



## Maryland Association of Student Councils

Maryland State Board of Education August Meeting  
Written Testimony

## Background:

Some of you may remember discussions at the 2019 February Executive Board meeting with regards to not having an Executive Director for MASC, and unfortunately, that is still a problem we are facing as an organization and we are asking for your help as we advocate for the Executive Director position to be posted.

This part-time pin position would allow the role of Executive director to be a permanent and sustainable one and not one of the contractual positions which has no sustainability and permanence.

As background history on the Executive Director, the MASC Executive Director was originally hired under the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP), which was the Principals union and later became a full-time, on loan, pin position under the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) meaning it was a permanent and sustainable position.

However, in 2008 due to budget constraints, MSDE lost pins and the MASC Executive Director was one of those pins. Select members of MSDE youth development branch then absorbed the duties of MASC during the 2008-2009 school year and in 2009 a new Executive Director was appointed on a part-time contractual 10-month basis. This part-time contractual position includes very little pay for what generally ends up being a job that requires more hours than what the position itself lists. This makes it almost impossible to find an Executive Director who can even remotely live off of being paid so little to do so much work.

In 2018 after Ms. Olivia Keithley, the 2017-18 Executive Director, left, MSDE did not hire an Executive Director despite there being several qualified candidates for the position, citing that the candidates lacked experience. Though Ms. Keithley was an incredible Executive Director, many found this reasoning confusing seeing as she was only a graduate student and aside from being an alumna in student council, hadn't had any advisor experience either.

MASC went on the 2018-19 school year without an Executive Director but later hired Mrs. Crawford to be the Acting Executive Director. MSDE promised Mrs. Crawford that the position would be posted in early July and that a 2019-20 Executive Director would be hired. However, due to issues with procurement, MSDE cited having trouble posting the position, pushing back the time we could get an Executive Director further and further.

MASC is an organization that we all love and have been greatly impacted by and in order to keep MASC's 73-year-long legacy and impact alive for future generations to come, it is imperative that we advocate for permanence and sustainability in our Executive Director position. We ask that the Maryland State Board of Education see that MSDE hires an Executive Director for the Maryland Association of Student Councils.

Your MASC Officers,

Bryce Awono	Jesse Harris, Jr.	Maggie Rathgeb	Adhvayith Sriram
President	1st Vice President	2nd Vice President	Treasurer

Claire Cabral, Baltimore County:

The Maryland Association of Student Councils (MASC) has been a part of my life for 3 years and has influenced me greatly, helping me grow as a leader and become more experienced with things such as public speaking, going outside my comfort zone, and acquainting myself with new people. The organization and the people within it are aspiring and push me to do my best each and every day.

I attended my first MASC event in 6th grade, which was the Ocean City Statewide Convention. It was a fascinating experience, because I got to meet so many wonderful students from around the state instead of remaining in my own county. There were so many workshops I was able to experience and I was able to take away so many new skills from the student leaders and advisors there. MASC inspired me to run for a position in my own county, which I was able to accomplish in my seventh grade year.

MASC is such a unique organization and has been for 73 years. I know so many students around Maryland who depend on MASC to keep them busy and to try new experiences. The networking amazes me, and I cannot wait to see future generations pursue opportunities through MASC.

Conor Curran, Anne Arundel County:

My name is Conor Curran and I'm a proud student leader in Anne Arundel County and President of The Chesapeake Regional Association Of Student Councils. I'm writing you today urging you to hire an Executive Director for The Maryland Association Of Student Councils. This position is so much more than a title or a payroll.

The Executive Director runs the business aspects of a student run organization. This is vital for day to day operations so that MASC can teach students across this great state leadership skills. I've been fortunate to take part in wonderful events that MASC has hosted. I always meet student leaders from across the state and form friendships with them.

One memory I vividly have is when we wanted to eliminate class rank in Anne Arundel County. Our Student Member of the Board at the time, Vice President Josie Urrrea, got students from surrounding counties to testify in support of her resolution. It was a beautiful thing to see. When we as student leaders are trying to create change, we will always have each others back. Just like the Executive Director will do for the trailblazers of this state.

Sincerely,  
Conor Curran  
CRASC President  
AMMPS AACO Coordinator

Jesse Harris, Saint Mary's County:

Hello State Board Members,

My name is Jesse Harris, Jr, I am from St. Mary's County and I serve as the 1st Vice President of the Maryland Association of Student Councils(MASC). I am writing to you today in regard to the position of Executive Director within our organization. Since 2007, we have been experiencing various changes and inconsistencies in the sustainability of this position with MSDE. Most recently, we went without an executive director last school year. There were several applicants for the position, however none of them were accepted after the contractual position was posted late. Although we made it through the year, it was only due to the dedication and initiative of the Assistant Executive Director, Karen Crawford.

We organize today to advocate for an official part time pin position for our Executive Director. This would allow for sustainability in our organization as events, planning, and meetings are year round. This would open the application up to more applicants and require the position to be filled for every new year.

