

# D211 POST: SPEAKER MAWI ASGEDOM TELLS PHS STUDENTS TO PUSH THEIR 'TURBO BUTTON'



*Public Speaker and Author Mawi Asgedom discusses the "turbo button," an idea to push one's self to work harder toward a goal.*

Public speaker Mawi Asgedom met with students at Palatine High School during an all school assembly January 24. During his presentation, Asgedom spoke of the difficulties of his early childhood as an Ethiopian refugee through his families settling in the United States and his ultimate graduation from Harvard.

Counselor Judy Locher worked to bring Asgedom to PHS after hearing speak at the Illinois School Counselor Association Conference.

"His work really resonated with Palatine High School because of our demographics and our project excel program, which is for first-generation students" she said. "Just thinking of how aspects of his story parallel with our students, I met with him and we built a connection."

Locher said when he agreed to speak with the PHS students she had a “turbo smile.”

Along with telling his story, he spoke of how each student in the room had their own story, and how their story was something they should be proud of. He also spoke of how students can approach situations to create what he called can do and not yet circles.

“These students have a story, and that story matters. They have the power to make choices to take charge of that story regardless of their background,” he said. “You look at these kids and know they have challenges just like challenges facing kids all over the country. I want to give them inspiration, encouragement, and tools they can use to better themselves.”



*Palatine High School students gathered in the gym to hear speaker and author Mawi Asgedom on January 24.*

Senior Shamoun Daudi said Asgedom’s speech was an inspiration for more than just self-improvement.

“I thought it was inspirational on how he is showing we can change ourselves for the better. I also think it gives a meaning to not only how we see the world but changing how the world sees us,” Daudi said. “After this, I think I want to do something change myself in a way to better the world around me, but also work to change the world around me in a way to better others.”

For Junior Steele Reahberger, she felt that if people like Asgedom can overcome his many struggles, then she can as well.

“I feel that his speech was very motivational. A lot of aspects spoke directly to me with some of the struggles I have faced lately,” she said. “I really like the idea of the turbo button. It tells me that I can always push myself that little more, even if I think I can’t.”

Asgedom said he was very impressed with the dedication of the staff at Palatine.

“The level of passion and energy around helping the students of all backgrounds to create bright futures is something I don’t see at a lot of schools,” he said. “The excel program here is very developed.”

Locher said that she hopes Asdedom showed all the students learn that they can do anything.

“It’s not going to be easy. It’s going to take work,” she said. “They have to access their resources and reach out for support. They have to engage that turbo button he talked about. Mawi never said there was not a ‘can’t do’ circle but rather ‘not yet.’”

