

Good afternoon Senator Looney, Representative Janowski, Senator Williams, Representative Lopes, members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My name is Jake Colavolpe and it is an honor to be appointed a student member of the State Board of Education by Governor Malloy. Many thanks to this committee for the opportunity to appear before you to speak to my desire to serve on the Board of Education.

I am a resident of East Haven, and a senior at The Sound School in New Haven. I have been incredibly lucky to be surrounded by such amazing and innovative faculty and peers for the past four years.

My first experience as the educator in the classroom – and not the student – was with Planned Parenthood of Southern New England. Three years ago I started my work with this organization as a member of their peer educator program. Since I have begun my work there, I have taught many workshops on a range of topics – from general sexual education, to understanding the media’s effects on ones body image – which has given me valuable classroom experience, particularly on unconventional topics. This, ultimately, fueled my passion for education.

For two years, I have served as the president of Sound School’s student government. We, as a body, have tackled many educational issues at our school, most recently Sound School’s relationship with AP courses. I have also worked closely with Superintendent Harries to effect positive change in New Haven schools, particularly in regards to the implementation and execution of the Common Core State Standards in our district; to be mindful of difficulties in major overhaul, but also pushing forward to help our students get the best education they can.

My experience with education has shown me one thing if nothing else - the opportunities that I have had are not indicative of those of other students in our state. This is undoubtedly a problem, and I wish to work on promoting the highest level of equity possible for all students. I believe that each and every one of our students is capable of reaching high standards with an effective education and the necessary support. This is why I wish to serve on the State Board of Education.

Thank you for your time.

Jake W. Colavolpe