

# Bloomfield Hills school board recall effort fails – Swawn Lewis - Detroit News

Petitioners can't collect enough signatures, turn attention to ballot

*Bloomfield Hills*— An attempt to recall Bloomfield Hills Public Schools board members is over. The board will remain seated.

A grass-roots group opposed to the board's plan to consolidate the district's two high schools — Andover and Lahser — into one created the Bloomfield 20/20 organization with a goal of eliminating the board. But the group failed to gather enough signatures in the allotted time span.

Still, it's not game over for the opposition.

"We're not disappointed," said Chris Fellin, a Bloomfield 20/20 organizer. "In fact, we're motivated because we gathered thousands and thousands of signatures. We just couldn't squeeze in enough signatures into the 90-day window deadline."

The actual deadline, Fellin said, isn't until the middle of January.

"When we realized we weren't going to make that 90-day window, we decided not to turn them in, but to use them instead as a database."

The group needed to collect almost 5,300 signatures for each of the seven board members within 90 days. Fellin said he did not have the specific number of signatures collected.

News of the failed attempt to recall the board was met with relief by board president Ingrid Day.

"It's nice to take the heavy stone from our backpacks," she said. "Our goal is to be one united community."

Day acknowledged the difficulties for the community with the board's plan to consolidate the high schools.

The Bloomfield 20/20 group continues to push for two smaller, renovated high schools.

"I'm sure there are community members who are frustrated, but what we want in the end is a design everyone can be proud of," Day said. "The preferred plan is to have one school on the Andover site."

What to do with the two high schools, both in need of repair, has been an issue for at least eight years. Voters consistently have rejected one new high school, most recently in the November 2010 election.

But Day said when the issue is put before voters again, the vote will not be whether residents want one or two high schools.

"There's been a reduction in enrollment, and we have a goal of protecting programs," said Day. "That's the idea behind unifying the high schools."

Fellin said the issue probably will be put before voters in a May election. "Bloomfield 20/20 will continue our mission, only now we will focus on educating voters about the board's plans well before the election," he said. "Otherwise, these parents will vote for a new high school on the backs of the 80 percent of residents who won't even know there's a question on the ballot in May."

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