

Good afternoon Senator Looney and Representative Janowski, members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee, I'm pleased to appear before this distinguished committee as Governor Rell's nominee to the State Board of Education. My name is Neha Mehta and I have been serving as a Student State Board of Education member for the past seven months.

Throughout my high school career, I have discovered my passion for student government. Whether it is organizing prom, devising new graduation requirements, encouraging a safe school environment, or setting up blood drives, student government has always intrigued me. Along with several leadership positions in school, and serving on the Suffield Board of Education, I was also given the honor to serve on the State Student Advisory Council on Education for the past two years. When I applied for my current position as Student Member, I felt enthusiastic and passionate about the possible opportunity. After a stringent process, it was to my extreme delight to be notified that I was selected for the position.

From the time I moved to this country, I have had quite the journey. I have lived in many different states and attended many different schools because of my father's occupation. However, my formative years have all taken place in the State of Connecticut. I attended Enfield Public Schools for elementary and middle school, and I have attended Suffield High School for my high school career. The changes in population, diversity, curriculum, and environment have all helped me construct my opinion and thoughts on education. Most importantly, my Indian background has helped me understand education on a global level. My parents' educational experiences and the schooling of my relatives have aided me in gaining the "whole picture." I understand the differences in educational systems, and the necessity to always strive for better education.

My various student experiences and genuine interest in government have allowed me to voice my honest opinion. I have found the experience of this position extremely rewarding and educational. I am made aware of the issues that affect other districts and I am also educated on the complexities of the educational system. The Connecticut Board of Education has provided me with extraordinary opportunities, such as speaking with Student Members across the nation through the National Association of State Boards of Education. The issues the Board faces now are not easy but I realize how much passion and hard work is put into every task. I am fortunate to sit among such a group of wonderful, encouraging, and knowledgeable individuals.

I would like to thank you for your time and I will be more than happy to answer any questions you may have for me. Thank You.