

Sharada Narayanan

MARYLAND SMOB: Personal Statement



In my eyes, every student deserves a world class education. Every student deserves the chances and opportunities that will provide them with tools to unlock their limitless power. Most importantly, every student deserves a voice, and I will strive day and night to be that for all 880,000+ Maryland students. To be the Student Member of Maryland State Board is to be the number one liaison between every single student, regardless of race, age, gender, disability, sexuality to the people who help to make the policies affecting these individuals on a daily basis. I want to lead by example, and show every student that your power lies not in your accolades but in your advocacy for yourself and others. To be the SMOB of MD is to be the biggest voice for the daily struggles of all students. I hope to make everyone's day a little bit easier, policy by policy, opportunity by opportunity, resource by resource and most importantly story by story.

Before addressing some of my policies, I want to give you a little insight into my journey first and foremostly. These last few years have been truly a very educational period for me to learn about the diversity of our school, and the amazing opportunities that the clubs within my school provide! I am incredibly honored to be able to state my position as an Ambassador for Harvard's Undergraduate Foreign Policy Initiative, where I got the opportunity to network with nearly 600 students worldwide, and have founded a nonprofit (Ubuntu for Humanity) that provides business grants to African women and youth. I have also participated in the creation of school spirit events, in my position as the Junior Class President, as the President in the Urbana Delegation of Maryland Youth and Government (through which I also participated in the Conference on National Affairs) and as the President for our delegation of Future Business Leaders of America. All of these experiences have taught me the value of teamwork, of listening, of going the extra mile, and of most importantly fighting for every voice everyday. Specifically within the Student Council I have been involved in MASC for a few years now, and serve as the current FCASC President for FCPS. This experience has shown me a community of leaders who achieve so much together and highlighted the emergence of a new generation of powerful advocates here in Maryland.

These are the things that motivate me everyday to wake up and serve my peers. Some of the key policies I want to focus on in terms of my platform include:

- 1. Diversity and Equity:** Maryland has made great strides in terms of making standardized testing more accessible in its Blueprint for the Future legislation, however still in terms of extracurriculars, from funding for afterschool transportation, to advocating for the arts, to even providing more support for students with special needs there is a lot of room for improvement that MD needs to make. Most importantly, our curriculums need to be more diversified, students should be able to see people like themselves reflected in the literature they consume. This means addressing the post-pandemic mental health crisis, and learning gap that is being faced.
- 2. Non-traditional/Career Related Instruction:** College and Career Readiness is no joke! For every student however, this looks different. Non-traditional learning allows students to be the leaders of their own learning and choose either accelerated or more paced learning based on what they need. Maryland needs to increase the amount of funding channeled into this kind of instruction through increasing specific opportunities for courses connecting to specific career experiences in magnet programs, IB Programs, CTC/CTE programs, etc. This bridges teachers and students.
- 3. Sustainability:** A huge part of being leaders of the future is creating a sustainable globe. That means starting within the community. Allowing students to create Green Teams and be invested in their own composting plans is crucial to developing health footprints and creating a self-reliant student population. By learning about ways our schools can reduce our output of Greenhouse Gases, we can even develop sustainable ways to grow the infrastructure of schools in MD.

Hand in hand, I am hoping that together we the students can get it done! My biggest priority of all is to listen to YOU! So let me know your thoughts and reach out to me at [@sharada4mdsmob](https://twitter.com/sharada4mdsmob)!