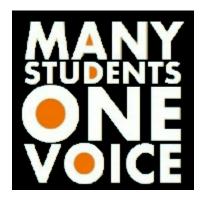
SMOB Election Voter Guide

Created by the Howard County Association of Student Councils (HCASC)



This packet was created by the Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC) of HCASC to help the student voters of HCPSS make an informed decision. HCASC does not endorse any candidate. HCASC serves to support and empower all students of HCPSS.

Meet Your Candidates

Lamia Ayaz



School: Howard High School Grade: 11th Email: <u>lamia4smob@gmail.com</u> Lamia's Canvas Page - Click to Learn More about Them

Antonio Clay-Hardy



School: Wilde Lake High School Grade: 10th Email: <u>Antonio4smob@gmail.com</u> <u>Antonio's Canvas Page - Click to Learn More about Them</u> The following questionnaire contains questions that we asked to both candidates via email. We have not in any way altered their responses, so the responses you see are their exact responses. Each candidate was limited to a maximum of 150 words for each question.

1. What do you think is the *most* important issue HCPSS is facing currently?

The most important issue that There are so many vital issues facing HCPSS but when I think HCPSS is facing is a deterioration in student mental health. There is so about the most important issue facing our schools is the lack of much pressure on students to perform well. Many are juggling mental health professionals in our academics, sports, extracurricular schools. Most of the issues that we activities, and jobs, all while trying deal with on a day-to-day basis stem to maintain a personal and social from how we deal with and respond life. Compound this with worries to our mental health problems. If about standardized test scores and we want to improve how students college admissions, it's no surprise feel when they walk into school, that one Howard County survey then it starts with having more professionals in school dedicated to found that 1 in 4 high school students met the criteria for the improvement of student lives. depression. There is a lack of resources and support for struggling students, leaving many to feel unheard and isolated. Lamia Ayaz Antonio Clay-Hardy

2. For the issue you outlined in Question 1, what steps do you plan on taking to combat it if you are elected?

The first step I propose to combat this deterioration is to survey students about their major stressors and what changes they'd like to see in the school system. Do students have trouble accessing their counselor? Do they see bullying in their school remain unaddressed? Do they feel like they are being taught to memorize rather than taught to learn? This feedback can be shared with Board of Education members and Central Office staff to make concrete change occur. I promise to advocate for action to address these issues, not just provide insincere platitudes.	To combat the ongoing issue of the lack of mental health professionals in school, I will dedicate myself to always making sure we are continuing to have an ongoing conversation about how mental health is affecting students in our community. The solution to every problem starts with talking about the problem and talking about the facts. And the facts are, that too many students are taking their own lives and they are doing so because they don't have anyone to turn to and talk about what they're going through. We need to also educate parents on how to not only deal with but understand the battles their children are going through.
- Lamia Ayaz	- Antonio Clay-Hardy

3. How will you ensure that the students of HCPSS are represented in your decisions?

To ensure that students of HCPSS	Having student input on all issues is
are represented in my decisions, I	incredibly important to me and to
will engage with students from all	the SMOB position in general. We

backgrounds. This entails doing	need to make it more accessible for
school and community visits,	students to not only understand the
welcoming conversations with	issues at hand but be able to
students and their families who	advocate for their own personal
might not have historically felt they	stances on those issues. I will use
had a voice in the county	Google Forms and surveys sent out
decision-making process. This could	to schools based on current
be families where English is not the	legislation in front of the Board of
primary language at home, or	Ed. But also I want to visit every
students who have tried to express	high school and middle school not
their concerns but struggled to find	just once, but multiple times to be
people willing to hear them. All	able to have those personal and very
perspectives are important in	crucial and informative
making an informed vote; at the end	conversations with students.
of the day, the SMOB is a	
representative of the students and	
their beliefs.	
- Lamia Ayaz	- Antonio Clay-Hardy

4. What experiences or lessons have you learned/had in your time attending HCPSS schools that led you to run for SMOB this year? In other words, why are you running?

Earlier this year, I was given the	Being a part of Howard County
opportunity to testify at the	schools has taught me that we truly
Maryland General Assembly in	do have issues that need solving,
support of a bill banning the sale of	from rampant drug use to the
diet pills to minors. At first, I didn't	inequitable distribution and access
expect much from a 2-minute	to items and resources they need. As
testimony. However, I found that the	a member of Wilde Lake's Speech
politicians in the room really	and Debate Team and having to
listened when students came up to	compete against other schools in the

speak. We were able to discuss an	county with budgets triple ours,
issue that was personally important	showed me that we can't expect
to me and had impacted so many of	every school to perform up to their
my friends and family members.	potential if we don't give them the
That was the first time I realized	resources or the opportunity to do
that the things I had to say could	so. As SMOB, I want to make sure
actually impact decision-making,	that we give students the best shot at
and I want to bring that back to the	succeeding and closing the
Board of Education. If there is any	opportunity gap that is so large
issue that students are facing and I	across so many of our schools.
have the opportunity to right it, I	
will do so without a moment of	
hesitation.	
- Lamia Ayaz	- Antonio Clay-Hardy

5. In your opinion, what role should the Student Member of the Board serve in HCPSS? In other words, why is the SMOB an important position in our school system?

The Student Member of the Board	The SMOB ought to play an
should be a familiar face in HCPSS	extremely crucial role on the Board
and a person who students feel	of Education. Not many people
comfortable reaching out to. At the	realize this but students are actually
end of the day, it is students who are	the largest stakeholder in our school
impacted by the decisions being	system, meaning we represent the
made at the Board of Education; it	largest group of anybody that is a
only makes sense that they have	member of HCPSS. And so with
someone who can represent their	that, we need to make sure that we
concerns and their beliefs in a room	have a person on the Board who
full of adults. The position is	will advocate for ALL, not just
especially unique in that the HCPSS	some, of the students that make up
SMOB has voting rights, unlike	one of the best school systems in the

many other counties. The student's	Country.
vote on an issue counts just as much	
as any other member's, and that	
speaks volumes to the power that	
students hold.	
- Lamia Ayaz	- Antonio Clay-Hardy