

Positiva

“Whatever the training may be, every American will need to get more than a High School Diploma. And dropping out of High School is no longer an option. It’s not just quitting on yourself, it’s quitting on your country - and this country needs and values the talents of every American.”



Speak out like your President

By Sophia Townsend
Staff Writer

So you’re doing your homework and you end up on Facebook. The makers of Milwaukee Students Speak Out are completely aware of this social network phenomenon, and developed one of their own.

Milwaukee Students Speak Out (SSO) is an online organization composed of student members who plan to spark change in our schools.

Milwaukee Board of School Directors member Danny Goldberg decided to bring the movement originally started in Minnesota, to Milwaukee.

Last year, SSO members held two issues conventions, where over 40 MPS students discussed the group’s focus for the next several months.

After the last issues convention, students found that most problems in Milwaukee Public Schools fall into two categories: school safety and discipline, and quality learning and teaching.

“Students Speak Out is very different from other organizations because it is basically composed of all students who are taking action to improve Milwaukee Public Schools,” said senior Dawn Henn, student leader on the Quality Learning and Teaching committee.



Facebook and SSO have similar features. One is able to upload videos, post pictures, comment one’s page and add friends. However, as clearly depicted by the site’s main page, students mean business.

“We want to define the issues for ourselves, and identify solutions. Our voices deserve to be in the mix. We can inspire change!” said the creators of the site.

Although the site is a social network, the student members discourage any type of content that is not aligned with the goal of the site.

“We share our experiences and ideas so we can help people who make

decisions about our schools understand more deeply the issues that impact us and our ideas for solutions,” said the site’s main page.

Violence Free Zone Site Supervisor Jesse Garcia, has witnessed SSO members in action at the last Issues Convention and other planning meetings.

“[SSO] offers a voice, an opportunity for thoughts to be out on display,” he said.

Garcia explains that in order for voices to be heard, they must come out as one, forceful melody.

“At the end of the day it’s a numbers game. If students get together and mobilize, you’ll get a change,” said Garcia.

Henn suggested that SSO’s motives come at a great time, “I have faith in this organization because it is addressing a vital need in our community. Education definitely needs to be reformed and who better to reform it than the students,” she said.

Henn encourages students to become a member of SSO by logging on milwaukee.studentspeakout.org and become an active member on the site.

“If you want an opportunity to express yourself with a young movement of change that has come into the MPS system, now’s your opportunity to let your voices be heard,” said Garcia.



Pedro Rivera

Rivera honored for business plan

Pedro Rivera was named Young Entrepreneur of the Year for 2008 by the Latino Entrepreneurial Network of Southeastern Wisconsin and the Multicultural Institute.

This award was given based on the Business Plan that Pedro did on the Summer Entrepreneurship Training Youth Camp during 2008.

“Pedro Rivera did an excellent presentation of the business plan of his own business, Bando Designs & Promotions,” said Ms. Rocio Santa, business department chair.

Rivera’s presentation was in front of lenders from different Financial Institutions throughout the area.

Debate team already winning medals for South

By Sophia Townsend
Staff Writer

Hundreds of fans watch and cheer as articulate students persuade everybody in the audience to think new, important, idea-changing thoughts.

Sounds exciting, but this is not the reality of debate.

Like most Hollywood films, the 2007 film, *The Great Debaters* movie glorified and enhanced what really happens. Viewing the film attracted several students to join South’s new debate club, which started the same year.

While not nearly as glamorous, the real debate experience can actually be pretty impressive, according to the advisers and students involved.

The team does what is called policy debate. Instead of a huge lecture hall filled with fans, debaters here at South argue in a room of five people: two teams of two and one judge at the UW-Milwaukee campus.

“Our debate team is strong, motivated and has won several medals this year,” said Ms. Myrte Campbell, debate coach and English teacher.

Inspired by the movie, Campbell and Mr. John Lyons, also an English teacher, organized the team, which practices every Tuesday and Thursday after school.

“Debate is awesome. It helped me enhance my public speaking and self confidence. You get to interact with other students and learn about things you normally wouldn’t look into,” said Gina Mack, senior.

Although only composed of about eight members, South’s team always shocks the larger schools at each meet.

Lyons boasts that South’s team has won everything from first to sixth place individual speaker awards and several team awards ranging from second to fifth place.

“Debate is the activity where students practice critical thinking skills, use their argumentative skills and reinforce their reading and listening skills,” said Lyons.

Policy debate includes debating selective topics chosen by the Urban Debate League administrators. These topics range from “Whether or not the US government should increase alternative energy incentives” to “Putting a stop to environmental racism.”

The debate coaches are very inviting and encourage everyone to join. “They shouldn’t be nervous,” said Lyons. “Everyone is coming in at the same level no one is expected to come as a master debater, you come in as a beginner, then you leave as a master.”

“We are looking for new members now that our seniors will be graduating,” said Campbell.