MASC is important to me because it provides the opportunity for student leaders from across the state to attain leadership and professional development as well as advocate for student related issues. We hold several events throughout the year and invite students from all across Maryland. Although MASC is a student led organization, the position of Executive Director is vital to the continuation of the growth and success that we have developed over the years.

I thank you for your time and hope that you will consider our organization's need for sustainability for the continued growth and development of the students of Maryland.

Sincerely,  
Jesse Harris, Jr.  
MASC 1st Vice President

Aisling Nay, Wicomico County:

Public Comment

08/27/19

To whom it may concern,

I, along with others representing MASC, am writing today to request that the Board of Education and MSDE make the Executive Director of MASC position into part-time pin position and to post the position up as soon as possible.

Having a pin position allows for a structure and persistence. Not only should the new candidates for the MASC Executive Director be fully aware of the responsibilities and undeniable hard work that comes with it, they should all be qualified enough to carry out such a task. However, MASC's previous Executive Director, Ms. Olivia Keithley, who left after the 2017-2018 school year, was more than qualified to direct such a large program, having only had student council experience, and no advisor experience under her belt. She exhibited a tremendous job while holding the Executive Director position. Many of the potential candidates are just as, or more qualified than Ms. Olivia Keithley, to direct such a large program.

There are more than plenty candidates to fill the Executive Board position, each with their own unique attributes to make them a great advisor. It would take your consideration to post the position as soon as possible, in order to immediately start selecting a new Executive Director with proper credentials. Though, this must be a part-time pin position, to allow for adequate sustainability.

Written Testimony

08/25/19

I first began my journey with MASC last Fall, when I first decided to run for Student Member of the Board. After failing to advance within the SMOB candidacy, I was warmly welcomed to MASC by the Executive Board, when I was asked to attend Legislative Session, held in February 2019. While there, I was able to discover the overwhelming presence of leadership for schools in Maryland. I was greatly informed of Regional SGAs, County SMOBs, and the awareness of MASC in the generally central part of Maryland. Later, I was able to take this information back with me to the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland, where I happen to reside with my family. With all of this newly gathered information, I then wrote an extremely long and detailed email to the Superintendent of Wicomico County Public Schools, as well as BOE members, and the County Council. Having done this, the Eastern Shore has invested time and effort into bringing awareness to MASC, as well as striving to bring stronger leadership.

MASC has allowed me to become more confident in myself, and to speak on behalf of what I believe needs changing for the betterment of students in my community. It has allowed

me to network freely with others in Maryland, to ultimately share new ideas and learn more. Lastly, I has allowed me to discover more about Public Advocacy, which I have grown to love, and would like to pursue in the future

Maggie Rathgeb:

The Maryland Association of Student Councils has ultimately changed my life. From the friends I've made to the skills I've learned, I owe so much to MASC.

First of all, MASC has taught me so much about leadership. Before I was apart of it, I was certainly involved with student government. But, I didn't develop a true passion for leadership until after joining MASC. Just the environment created by my fellow delegates makes me want to be more involved. MASC fosters an environment that creates an opportunity for growth within any student in the state of Maryland. Without it, I would not be the same leader within my school that jumps at the chance to help others and make change. I would not be as much of an outgoing person, nor would I have nearly as many occasions to experience the opportunity to network and learn from other student leaders.

All in all, The Maryland Association of Student Councils is an amazing group of student leaders truly making change in the state and in the lives of youth. I am beyond grateful for everything the Maryland Association of Student Councils has done for me.

Maggie Rathgeb  
8th Grade Northern Middle School  
MASC Second Vice President  
[maggie.rathgeb@mdstudentcouncils.org](mailto:maggie.rathgeb@mdstudentcouncils.org)

Gabrielle Ryder:

Good morning Board of Education, my name is Gabrielle Ryder and I am junior at Washington County Technical High School in Washington County. For the past three years, I have been honored with the opportunity to be involved with the Maryland Association of Student Councils as a delegate and now a member of their executive board as one of their Mental Health Affairs Coordinators. Through MASC, I have been able to share the mental health program I created in Washington County with students state-wide and have inspired some to do similar things in their own counties. While that accomplishment is extremely important to me, the thing that I am most grateful for is the opportunity to learn from so many influential students and adults. During my first year of involvement, MASC was lead by Ms. Olivia Keithley and Mrs. Karen Crawford. Aided by Mrs. Crawford's four years as Assistant Executive Director, Ms. Keithley used her experience as student council alumna to develop MASC where it is today. The adults of MASC take care of the business side, as well as provide guidance to students. It is through people such as Mrs. Crawford, in such demanding positions, that I have learned to lead through loving, whether it be through what I am doing, the people involved, or the purpose.

