by extending the

academic calendar year-round and by lengthening the school day by several hours.

“Detroit schools must be transformed by this fall in order to save a generation of students by preparing them to succeed in a global workforce,” said Clarke. “We need to act with a sense of urgency and make some dramatic changes to make sure that our children will succeed.”

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