

Election of the 30th Student Member of the Board of Education

MCR Special Election Committee 2007 Voters Guide



Election Day
April 25, 2007

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Grade 11

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Montgomery County has the 17th largest public school system in the United States and is projected to have 145,622 students enrolled next year. Unlike many other jurisdictions throughout the country, we are lucky enough to have a voting Student Member of the Board of Education. Through this position we can advocate to protect student rights and improve our schools. Because the SMOB only has twelve short months to make a difference, it is essential that we be represented by a student with experience, dedication, and energy. I believe I can be that student. However, I have not waited to be elected to take action. Since middle school, I have testified in front of the Board of Education, and I have worked with individual and county student governments to improve the quality of life for all students. I am proud of my efforts, including my successful push to undo the R-rated movie ban and instead to allow R-rated movies in high schools and PG-13 rated movies in middle schools. I hope you will give me the chance to continue to work on your behalf as the next SMOB.

Platform

I support:

- Creating a uniform, student evaluation system of teachers similar to the system at Montgomery College
- Returning driver's ed classes to the curriculum to save students time and money
- Adding more funding for after school activities to cater to all students' needs
- Working with individual high schools to develop open lunch policies
- Expanding the current high school cell phone policy to all middle schools
- Increasing SMOB voting rights
- Approving a comprehensive sex education curriculum
- Opening up some school activities to students who do not meet the 2.0 GPA requirement
- Exempting students from final exams if they are taking that subject's AP exam

I oppose:

- The Loss of Credit (LC) policy which uses grades as a form of punishment
- The use of cameras and recorders on buses without the knowledge of students
- Random drug testing of athletes
- The inconsistency in the implementation of the grading policy throughout the school system that allows teachers to unfairly and unequally grade students

Education

2004 – Present: Walter Johnson High School (Grades 9-11)

2001 – 2004: Tilden Middle School (Grades 6-8)

1996 – 2001: Garrett Park Elementary School (Grades K-5)

Leadership and Accomplishments:

2004 – 2005:

Special Elections Administrator – Montgomery County Region (MCR)
Student Member – Curriculum Advisory Assembly

2005 – 2006:

Special Elections Administrator – MCR
Chair – Coalition of High School Democrats
Deputy Political Director – Silverman for County Executive campaign
Student Member – Committee to review R-rated movie policy
Successfully abolished the former R-rated movie ban so that R-rated movies can be shown in high schools and PG-13 movies can be shown in middle schools

2006 – 2007:

Treasurer – MCR
Intern – Congressman Chris Van Hollen's Office
District Office Director – Maryland Delegate Saqib Ali's Office
Member – Montgomery County Commission on Children and Youth
Coordinator – SMOB Student Advisory Committee
Successfully lobbied against a bill which would have reduced SMOB voting rights

Question 1: What would be your top three realistic priorities as the Student Member of the Board of Education?

The SMOB only has one year to make a difference in our school system. If elected, I will focus my efforts on three main areas:

- 1) Improving academic life by bringing back driver's education to the curriculum to save students time and money and by exempting students from final exams if they have taken an AP exam in a course.
- 2) Improving communication between the SMOB and students by creating an email listserv for electronic updates and by publishing a quarterly newsletter.
- 3) Improving equality in student life by working to close the minority achievement gap and by instituting a student evaluation system of teachers.

Question 2: What qualities and performance goals would you consider for hiring or contract renewal of our superintendent?

The Superintendent is the educational and administrative director of the school system and as a result has the greatest influence on student life. If elected, I will look for a person who can achieve measurable results and who is passionate about eliminating the minority achievement gap, reducing class sizes, and implementing the grading policy uniformly and consistently. Most importantly, I will look for a candidate who listens to our voice and who cares about student opinions.

The candidates' profiles have been prepared by the candidates and do not necessarily represent the views of the Special Elections Committee (SEC). The Montgomery County Region of the Maryland Association of Student Councils (MCR), or Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). The SEC cannot assure the accuracy of the statements contained in this document. Published by the SEC of MCR in cooperation with MCPS.