

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

January 16, 2019

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Student Member of the Board Process (12-04-18-06)

Question

Mrs. Smondrowski requested information regarding what staff is doing to make sure that all student groups, including and in particular, ESOL students, are aware of running for the Student Member of the Board, and what assistance they can receive to campaign due to transportation and other accessibility issues.

Response

The Special Elections Committee (SEC) Administrators, Mr. Brian Kramer, Grade 12 student, Northwood High School; and Miss Alexa Young, Grade 12 student, Col. Zadok Magruder High School; are appointed by the officers from Montgomery County Region–Student Government Association (SGA) for a one- year term. They lead the committee of approximately 90 students from across the district to review and develop the election protocols and conduct the Student Member of the Board (SMOB) election.

Mrs. Shella B. Cherry, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) coordinator, Student Leadership, Volunteers and Student Service Learning; Mr. Kramer; and Miss Young met to discuss opportunities for expanding the field of candidates seeking to run in SMOB elections. They concurred that additional means to create greater awareness about the SMOB election process and access to increase outreach to students in schools across the district would set the course for a more equitable process.

Mrs. Cherry has updated the MCPS Student Leadership and SEC webpages, posted information on social media through multiple student leadership platforms, and shared candidate filing dates and information with staff in the Department of Communications for distribution. Additionally, this information has been shared with high school SGA advisors across the district.

Mr. Kramer and Miss Young will contact Miss Ananya Tadikonda, SMOB for the 2018–2019 school year, for an opportunity to present the information during her SMOB Minute announcements aired in all secondary schools. Mr. Kramer and Miss Young will contact all school-based SGA advisors and English for Speakers of Other Languages teachers in all high schools to share candidate filing information. They will share that SEC and Mrs. Cherry will assist interested students with translation needs by employing the MCPS Language Line to ensure that all items and questions are reviewed with potential candidates in their preferred language.

SMOB election protocols currently are disseminated in English. Mrs. Cherry, Mr. Kramer, and Miss Young agreed to include translation for the election protocols for 2019–2020 school year. This will ensure that the protocols for future SMOB elections are accessible to students with varying languages preferences.

Mrs. Cherry, Mr. Kramer, and Miss Young also discussed the need to provide support to students who need assistance with outreach to students in schools across the district. Mr. Kramer, former SMOB candidate, shared the impact this had on him having to miss a great deal of class time to travel using public transportation. SEC recognizes that students may use technology to reach out to their peers. At the mandatory candidates meetings, Mrs. Cherry, Mr. Kramer, and Miss Young will share technological methods, such as scheduled Google Hangouts during schools' lunch periods, where students and the candidate may engage in real-time discussions. Additionally, they will discuss the appropriate use of live streaming on other social media platforms. Mrs. Cherry and SEC student leaders remain committed to improving the SMOB election process and providing access to all students with information about running for the position and participating in outreach to the MCPS community.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Jonathan T. Brice, associate superintendent for student and family support and engagement, Office of the Chief Academic Officer, at 240-453-2426.

JRS:MVN:JTB:sbc

Copy to:
Executive Staff
Mrs. Cherry
Ms. Webb