



# **Maryland Youth Advisory Council**

## **2015-2016 Annual Report**

August 30, 2016

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**Larry Hogan**  
Governor

**Boyd K. Rutherford**  
Lt. Governor

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Executive Director  
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MSAR # 10854

## Acknowledgements



On behalf of the Maryland Youth Advisory Council (MYAC), I am pleased to present the Council's 2015-2016 Annual Report. The report has been developed by the members of the MYAC Executive Board and represents the activities and priorities of the council during the 2015-2016 year. I would like to thank all members of the council for their service, dedication, and enthusiasm in representing the youth of Maryland.

Alison N. Smith  
Youth Co-Chair  
Maryland Youth Advisory Council

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# Background and Mission of the Council

## **BACKGROUND**

The Maryland Youth Advisory Council (the Council) was established through the General Assembly in 2008 (Chapter 559, Acts of 2008 and Chapter 69, Acts of 2009) to ensure that Maryland youth are given the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations regarding public policies and programs that affect their future and to take a leadership role in creating meaningful change.

Members are appointed by the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Delegates, the Maryland Association of Student Councils, University System of Maryland Student Council, and the Maryland Higher Education Commission Student Advisory Council.

All youth members must be 14-22 years of age, serve a one year term (September 1 - August 30), and cannot serve more than two consecutive terms.

## **MISSION:**

As a coalition of diverse young advocates and leaders from across the State, we, the Maryland Youth Advisory Council address relevant issues by influencing legislation, spreading public awareness and serving as a liaison between youth and policymakers.

## **VISION:**

We strive to be an effective voice that:

- Incites change for the betterment of Maryland youth,
- Ensures equal opportunity for all youth regardless of background or circumstance,
- Initiates political conversations with youth,
- Educates youth on political issues, and
- Is respected by legislators and other stakeholders on youth issues.

