

# Maja N. Durkovic

## *Candidate for President of the Maryland Association of Student Councils*

Hello, MASC! My name is Maja Durkovic and I am unbelievably excited to have the opportunity to run for your president. My six years of student leadership involvement, three of which have been with MASC, have provided me with opportunities and gifts beyond my wildest imaginations. One of these gifts was an indispensable community. Throughout two and a half years of a virtual world, shrouded by uncertainty and disconnect, student leadership has allowed me to form invaluable relationships that I would never have experienced elsewhere. MASC is home to passionate, driven student leaders – ones who take on changemaking with pride, doing so while instilling unparalleled dignity in the youth voice. These students, and this community, are at the core of who I am as both a leader and a human. From high schoolers in mountainous Garret County to middle schoolers on the beaches of Worcester County, I cannot wait to lead with all of you, MASC.

*My presidential visions for the 2022-2023 school year are as follows:*

### **Streamlining Organization & Communication**

- Prioritizing **accessibly and flexibility** in the expected transition to the upcoming year of fully in-person MASC activities and events, including continuing to offer **virtual meeting options**.
- Enhance inter-staff communication and understanding with thorough **goal-setting** and **position updates**.

A fully in-person transition, while exciting, presents the necessity for increased accessibility for those that are unable to attend these meetings. By allowing for virtual attendance options, MASC will allow for more diverse, regular meeting attendance, one not hindered by travel costs or COVID-19 concerns. Thorough goal-setting and position updates, which will largely be conducted at Executive Board meetings, will allow for enhanced communication and understanding of staff progress, while facilitating unity among MASC Staff.

### **Transforming Committees**

- **Opening and advertising** committee involvement for students in all grades across Maryland.
- Create a community centering on **diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)**, while also maintaining and expanding MASC's existing committees.

Committees are an aspect of MASC that allows for more participation from a more diverse and expanded pool of students. By expanding existing committees, including the Middle School Involvement, Civic Engagement, Social Media, and Civic Engagement committees, while adding a DEI-focused committee, MASC will open itself to needed diversity in opinions and student experience.

### **Promoting Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI)**

- Establish a **DEI Affairs Coordinator** position within the Special Issues Department.
- The DEI Affairs Coordinator would serve as **committee chair** on the newly formed DEI Committee.

MASC has the duty to advocate for a diverse, equitable, and inclusive education system for all Maryland students. A DEI Affairs Coordinator would focus their efforts on advocating and locating state- or county-wide initiatives that promote an educational environment that centers DEI. Like the Mental Health and Environmental Affairs Coordinators, a DEI Affairs Coordinator would work conjunctively with the State Legislative Affairs and Advocacy Coordinators to locate DEI-focused bills in the Maryland General Assembly.

### **Pursuing a Wide-Ranging Community**

- Promoting **inter-county communication** with monthly **"Presidents' Calls"** – a collaborative environment for the MASC president and regional presidents.
- Effectively use virtual platforms to open certain MASC events to the **national student council community**.

Communication between the state and regional presidents is essential to building a collaborative state-wide community. These meetings would allow for personal connections and strategy-discussions for all involved. With possible continuation of some virtual events, the opening of these meetings to the national student council community will provide unseen diversity in participation.