

DHRITI VADLAKONDA

Ambitious and transformational student leader with a passion for serving her community. Demonstrates exceptional communication skills and capable of making critical decisions during challenges.

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EDUCATION

River Hill High School

2018 - Current

- ☆ AP Scholar with Honor
- ☆ Student of the Year “Soaring Hawk” Award Recipient
- ☆ Student of the Month x2

Languages: Proficient in English, Hindi, Telugu, and Spanish

ACTIVITIES

Mock Trial

- ☆ Final Team Attorney/Witness (2018 – Current)
- ☆ County and Regional Champion – Top 8 Maryland Teams pre-COVID-19 (2020)
- ☆ County Champion (2018 – 2019)

National Spanish Honors Society (2019 – Current)

- ☆ National Spanish Exam- Gold Medalist (2020)

National English Honors Society (2018 – Current)

- ☆ Junior President (2020–Current)

Musical Arts

- ☆ All-State Senior Chorus (2021)
- ☆ Peabody Children’s Choir – Cantate (2017 – Current)
- ☆ Howard County Gifted and Talented High School Choir (2019 – 2020)
- ☆ All-State Junior Chorus (2019)

Indian Classical Dance

- ☆ Received numerous first place awards in competitions around the country, 11+ years of experience, Junior Certification

Community Service

- ☆ Zooniverse Virtual Volunteer
- ☆ STEM Tutor – Stem and Buds
- ☆ Howard County Library Volunteer
- ☆ Girl Scouts of Central MD

EXPERIENCE

Corresponding Secretary – Howard County Association of Student Councils (HCASC) (2020 - Current)

Worked with community Superintendent and Central Office staff to establish a “Listen and Learn” feedback session for students to share experiences regarding mental health, workload, and virtual school; organized a county-wide survey enquiring students about “What Makes School Feel Like School” for the Howard County (HoCo) Board of Education to gain insight into struggles in a virtual environment; sends regular social media and e-mail updates regarding General Assembly meetings, HoCo SMOB advocacy, and upcoming leadership opportunities to all members.

Director of Communications Task Force – HCASC (2020 - Current)

Coordinates communication efforts between Appointed Staff committees, the Officer Team, other HCASC members, and the general public; compiles monthly recap posts from Appointed Staff committees detailing the committee’s current work/news/updates and shares posts on HCASC social media, HCASC website, and email list.

Presenter – National Association of Student Councils Conference (July 2020)

Conducted a “Meet the Pro” session for over 200 attendees about personal experiences as a student leader; presented informative tips on how middle and high students can erase self-doubt and build their inner confidence in their daily activities, offered personalized advice on how students can successfully get involved in leadership opportunities at their schools and develop a strong presence in these activities.

Appointed Officer on SMOB Convention Committee – HCASC (2019-2020)

Facilitated the planning of all aspects relating to the election of the HoCo SMOB; coordinated the day-of operations for the SMOB convention; promoted the Office of SMOB as a way to elevate student voice in HoCo; planned and executed student delegate training; supported school-based leadership throughout the delegate selection process; revised guidelines for the implementation of the HoCo Student Representation policy for a virtual 2021 convention.

HCASC Liaison – River Hill Student Government Association (2019-2020)

Attended all HCASC meetings, representing the needs of River Hill students; relayed information from the meetings to the River Hill SGA Executive Board, including critical material regarding the SMOB student delegate nomination and selection processes at River Hill; represented the interests of the SGA Executive Board to HCASC; actively participated in the activities and committees of HCASC.

Class President – River Hill High School (2018-2019)

Served as the chief leader and coordinator for activities of the Class of 2022; Organized a Freshman Pep Rally and Basketball game, as well as Class Spirit Days for over 500 students; set meeting dates and created meeting agendas; saw that all planned projects were carried out to completion and success.

Student Delegate – Howard County SMOB Convention (2018-2019)

Served as a representative leader of River Hill High School at the HoCo SMOB Convention; evaluated all Student Member applicants according to their resumés, cover letters, opening/closing speeches, and responses during the general question/answer session; voted for two applicants to advance to the general election; promoted the position of the HoCo SMOB.