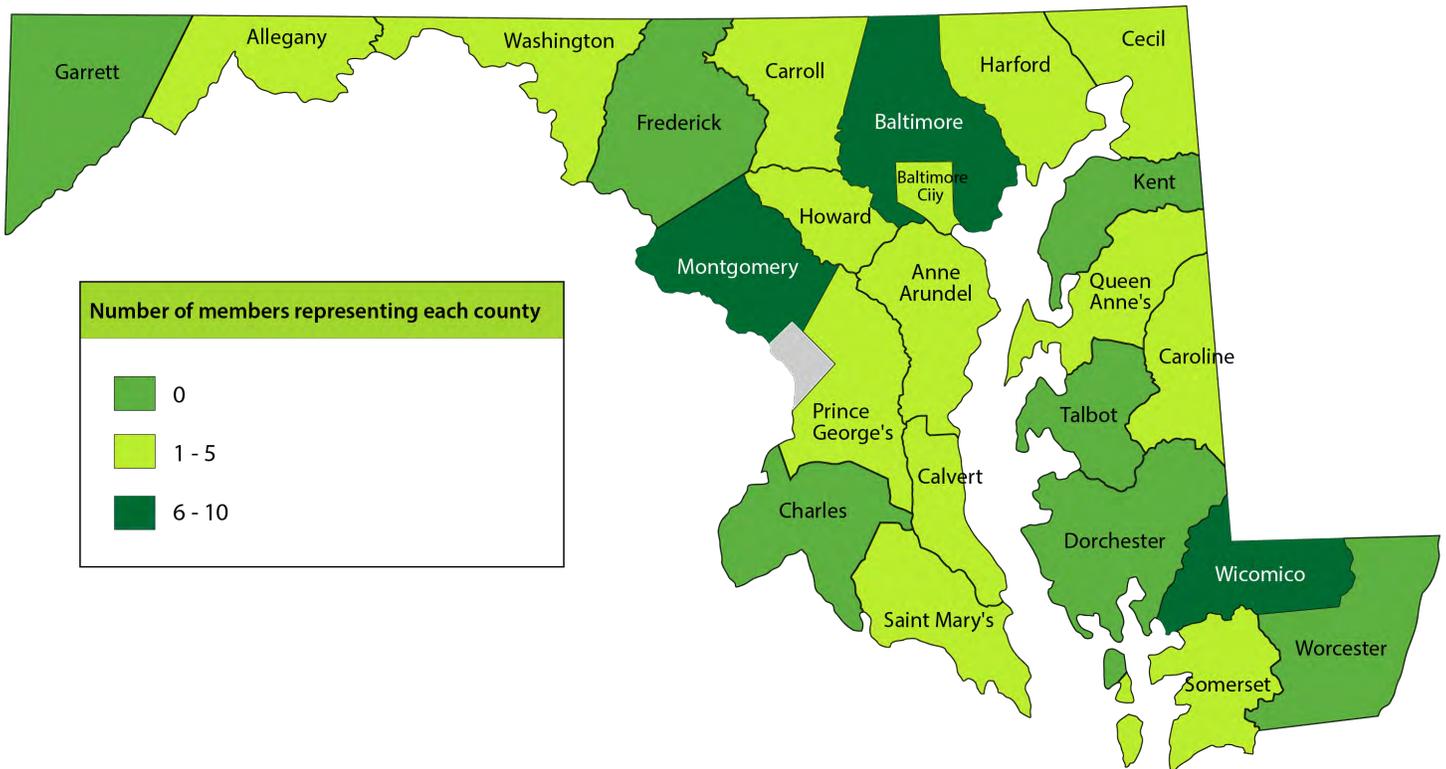
## **RESPONSIBILITY:**

- Holding at least 4 meetings a year;
- Holding at least one public meeting on issues of importance to youth (topics can include: education, a safe learning environment, employment opportunities, increasing youth participation in government, healthcare access and quality of care, substance abuse and underage drinking, emotional and physical well-being, the environment, poverty, homelessness, youth access to services, suicide prevention, and educational accessibility issues for students with disabilities);
- Recommending one legislative proposal;
- Providing testimony before legislative bodies on youth issues;
- Conducting a public awareness campaign to raise awareness about the Council among Maryland youth; and
- Providing an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly.

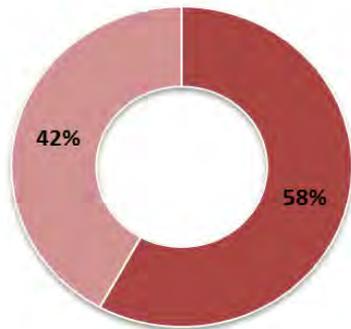
## 2015-2016 Council at a Glance

The 2015-2016 Council is composed of 50 members, representing 17 counties, 32 high schools, and 17 colleges/universities. The majority of the Council was female (58%) with 42% male. Of the 50 members, 18 are returning second-years members and 32 are first-year members.

The five Maryland Higher Education Commission Student Advisory Council appointments remained unfilled. During the council year, four members resigned their position on the Council, two of which were filled during the year.

