

Student-member for State Board of Education Testimony

Clayton Potter

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Good afternoon Senator Looney, Representative Janowski, Senator Fasano, Representative Camillo and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My name is Clayton Potter and it is an honor and privilege to be appointed as a student member of the State Board of Education by Governor Dannel P. Malloy.

My sincere thanks to this committee for the opportunity to appear before you to speak to my desire to serve on the State Board of Education.

Education has always been a focus point of my life; being a student is my job. All my life I've had straight A's, I am a consistent honor roll student, and a member of the National Honor Society. Since my sophomore year of high school I have taken seven AP and college courses. I maintain a 4.3 GPA and I'm ranked seventh in my class. At school I am Class President, a baseball player, and a part of the More Than Words Leadership Program. Additionally, I am a Peer Educator of the Students Teaching About Responsible Sexuality (STARS) program at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England. Most recently, I was appointed President of the Kids and families Impacting Disease through Science (KIDS-CT) group in CT which is an advisory group of children, adolescents and families focused on understanding, communicating and improving the process of medical innovation for children.

Before my principal encouraged me to apply for the SBE position in the spring of 2013, I was unaware that students served on the board, but I was excited about the opportunity. Since kindergarten I've been enrolled in the New London Public School System, which is considered an urban priority school district. It is currently being overseen by special master Dr. Steven Adamowski and is being run

under a Strategic Operating Plan until 2016. As one might expect, I have experienced classrooms that are far from productive learning environments. However, throughout high school I've attended the Science and Tech Magnet School of Southeastern CT where I learned to love some of my classes for the first time. My class of 2014 raised the CAPT scores as sophomores and we're continuing to raise the standards as seniors. Now, New London is becoming an all-magnet school district. We were a pilot district of the new SEED teacher evaluation plans, and we are continuing to implement the new Common Core learning objectives as our entire school system is being turned around. As a successful student coming from a priority school district, I bring good insight to the SBE because I am a part of one of the school systems we are working hard to turn around. I can offer opinions and suggestions that consider the reality of unsatisfactory situations, while trying to attain certain expected goals. This position allows me to be involved in the processes that assure my peers across the state are getting the best education possible. Since I want the best education for myself and for others, I'm grateful to serve on this board.

In closing, serving as a student member on the State Board of Education provides the opportunity to bridge the gap between professional expertise in the design of a product and consumer insight. We serve as representatives of our fellow students' concerns and we keep their interests in mind when contributing to the constant changes being made to improve our schools' academic criteria, safety protocols, and school policies and climates. Coming from a school district where I was not always in an exceptional learning environment makes this job all the more important to me, because I want students to enjoy school as much as possible. I'm honored to be able to help make sure that every child is receiving the best education possible by sitting on the SBE.

Thank you all for this opportunity, your time, and consideration. I would be glad to answer any questions at this time.

Have a good day.