

APPROVED
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Rockville, Maryland
July 5, 2005

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Tuesday, July 5, 2005, at 7:35 p.m.

Present: Mrs. Patricia B. O'Neill, President
in the Chair
Mr. Steve Abrams
Ms. Sharon W. Cox
Ms. Valerie Ervin
Dr. Charles Haughey
Mrs. Nancy Navarro
Mr. Gabriel Romero
Mr. Sagar Sanghvi, Student Board Member
Mr. Sebastian Johnson, Student Board Member
Dr. Jerry Weast, Secretary/Treasurer

Absent: None

Re: **SWEARING IN**

Ms. Loretta Knight, deputy clerk of the circuit court, administered the oath of office to Mr. Johnson.

Re: **STATEMENT BY MR. JOHNSON**

"I thank my colleagues for their warm remarks, and I am honored to be a member of the Board of Education of Montgomery County.

I am grateful to the students of this county for this unique experience. I do not want to focus tonight on a personal victory. I would rather observe this occasion as a celebration of Montgomery County's commitment to student representation. The position of Student Member of the Board (SMOB) has existed for almost three decades now, and in those decades we students have worked hard to assert our voice. The adult members of the Board now regard the student member as an invaluable point of view.

It has taken time and effort for students to reach this level of respect. Each new student member owes a debt of gratitude to his predecessor for paving the way to greater accomplishment. For two years, Sagar Sanghvi has been committed to the students of this county. I thank him personally for his help these past two months, and I thank him on behalf of the students of this county for his stellar record of service and dedication.

As we move onto face new challenges in our county, and as we strive to expand student rights and opportunities, we must remain committed to equal education in our facilities and among

our students. Achievement that does not include minority students; achievement that leaves special education and ESOL students behind; achievement that uplifts some schools, and leaves others by the wayside – this achievement is hollow and meaningless. I applaud my colleagues on the Board for their efforts thus far, and I look forward to joining them in doing more.

As we continue our efforts to better represent students, we must also change the way we view the position of the student member. The SMOB has the potential to be a student advocate not only to the Board, but to our county and state. I pledge to do everything I can to expand the role our student member plays in our community.

I thank you all for coming today. I especially thank my mother, who from an early age instilled in me compassion for others and the belief that no one is beyond help. She's an extraordinary teacher and an empathetic leader. Although I always make fun of her for crying during sappy movies on television, if I turn out to be half as caring or as good a leader as she is, I will consider myself lucky.

I also want to thank my SGA advisors over the years: Lauren Hagy, Summer Roark, Karen Crawford, and, especially, Rondai Ravilious, who has had to put up with more of my crazy ideas and even crazier projects than anyone should have to. She believed in me when everyone else thought I was just a freshman with impossible goals. Which I was. Even though she could not be here today, I thank her.

I thank Amanda Lee for helping me write this speech and every other speech for the past year. I thank her for managing my campaign. I thank her for being right all the time. I only wish I had convinced her to join SGA sooner, because now I do not know what I am going to do without her.

I thank my best friends Stephen Demarais and Barun Aryal for pretending all my jokes about parliamentary procedure were funny, and for accepting the responsibility of running the student government at Blair High School so that I could do this. They have been great leaders, and even better friends.

I thank all the people here, friends and family, who have kept me grounded. When my head gets a little too big and I get a little overconfident, you are the people who let me know just what you really think of me. Thank you for that.

And, of course, I am eternally grateful to the students of this county. For five years, I have worked to serve and represent them. I am humbled by their support, and I hope to retain their confidence in the year to come.

I now have 360 days to create the profound and necessary changes I promised during my

campaign. So, I better get started now. Thank you all for coming. I really appreciate your support, and I look forward to my service on the Board.”

Re: PRESENTATION TO MR. SANGHVI

On behalf of the members of the Board, Mrs. O’Neill presented Mr. Sanghvi with memorabilia of his service on the Board of Education.

Re: STATEMENT BY MR. SANGHVI

“Congratulations to Sebastian. His speech said it all – he is an advocate for student representation, and he is an advocate for students. I am confident that Sebastian will do a superb job continuing the role of the student Board member, which started with David Neiman 27 years ago. I look forward to hearing great things about Sebastian in the future.

In each of my two years on the Board, I have started my statement to the Board and community with an anecdote, and I will do the same now. On Friday, my first day off the Board, I was going to work and pulled my car into my parking slot. I looked up and the sign read, ‘Reserved for Sebastian Johnson – at all times.’ Eight hours into the day, and I had been replaced, thanks to the efficiency of the Board’s staff.

Two years have gone by very quickly, and I have learned a lot over that time. One thing I have learned to do is read 500 pages in one night before every Board meeting. That will be a skill I can use in college. More importantly, I have learned that motivating and influencing lives of other people is rewarding and important. I have seen that at every Board meeting, from voting on an appeal that affects a single student to voting on a policy that affects 140,000 students. Every Board member takes every vote seriously. The school system is in good hands for many years to come.

This Board has always listened to the student voice. During my first meeting while considering appeals, one Board member asked me what I thought. It meant so much to me that adults were seeking my opinion. Please stay the course and keep student representation alive.

Being the youngest on the Board should be intimidating, but it has been fun. When I take a trip with my friends, they are boring!

Overall, the past two years have been a learning experience. The Board has taught me values and morals, built on the foundation that my parents built. I will really miss the Board.

I want to thank my family – mom and dad – who did not understand the time commitment of the Board. Thanks to my brother and best friend who has helped me for as long as I can

remember. Thanks to my friends for their support and understanding, especially when I want to attend a Board meeting and not a basketball game. Thanks to the Board staff for their continued support.

Thank you.

**Re: COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS AND THE
SUPERINTENDENT**

Board members welcomed Mr. Johnson and thanked Mr. Sanghvi for his work on the Board of Education and wished him well in all his future endeavors.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m. A reception followed in the auditorium.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

JDW:gr