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choice would be two things she'd propose to improve public school curriculum. "I don't think there should be a prescribed curriculum at all, and young minds should be given the choice studying what they'd like to study instead of what is required in formulas." She thinks elementary and junior high education "should allow children almost absolute freedom in pursuing what stimulates them intellectually and should provide a more psychologically nurturing environment" in which to learn. "Then perhaps the added meaning and personal fulfillment of curiosity would increase a voluntary attachment to public education, instead of the current indifferent attitude or even negative 'I hate school' mentality."

Xiaoju names English teachers Linda Pavich and Kathy Garvelink as having a major impact on her life. "They have encouraged me to read more widely, and write and think in ways I've never done so before. Their unique personalities and ways of thinking have so impressed upon me that I wish to emulate them and also acquire such maturity, inner peace, joy for living and unique style."

Her parents are Songhua Hu and Mingchun Cao of Troy.



SAMUEL R. KOLINS
Birmingham Seaholm

All A's and a near-perfect 35 on the SAT are Samuel Kolins' impressive credentials. He'll attend Bowdoin College (Maine) with an eye toward studying economics or math.

He is a National Merit Finalist, a Presidential Scholar nominee and winner of the Rensselaer Medal. He is also an AP scholar and received honorable mention in the Michigan Math Prize Competition.

Samuel plays trombone in Seaholm's Marching, Symphony and Jazz bands. He also plays tennis, captaining the JV team, and was Quiz Bowl JV and Varsity captain.

To improve public education, he would "increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession, encouraging a greater number of motivational, qualified people to become teachers."

He says English teacher Barb Angott has had the most influence. "She has done a terrific job helping me improve my reading and writing skills."

Samuel's parents are Mark Kolins and Maria Abrahamsen of Bloomfield Township. He has a sister, Sarah, who is 10.



MANDA LAI
West Bloomfield High

Manda Lai is another in our string of All-Stars with a 4.0 average and 34 on the ACT. She will attend the University of Michigan in a pre-medicine and possibly business as well. Her sights are set on becoming a neurosurgeon.

She is a National Merit Commended Student, an AP Scholar, the winner of a U-M Regents Merit Scholarship and a Michigan Competitive Scholarship and a Michigan Math Prize Competition Finalist for three years. An All-American Scholar as a sophomore, she was on a Quiz Bowl team that placed first in state-wide competition and in the top eight nationally that year. She is also a top 10 Medalist in the statewide DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) competition in both economics and mathematics.

Manda, who is president of the International Club, organized the recent communitywide Ethnic Festival at West Bloomfield High School. She

also headed a National Honor Society Battle of the Sexes Trivia Contest, raising more than \$3,000 for a local children's charity.

She has played cello in the Metropolitan Symphony Youth Symphony for six years and is a member of the WBHS Symphony Orchestra. She runs varsity cross country and captains the Quiz Bowl team within DECA, which came in first in the state and recently competed in the Nationals. She is on the executive board of National Honor Society and Earth Club and takes part in forensics, the *Spectrum Newsmagazine* and the Tzu-Chi Charity Foundation. She also is a private tutor.

On public education, she would place less emphasis on standardized test scores and more judgment on students' overall performance and involvement in school.

Manda gives credit to many of her teachers for "influencing me to become the diligent and dedicated student that I am today... Each has helped to quench my thirst for knowledge... Mathematics has always been my strongest subject so I would like to recognize Joe Brandell, my AP Calculus BC teacher last year, for teaching me calculus and then pushing me to pursue math further at the college level." She took Calculus 3 and Differential Equations courses at the University of Michigan-Dearborn this year.

Her parents are Jing-Yueh Jethro Lai and Chau-Hei Janice Lai of West Bloomfield. She has two sisters, Sonya, 20; and Caroline, 16; and a brother, Robert, 19.



JASON M. MITCHELL
Walled Lake Western

Jason Mitchell rang up 35 on the ACT to go along with his 4.0 grade point average. He'll head to Michigan Technological University on a full-tuition scholarship to study computer science. His aim is to become a computer programmer.

He is a National Merit Finalist and the winner of his school's Academic letter. He and a teammate recently took first place at the Saginaw Valley High School Computer Programming Competition. He also works for the City of Wixom in its computer department.

To improve public education, Jason suggests offering a wider class selection. "Despite my efforts I never was able to take AP computer science."

He selects English teacher Joe Johnson as most influential. "His creative methods made class interesting and informative."

Jason's parents are Vernon and Teresa Mitchell. He has a brother, Ryan, 14.



SUHAEL MOMIN
Troy Athens

He achieved a perfect 1600 on the SAT. His grade point average is 3.96. So Suhael Momin is an Academic All-Star. He is choosing among the University of Southern California, University of Michigan, Northwestern University and the University of Pennsylvania and hopes to pursue a career in medicine.

He is a corporate National Merit Scholarship winner, receiving a \$6,000 stipend over four years from Motorola. Suhael is also an AP Scholar, and will graduate Summa Cum Laude. He captains the forensics team, plays varsity tennis, is treasurer of Student Government, and participates in the Science Olympiad and Project Lead. He also volunteers as a patient companion at Beaumont Hospital.

To improve public education, he would decrease class size to create more interaction between teachers and students as well as students and students.

French teacher Cheryl Fichtner is the educator who most impacted him. "I went into high school not liking French. She got around that. The last year she integrated it with French history, French literature, French music. She got me to really enjoy and appreciate it."

His parents are Salim Momin and Rita Momin of Troy.



ILYA PODOLYAKO
West Bloomfield High

This all-A student scored 1570 on the SAT and is choosing between the University of Michigan and Harvard University. Ilya Podolyako plans to major in either political science or psychology toward his goal of attending law school and becoming an attorney.

He has won a \$2,500 National Merit Scholarship, and is a University of Michigan Dean's and Regents Scholar and an Oakland Athletic League Scholar Athlete. He's also a Poetry.com Editor's Choice Award recipient, a Michigan competitive scholarship winner and a graduate of the National Youth Leadership Forum.

He runs varsity cross country for West Bloomfield and is captain of its varsity track team. He also is active in