

Alex O'Sullivan
Student Representative

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To My D.C. State Board of Education Family,

I do not know where to begin. Typically expressing my thoughts and emotions through words has been my thing on the State Board. But I can't lie, figuring out how to say this has been a struggle. I guess what I am trying to say is that words cannot describe everything the past two and a half years on the Board has meant to me, and I know this letter will probably not do me full justice. But I will try anyway.

First, I want to thank everyone on the State Board who has guided me and befriended me throughout this process. I have had the incredible pleasure to work with some very inspiring public servants whose deepest love is for their community and for the teachers, parents, and students they represent. I will never forget the experiences I made with the members who make up the Board. From co-drafting a resolution to the small-talk before meetings to the chance run-ins on the weekends to the hilarious text conversations and even the most-spirited debates and everything in between. I deeply cherish the relationships I built with each of you over the past couple years, and I am confident that at least a couple of you (looking at you, Frazier) will continue to stay in touch and mentor me throughout my future endeavors.



I want to thank the Student Advisory Committee. At the beginning of my first term, meetings were in-person, and I knew each of your faces. I just could not remember your names. Now by my third term, meetings are virtual, and many new high schoolers have joined, so I know each of your names, but for some, I only know black squares as your faces -- I am sure many teachers can relate. But in full sincerity, thank you so much to each of you. I have grown so much as this committee has grown, and with every step the SAC took, I feel I took a step right with it. My proudest memory as a Student Representative will forever be of the Distance Learning Town Hall Series we put together during virtual learning, because seeing so many of you speak your truth and frustrations to power gave me an overwhelming feeling of pride and fulfillment, and I hope those events meant as much to you as they do to me. There are a couple of members still on the Committee who joined when I joined two years ago, and it only hurts a little to know they have outlasted me on the SAC on this journey. I want to also thank Dayja, Shayla, Ean, Juliana, and Skye-Ali for working with me on various parts of my journey as a Student Representative and pushing me to grow as a leader and co-chair of this group. I look forward to seeing the tremendous work the Committee has in store and reading about the accomplishments of its members at some point in the future. I feel confident and assured knowing the Committee is in good hands with Juliana and Skye-Ali as they lead the SAC forward.

I want to thank John-Paul and all of the staffers on the State Board. John-Paul does not get the credit he deserves for everything that he does, and without him, none of this would be possible for me. He has been anything and everything I could ask for as a leader, as a mentor, as a coach, and certainly as an Executive Director. He has been nothing but a helping-hand and a backbone for support throughout my time on the Board, and he is one of the most fun and kind people to talk to.



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Alex, Caitlin, Milayo, Darren, Rhoma, and all the other staffers, fellows, and interns who have worked with the State Board have been nothing but the same. Each of you have made my job as a Student Representative that much easier, and I could always count on any of you whenever I needed it. I wish each of you nothing but the best.

To my parents, thank you for bearing with me all of those Wednesday evenings where I stayed in my room until past 9 PM during the frequently late running public meetings (I somehow didn’t once miss a homework assignment on those nights, but there were some close calls). Thank you for providing me with endless support, advice, and love so that I could maintain my civic duty and uphold my oath of office.

I have learned and grown so much over the past 2 and a half years. This experience has instilled in me qualities that have made me a better person and leader. One of the biggest issues I championed on the Board was that of student voice, and a big reason this happens to be is because the State Board helped me find mine; and to that I am most thankful.

I came back for a third term on the Board mostly to help mentor the new Student Representatives that joined as we expanded from two to four, and to ensure the progress of the Student Advisory Committee continued forward. I can confidently say both have happened, and that I have just about checked the last boxes off my bucket list.

But it is time now that I resign as a Student Representative, and that I take the space I need for myself before I head off to face the future endeavors that await me. I have given this position my all. That is the promise I made when I first joined the Board, and it is the promise I know I have upheld.

The only things left now is my final public meeting this Wednesday on the 15th, my final SAC meeting on the 20th, and my final day as a Student Representative on the DC State Board of Education on December 31st, 2021.

I did not come to this decision to step down lightly, but to quote a certain Pulitzer-Prize winning contemporary genius: “There’s beauty in completion, and always faith in the unknown”.

Best Regards,
Alex O’Sullivan