

A Statement from Abisola

Hello! My name is Abisola Ayoola, and I am so grateful to have the opportunity to serve as your next Student Member of the Maryland State Board of Education! I am a junior at Wilde Lake High School, where I am deeply immersed in the school community. Notable aspects of my life include my service as Howard County Student Member of the Board, as well as my involvement with the Howard County Association of Student Councils, Student Government Association, Spanish Honor Society, and National Honor Society, all of which provide opportunities to make tangible impacts. Whether it's gathering input at the school General Assemblies, constructing journals to send to our sister school in the Dominican Republic, or simply tutoring a peer, I take joy in giving back to others and taking the initiative, which is precisely what drove me to become Howard County SMOB.

In my position, I have been able to expand my reach outside my school and throughout my county. I have been granted an important responsibility by my constituents. Throughout my term, it has been crucial to me that I consistently do right by my fellow students. By interacting with them through social media and school visits, I have been able to keep the students of Howard County updated and engaged. That being said, I believe that one of the best ways to effectively carry out the role of state SMOB would be employing the power of local student members. Collaboration across the state can strengthen and amplify student voices, which is why I would maintain contact with county student members.

As a second year Independent Research student at Wilde Lake, I have been studying the impacts of standardized testing on the well-being of students. The program has made me proficient in public speaking, presenting, analyzing data, and creating accurate surveys; all of which are fundamental skills for a successful student member. My intention is to help my Board make student centered decisions when it comes to testing. Throughout the state, students are subjected to an unfathomable amount of pressure, both academically and internally, and the idea that there is a mechanical process to achieve success after high school is weighing them down. While the push towards College and Career Readiness has its positives, it is crucial that we keep our students at the forefront of all decisions. We do this by providing support and resources that help students meet standards. Students benefit from policies that prioritize their mental health and personal growth, and I am prepared to advocate tirelessly on their behalf.

My current role has given me influence over numerous matters. However, every now and then a student will express a concern that is out of my reach, and I tell them, "that is a state issue." If granted the privilege of serving as your State SMOB, not only would I expand my current work to a state level, but I would have the ability to help Maryland students with the issues that matter most to them. I want to fight for you, the hundreds of thousands of unique and valuable students in this state. Thank you for believing in the power of student voices and I can't wait to see what we accomplish!

Sincerely,

Abisola Ayoola