

APPROVED
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Rockville, Maryland
July 5, 2006

The Board of Education of Montgomery County met in special session at the Carver Educational Services Center, Rockville, Maryland, on Wednesday, July 5, 2005, at 7:40 p.m.

Present: Ms. Sharon W. Cox, Vice President
in the Chair
Mrs. Nancy Navarro
Mrs. Patricia O'Neill
Mr. Gabriel Romero
Mr. Sebastian Johnson, Student Board Member
Ms. Sarah Horvitz, Student Board Member-Elect
Dr. Frieda Lacey, Acting Secretary/Treasurer

Absent: Mr. Steve Abrams
Ms. Valerie Ervin
Dr. Charles Haughey

Re: **SWEARING IN**

Ms. Molly Ruhl, clerk of the circuit court, administered the oath of office to Ms. Horvitz.

Re: **STATEMENT BY MS. HORVITZ**

"Everything starts as somebody's daydream" said Larry Niven. I can remember sitting in my social studies class in 6th grade watching some video about these 2 students who went to schools I'd never even heard of, talking about issues that I didn't think concerned the typical 12 year old. It was this day that I was introduced to the idea of a student member on the board. Of course at the time it didn't mean a lot to me mostly because I was 12 and most 12 year olds don't think about politics or anything on that level. Over the years, I began to get more and more excited over SMOB elections. It excited me because I realized that I was projecting my own, personal voice to the board in voting for the SMOB. The position of the SMOB began to have more meaning when I started understanding that students aren't just numbers like statistics or test scores, but real people with real issues that they want to bring to light. These experiences became the seeds for my dream to become SMOB. A dream that would allow me to help students take ownership of their own educations.

Last week I attended the National Association of Student Councils convention in Philadelphia. I met students from every state in the country, Puerto Rico, Canada, and Australia. We talked about everything ranging from what type of area we live in to student government. A lot of students had never heard of the idea of a SMOB, let alone one that was voted in by a majority of students in the county. I was suddenly very grateful to live in such a great county as the one we live in. A county where students do have an

influential voice and where they are listened to.

It's clear that we have come a long way in improving communication and cooperation, but I believe we should settle for nothing less than the best for the students in this county. It is my dream that all students will see the importance in SGA that I do. We should all be aware of our rights and, more importantly, know that we have a voice and that we, as students, can effect change. The students of Montgomery County already have a voice; we just need to use it. As SMOB, I hope to bring students together from all over the county. The diversity of our school system can and will be one of our greatest assets.

I wouldn't be standing here right now if it weren't for the support and love of many people.

First, I'd like to thank my parents for believing in me and encouraging me over the years to be more involved. When I entered high school they kept telling me how important it was to find some activity that I was interested in and to stick to it. Somewhere along the way I found student government and found that aroused an interest in politics and a passion for improving the school environment. Their support over the years has enabled me to stand here in front of you all today.

I'd also like to thank Mr. Michael Durso for being an extraordinary principal and supporting me all the way through my campaign. I remember when I first told him that I wanted to run for SMOB how he instantly was excited for me and believed in me. Thank you.

Mrs. Crawford and Mr. Nicholson, you are the best advisors in the world. I can't even express how thankful I am to have you by my side. Mr. Nicholson, thank you for the support even during the countless hours I spent in your room complaining about how I can't do this. I wouldn't be here right now without all your help.

To all my friends, thank you for everything. I'd especially like to thank two of my good friends Avi Edelman and Adam Yalowitz who couldn't be here today. Thank you for managing my campaign and keeping me accountable. Thank you for helping me write my speeches even at 2 AM on a school night. And most of all, thank you for being amazing friends throughout everything. I'd also like to thank Brian Chen for being such a great influence on my life and for helping me write this speech. You have truly been an inspiration and I hope to be able to achieve on the same levels that you have.

Last but not least, I'd like to thank the students of Montgomery County for voting me into office. I know that we can all work together to improve our county even further.

Thank you everyone for being here today to celebrate and share this special day with me. May all our daydreams for a better tomorrow become a reality for MCPS in this coming year. Thank you."

Re: STATEMENT BY MR. JOHNSON

“Congratulations to Sarah. That was an excellent speech, and I'm pleased to have had the opportunity to work with her this year. The students of this county have elected a great leader and outstanding representative. I'm sure Sarah will do great things for our students in the coming year.

I had some trouble writing this speech, because I didn't quite know what to say. So I went through the records and read the farewell speeches of previous student members, and picked up on a few themes. One thing they all said was that serving on the Board of Education was fun. I wouldn't exactly say that. What I would say is serving on the Board is very hard, but rewarding, work. Feeling like you've made a difference and a connection with students is worth all the meetings and school visits. Another theme that previous student members have hit on is what it's like to be the youngest member of the Board of Education. I have no idea. I'll be the first to admit that the other board members are far more youthful and vigorous than I am. Of all the advice the superintendent gave me this year, what I got most often was "loosen up, don't be so ornery, smile a little." Hopefully when I get to his age, I will be as gregarious. Finally, past student members have talked about what they learned on the Board of Education. I've learned there's no such thing as a part-time job in public service. I've learned that if I ever do achieve actual fame, which is unlikely as a history teacher, my autograph will be worth nothing because every middle school student in Montgomery County already has it. On a more serious note, I've learned that in our entitlement society where everyone feels they have a right to everything, it's easy to forget what we take for granted here in our county. I believe that access to a high quality education is the right of every child. My work on the Board of Education to ensure that right has become a lifelong commitment.

I thank my colleagues on the Board and the Superintendent for being leaders in education and helping me throughout the year with advice and encouragement. I admire all of you and I think that it's important for our community to realize that all of our Board members share the same commitment to education and to hearing the voice of our students through their elected representatives.

I thank my mother, who has served the very crucial role of managing my public image this year by watching the televised board meetings and telling me to sit up, speak more, and stop conversing with my neighbors.

I thank my friends who have been very supportive of me and my endless litany of engagements, especially Barun Aryal and Stephen Demarais who drove me across the county numerous times.

I thank my teachers, who have showed me superhuman understanding and patience, especially when it comes to deadlines.

I thank my SGA advisors over the years, especially Rondai Ravilous, whom I have given more gray hairs than twenty years of teaching and parenting combined.

I thank the Board Staff, led by Mr. George Margolies, who went out of their way on many occasions to make me feel welcome at the Board and to support my endeavors on behalf of students.

Finally, I thank the students of Montgomery County for giving me the privilege and honor of serving as their elected representative. It is my sincere hope that the progress we have made over the past year will be continued and built upon for many years to come.

Thank you.”

Re: **COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS AND THE SUPERINTENDENT**

Board members welcomed Ms. Horvitz and thanked Mr. Johnson for his work on the Board of Education and wished him well in all his future endeavors.

Re: **PRESENTATION TO MR. JOHNSON**

On behalf of the members of the Board, Ms. Cox presented Mr. Johnson with memorabilia of his service on the Board of Education.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m. A reception followed in the auditorium.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

JDW:gr