

**OPENING STATEMENT BEFORE THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE NOMINATIONS  
COMMITTEE**

**Timothy J. Noel Sullivan  
Nominee for Student Member of the Connecticut State Board of Education  
February 18, 2016**

Good Morning Senator Duff, Representative Janowski, Senator Kane, Representative Buck-Taylor, and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My name is TJ Noel-Sullivan, and it is an honor to be appointed a student member of the State Board of Education by Governor Malloy. I'd like to thank this committee for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am a lifelong resident of Hartford, and attend Classical Magnet, which is a Hartford Public School. Classical has had a tremendous influence in shaping who I am today, not only academically, but also culturally. Being at a magnet school has exposed me to a very diverse group of stories and backgrounds. Also, through athletics and academic competitions, I have the opportunity to make friends with students from some of the highest performing, and lowest performing schools in the state. I've found these experiences to be invaluable during my time so far on the board, as we discuss issues of equity.

While there is nothing quite like it, I learned in my first few meetings that my past experiences made me well prepared to serve on the Board. I've been very active in my student government and School Governance Council, where I learned a lot about the intricacies of education. I also serve on the Hartford Board of Education, where I have learned that questions can be a very powerful tool as a student member.

The main reason that I applied for this position is because I believe that consumer feedback is an essential part of improvement. I am extremely grateful that the Governor and Legislature have given students the opportunity to voice their opinions about such crucial issues. As a student who took both the SBAC and SAT, I was proud to share my opinion when it came before the board this year. As I see it, my role is not to look out for my interests, or those of my school, but to look out for the best interests of every student in the State of Connecticut.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.