

1. Hello MASC! How do we feel! In the 1990's,, the Bokoum family left West Africa and immigrated to..the United States to pursue their educational goals and to make necessary sacrifices for a better future and for more accessibility for their children. Seeing my parent's grit and passion for education.has allowed me to experience the immense benefits which a quality, world class education can provide. Maryland is known for its high quality of education, but we must continue to evolve and embrace necessary changes if we are to continue to excel.
2. I am Kevin Bokoum, and I have the great honor and privilege of running to be your student member of the board of education for Maryland. If you were to ask anyone what one key and true strength of Maryland is,they would say - diversity. Not just diversity in skin tone, but diversity in thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and in the student body.
3. My journey started in middle school, where I advocated for and helped to start a community food pantry.. This passion for helping students carried on to high school where I was a part of our Student Council Executive Board, where I worked on mental health initiatives and advocated for Opioid education programs throughout Washington County and throughout the state. Now, in junior year, I am the Student Member of the Board of Education for Washington County. As SMOB, I have advocated for Arts Equity, increased student involvement throughout wcps committees, and served as a key member in planning our counties Return-To-Learn plan. In my history of student activism, I have not forgotten the most important constituency, our diverse student population!
4. What is an advocate? From my experience, an advocate is someone who cares about something greater than themself. I am an advocate. I will be your advocate. I have had the pleasure of working with incredibly talented student leaders. From the state SMOB, numerous county SMOBs, and school presidents from around the country, these exceptional leaders have contributed significantly to my mindset on public education and the diverse population it serves..
5. Today, I am running to be your 36th Student Member of the Maryland State Board of Education so I can advocate for ALL Maryland students ensuring that educators, parents, and other stakeholders put the most important group first, Our students. I'll accomplish this through promoting students first in three (3) key ways:
 - i. Equity throughout all Maryland systems
 - ii. Eliminating the opportunity gap between the student and the system
 - iii. Advocating for underrepresented students.
6. First, what is equity in public schools? Equity for students means that every student receives access to what they need to succeed. We must break the barriers of inequity in education in order for ALL Maryland students to succeed. As State SMOB, I will work with other board members and Maryland State Department of Education to ensure equity starts right when a child enters the Maryland public school system. I will fight for a significant increase in access to our Pre-kindergarten programs, so every student can get a jumpstart to the world-class education within Maryland. Additionally, I will push for 1 to 1 technology access for every student in all twenty-four school systems. To make sure this happens, I will

continue to advocate for the Kirwan Commission's recommendation to increase school funding, the Built to Learn Act which helps fund school construction, and any other legislation which will guarantee that our schools receive the funding they deserve.

7. Secondly, To close the gap between the students and the Maryland public school system, diverse career Technology education programs must be improved and expanded upon. We must deviate from a one size fits all mindset and expand our curriculums throughout the whole state to be more inclusive of all of the various cultures, ethnicities, genders, and people who have helped establish the interconnected world we live in today.
8. Finally, while advocating for all students, we must especially look out for underrepresented students. I will continue to advocate for those students who have special accommodations such as IEPs, 504s, and those who are English Language Learning Students. Furthermore, I will ensure that the student voice remains key in decisions by defending and advocating for student member voting rights - on all county boards throughout the state and fighting against those who try to silence it.
9. I, Kevin Bokoum, have the same drive and passion for education that brought my parents to the United States and Maryland. I am here for you, the diverse students of Maryland, and I will be sure to put all of you first in every decision and effort I make. During Legislative session, vote Kevin Bokoum for Student Member of the Maryland State Board of Education, to make certain we put our students first, to ensure a brighter tomorrow! Thank you.