



For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Pamela Lavers
lavers@macombgov.org (586)493-4877 Date: December 1, 2017

Macomb County Students Have a Bright Future

Nearly 500 students attended the third annual Macomb Diversity Summit at the Macomb Intermediate School District on November 28. This summit provides an opportunity for middle and high school students to dialogue about race relations and cultural matters that are relevant today. This forum also helps student leaders develop action plans regarding ways to strengthen their schools and communities.

"Macomb County schools are wonderfully diverse and supporting an environment where diversity is celebrated is an integral part of our schools," said Mike Devault, Macomb Intermediate School District Superintendent.

The Macomb Diversity Summit is a partnership with Macomb County Mark A. Hackel's Office, Macomb Community College and the Macomb Intermediate School District.

"The summit gives voice to students so that they can share their perspective on challenges as well as bright spots in a meaningful forum," said Dr. James O. Sawyer IV, President, Macomb Community College. "It is important to engage youth, foster their community involvement and cultivate their leadership abilities."

A variety of topics were introduced and discussed including Race Relations and Culture Discussion That Transforms; Cross-Cultural Experiences of 1st Generation Young Adults; Understanding Each Other through Art; Unpacking Your Identity; and The Power of Peer-to-Peer Mentorship. Discussion panelists included students from Macomb Community College and various school districts throughout Macomb County.

"I experienced a lot of learning throughout the day and I also learned a lot from speaking with other students and listening to their stories," offered Sarah Ibrahim, a panel member and student from Henry Ford High School. "Many students had similar feelings about assumptions and indicated how they can be toxic, especially when acted upon unfairly. Many students were very eager to work together to improve their schools."

"This event continues to impress me," said Hackel. "The students tackled these important conversations with courage, optimism and genuine respect for one another."

The feedback from staff was extremely positive as well. "The summit was relevant, informative, meaningful and outright AWESOME! After attending two breakout sessions, students were brought together and given an opportunity to have a voice, speak openly and candidly to their peers about diversity. As an educator and member of many communities I was extremely proud to hear students express themselves with so much passion and hope for our collective futures. The Diversity Summit was a huge success and the planning team members hit it out the ballpark - A great home run for teams of Diversity!" Michael Harvey, Student Relations Director, Center Line High School.

Media Advisory

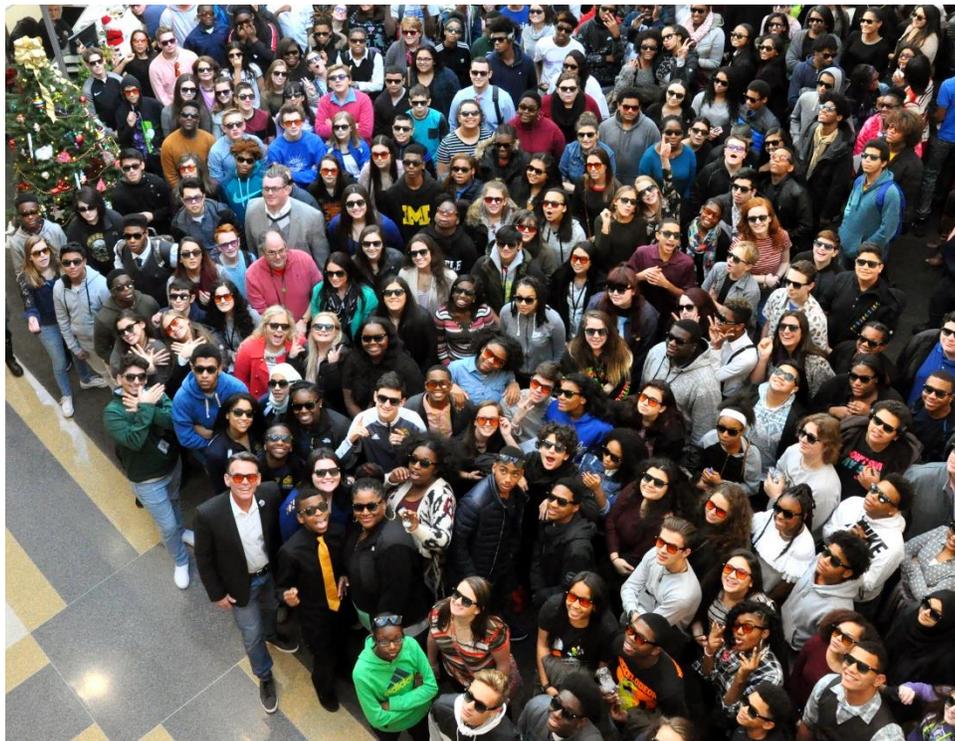
Office of Macomb County Executive
Mark A. Hackel



Barbara VanSweden, Superintendent of Fitzgerald Public Schools, and one of the key organizers of the summit consistently keeps a few questions at the forefront, “How are we going to keep the discussion going, how are we going to continue growing as adults, and how do we consistently support our students as they grow into their roles as leaders in Macomb County?”

The 2017 Macomb Diversity Summit was extremely successful. The students felt valued and many expressed appreciation for the acknowledgement of their voices. Numerous students articulated the importance of unique identities, as well as the strength of coming together.

We would like to recognize our sponsors, facilitators, and volunteers for a successful event. Sponsors for this event were: Extra Credit Union, Macomb Community College, Macomb Intermediate School District, MacombACT, McLaren Macomb Hospital, and OneMacomb.



Macomb County Executive Mark A. Hackel with nearly 500 Macomb County Students

###