The 2019-2020 school year is underway, marking the start of the second year MASC has been without an Executive Director. By creating a part-time pin position in the Maryland Department of Education for an Executive Director, this eliminates the possibility of unsustainability through a contractual position. Mrs. Crawford has done an incredible job these past two years as Acting Executive Director, but it should not have been all up to her. After Ms. Keithley left MASC in 2018, the MSDE did not hire a replacement even with an array of qualified candidates. The expectations for qualifications and experience should be clear to avoid confusion similar to that situation. The MSDE needs to create a part-time pin position and needs to post the position as soon as possible for the smoothest transition into this year. Through the sustainability and permanence of this position, MASC can continue to develop the leaders of tomorrow. Thank you.

Dominic Phillips-Moore

Hello! My name is Dominic Phillips-Moore, I'm a proud student leader from Frederick County, and the Western Divisional Liaison of the Maryland Association of Student Councils.

In my two years that I have been participating in the events that MASC has hosted, the issue of the inability to find an Executive Director has always come up, While I understand the credentials and the logistics that come with the Executive Director position, it is essential for the Maryland State Department of Education to work efficiently to provide not only MASC but the hundreds of student leaders within this great state with an on-going paid Executive Director position.

As a MASC executive board member, I work very closely with our current acting executive director, her guidance and support not only is crucial to ensure I properly handle my job to its fullest, but to make sure that our organization as a whole is successful. With this being said, having an Executive Director will positively impact the overall function of our organization, and that we fulfill our purpose as an organization dedicated to empowering the students of Maryland.

The MASC Officers and Executive Board, along with the persistent student leaders across the State of Maryland are ready to take the next step in furthering our leadership skills, now it's up to **you** to hear the 897,000 students of our state, to fund an Executive Director for MASC. I hope that we can make the right decision, thank you for your time.

Kerra Miller:

MASC has provided me with an opportunity to lead as well as learn from others. I have responsibilities to hold myself to. The different workshops and conferences teach me how to be a leader and teach people. I like MASC because it isn't throwing you in the dark but actually giving you guidance that you can then share with others. I love meeting all the new people that I would otherwise never be in contact with. I have made some really good friends at MASC.



maryland state education association

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**EDUCATORS  
TOGETHER**

August 27, 2019

Good morning President Sumpter, Vice President Halle, and members of the board.

I am Cheryl Bost and I represent over 74,000 dedicated educators who, as we speak, are preparing schools, lessons, bus routes, and schedules; every aspect of welcoming students to our public schools to ensure they have a successful year.

I have two topics I'd like to share some thoughts on, but because I only have three minutes, I am giving you a leave-behind on the discipline task force for you to please review prior to its appearance on your agenda today.

As you vote on emergency regulations for State Board of Education Teacher Member Election (13A.07.13), we have recommendations for your consideration.

**Recommendation: Remove “lead teacher” and “master teacher” from definitions and candidate eligibility guidance.**

Rationale: Defining “lead teacher” and “master teacher” as eligibility for a candidate is prematurely placing in regulations terms that, as shown in the PowerPoint, are terms from the Kirwan Commission that have yet to be implemented or negotiated in any district and the commission itself has yet to finalize. The creation of a career ladder and any such named positions is heavily reliant on full funding of the Kirwan Commission recommendations and anticipated for later in the phase-in of the recommendations. The law is clear that a candidate must be actively teaching, period. The title of the position held has no bearing on eligibility. There are many positions throughout each district that could be named and defined, but that would take pages. Additionally, we strongly believe that the naming the positions of “lead teacher” and “master teacher,” as defined, usurps the eligibility requirements as set in statute by setting two tiers of eligibility.

**Recommendation: Remove, “(e) Confirmation from the human resources director, or equivalent position, of the teacher’s current school verifying that the teacher is actively teaching and has completed a criminal background check;” from the required nomination packet.**

Rationale: In most districts human resources departments are under staffed and are currently working to fill vacancies, address the requirements of new teachers, recertifications, and the like. Any inquiry to an HR department usually takes, minimally two to three weeks turnaround time. The efficiency or inefficiency of a district department should not prevent a legally qualified candidate from being deemed eligible to run for this position. Especially when the state department could easily retrieve this information.

**Recommendation: Remove, “(g) The signature of the local school system superintendent or head of a nonpublic school’s legal authority acknowledging the need to provide classroom coverage and other support for an educator if he or she is nominated to serve on the State Board of Education”**



Rationale: We strongly believe that this violates the written and intent of the law which clearly outlines eligibility for candidates. Approval of any superior or superintendent is not an eligibility requirement in statute. This allows local superintendents to screen, block, or in other ways hand pick who they wish to be eligible, or not, for the seat. The current State Board members were not required to get approval from their employer to be appointed to the board. Since the passage of this law, a superintendent must allow an eligible candidate to serve and we would expect them to not impose punitive measures as a result of a teacher serving as a board member.

Based on previous public comments by current board members and the overbearing nomination requirements outlined in the proposed regulations, the lack of acceptance and openness to have a teacher, a person trusted with the well-being and education of our most precious children, is extremely disturbing. You celebrate and thank our teachers of the year and award winners yet act as if how dare any teacher serve on the state board. I hope you will rectify this hostility towards your incoming colleague, whose dedication to public education and the students of Maryland is no less than that of anyone in this room.