

Ingham Academy youths to pose questions to local candidates

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Candidates running for local and state offices will hear from youth enrolled at Ingham Academy during a candidate forum.

The special candidate forum will be held on Oct. 18, and court-ordered youths enrolled at the Ingham Academy will pose questions that are on their mind to those running for State House, Ingham County Prosecutor and Ingham County Sheriff's offices.

The forum is hosted by the Ingham County Circuit Court, Peckham, Inc., and Michigan's Children.

Candidates invited to the forum include those running for House Districts 67, 68 and 69.

"This event allows youth in the juvenile justice system to participate in the election process and have their issues heard and addressed by the candidates," said Scott LeRoy, Juvenile Program Director for the 30th Judicial Circuit Court – Family Division.

Youths participating range in age from 16 to 24, and will ask questions they selected that reflect direct importance to their life experiences, including foster care, the juvenile justice system, Zero Tolerance laws, gun violence and human trafficking.

"It's an exciting and important event because elected officials need to hear the concerns of today's youth," said Sarah Britton, Associate Director of Youth Services at Peckham, Inc. "For the first time in these students' lives, they will be in the driver's seat, asking questions of officials that really matter to them."

The program will follow standard format with all candidates having equal time to address the audience and respond to questions.

"Kids deserve to be heard by their decision-makers and those setting policies that impact them in Lansing and Washington, D.C., said Michigan's Children CEO and President Matt Gillard. "Before we send any more leaders to Lansing and other key offices, the candidates need to hear what's on their minds."

The non-partisan forum takes place at 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Ingham County Family Center, home to Ingham Academy, at 1601 W. Holmes Road, in Lansing. Award-winning journalist Dustin Dwyer, of Michigan's Radio's State of Opportunity, will moderate.