Representative Speaker – HoCo Watershed Report Card Program (2018-2019)

Represented River Hill High School’s Science Department at this county-wide STEM program; collected, analyzed, and presented quantitative and qualitative analyses regarding the health of River Hill’s Watershed to the County Executive, HoCo Central Office Staff, and HoCo Board of Education members.

Vote Dhriti Vadlakonda for Maryland SMOB!

Hey MASC!!! My name is Dhriti Vadlakonda, and I am a junior at River Hill High School in Howard County, Maryland. I am beyond honored to be running for the position of the Maryland Student Member of the Board (SMOB), and I am looking forward to meeting you all very soon!

Leadership has always been such a great passion of mine. Ever since I can remember, I have loved exacting positive change in my community and representing student voices at any level I could reach. To elevate the voices of over 900,000 wonderful Maryland students is an opportunity that I am humbled to have. I will be privileged to work with new, talented student leaders like YOU and to hear YOUR diverse stories. I see the Maryland SMOB as essentially the bridge between members of the Board of Education (BOE) and Maryland students. Like any effective bridge, the SMOB must be accountable and dependable to her constituents, as well as a strong support for their educational journeys. My responsibility will not only be to proudly represent all Maryland students, but also to put myself in the plethora of shoes that represent their diversity. This way, I can fully understand the struggles and ambitions of all students to best serve them. On a Board with many adults, I will successfully balance the dynamic by unhesitatingly pushing forward the viewpoints of a student.

As your SMOB, one of my top priorities will be to tackle learning loss experienced by Maryland students during the Coronavirus pandemic. School shutdowns cause disproportionate learning losses and persistent achievement disparities across students of low socioeconomic backgrounds, in turn affecting their future professional lives and overall well-being. As SMOB, I will push for the Board to support projects that address the educational recovery of at-risk students especially, such as English as Second Language (ESL) speakers, students with disabilities, and younger students. I will encourage the BOE to reach out to every Maryland student to get a reliable assessment of the degree of not only learning loss, but also health, trauma, abuse, addiction, and domestic violence. I will make certain that the BOE continues to support tutoring and other supplemental services to compensate for time away from direct instruction. I will also push for partnership with social and mental health services so that resources are made accessible to students coping with stresses of the pandemic.

This school year has also highlighted the digital divide that Maryland faces. Internet access remains a major concern for many students, and there must be collective effort at the state and county levels to push for internet access for all. Providing a substantial number of hot spots, laptops for every student, and introducing resolutions to increase internet speeds are integral steps. Ensuring a safe internet is also an issue I am passionate about. This past year, we have faced a malicious ransomware attack on our education system, which can be a result of underfunded infrastructure and utilities. I will advocate for the allocation of resources, financial support, and regular supervision of online educational tools to ensure that Maryland students are able to use the Internet safely.

Recently, the voting rights of the Howard County SMOB have been challenged by litigation. To take away the vote of the SMOB is to take away one of the few substantive stakes students have in their education. Critical times call for immediate action. As a Maryland SMOB from Howard County, I will utilize my influence to empower the role of a SMOB as an independent, self-sufficient champion of student voice and will encourage students to stand with the SMOB as an avenue of student voice. I believe in the power of every student to be an advocate for his/her voice, but for that to be possible, the SMOB's voting rights are critical.

From Class President to a presenter at the National Association of Student Councils Conference, I have a plethora of diverse student leadership experiences at the grade, school, county, and even national level. I am confident that my leadership experiences will make me a knowledgeable, understanding, and approachable Student Member. Through my extracurricular activities, I have built strong communication and critical-thinking abilities, as well as sharpened time-management and prioritization skills. I love learning, and as SMOB, I know I will constantly be learning, and I will whole-heartedly welcome feedback! I will fight tirelessly on YOUR behalf. I will provide YOU with everything you need and more to be successful in YOUR education. Should I be given the honor of serving in this position, I will strive to exceed all expectations and broaden the legacy of the Maryland SMOB.

I know that this past year has been quite a tumultuous journey (to say the least!), but I want you all to know that I am here for you—not only as a candidate for the state SMOB, but also as a fellow student who is going through everything with you. :)