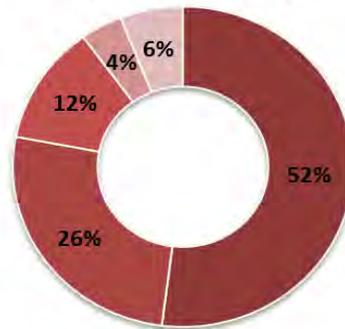


**Gender**



■ Female ■ Male

**Race/Ethnicity**



■ White ■ African American ■ Asian ■ Hispanic ■ Other

# 2015-2016 Maryland Youth Advisory Council Roster

## 2015-2016 MARYLAND YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL CO-CHAIRS

**Senate Co-Chair** (appointed by the President of the Senate) - Senator Roger Manno

**House Co-Chair** (appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates) - Vacant

**Youth Co-Chair** (elected by Council members to a one-year term) - Alison Smith

**Governor's Office for Children Co-Chair** (appointed by the Governor) - Christina Drushel Williams

## 2015-2016 MARYLAND YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BOARD (elected by Council members)

**Youth Co-Chair**—Alison Smith

**Youth Vice Chair**—Matthew Saxton

**Secretary**—Zachary Caplan

**Legislative Committee Chair**—Juwana Blocker

**Public Awareness Committee Chair**—Michael Keffer

**Executive Board Members**—Jessica Bishai, Kimberly Carter, Calvin Crunkleton, Jonathan Dayton, Grace Hageman, Tyler Hagen, Emma Middleton, Antonio Morrell, Nicholas Schmitz, Anna Selbrede, Eric Zhao

## APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR

### **Appointed in 2014**

Grace Hageman—Harford County—Aberdeen High School

Tierra Harris—St. Mary's County—College of Southern Maryland

Gabrielle Nelson—Carroll County—Century High School

Sydney Parker—Montgomery County—Morgan State University

Anna Selbrede—Howard County—River Hill High School

### **Appointed in 2015**

Dennis Barnes, Jr.—Baltimore City—St. Francis Academy

Zachary Caplan—Baltimore County—Towson High School

Nicholas Caplan—Cecil County—North East High School

Shanna Daniels—Baltimore County—Parkville High School

Noelle Dayal—Montgomery County—The Holton-Arms School

David Evans, Jr.—Somerset County

Kayla Knotts—Caroline County—North Caroline High School

Casey Levy—Baltimore County—Franklin High School

Patricia Miller—Wicomico County—Salisbury University

Antonio Morrell—Prince George’s County—Prince George’s Community College

Joseph Vogel—Montgomery County—George Washington University

### **APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES**

#### **Appointed in 2014**

Christian Hooker—Anne Arundel County—Glenelg County Day School

Ian McGrory—Queen Anne’s County—Queen Annes’s County High School

Alison Smith—Harford County—Edgewood High School

Sydney Young—Howard County—Howard High School

#### **Appointed in 2015**

Nora Corasaniti—Anne Arundel County—University of Maryland Baltimore County

Jonathan Dayton—Allegany County—Mountain Ridge High School

Tyler Hagen—Baltimore County—McDaniel College

Viraj Paul—Montgomery County—Poolesville High School

### **APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE**

#### **Appointed in 2015**

Sarah Ahmed—Howard County—Howard Community College

Kimberly Carter—Anne Arundel County—Our Lady of Good Council

Calvin Crunkleton—Calvert County

Maya Lapinski—Baltimore County—Dulaney High School

Connor Mull—Wicomico County—James M. Bennett High School

Tahseen Rasheed—St. Mary’s County—St. Mary’s College of Maryland

Jamaka Thomas—Prince George’s County—Elizabeth Seton High School

Savannah Williams—Montgomery County—Walt Whitman High School

### **APPOINTED BY THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT COUNCILS**

#### **Appointed in 2014**

Inuri Abeysekara—Montgomery County—Sherwood High School

Maggie Chen—Montgomery County—Poolesville High School

Alisha Desai—Montgomery County—Winston Churchill High School

Michael Keffler—Calvert County—Huntingtown High School  
Abigail King—Cecil County—Rising Sun High School  
Thorne Lindsey—Allegany County—Allegany High School  
Matthew Saxton—Carroll County—Century High School  
Nicholas Schmitz—Calvert County—Huntingtown High School  
Eric Zhao—Anne Arundel County—Meade Senior High School

**Appointed in 2015**

Jessica Bishai—Baltimore County—Dulaney High School  
Juwana Blocker—Prince George’s County—Parkdale High School  
Danielle Craige—Somerset County—Washington Academy and High School  
Emma Gilligan—St. Mary’s County—Leonardtwn High School  
Ryan Pickrel—Carroll County—Century High School  
Hollyann Wettstein— Washington County—North Hagerstown High School

**APPOINTED BY THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND STUDENT COUNCIL**

**Appointed in 2015**

Julian Brown, Baltimore County—Towson University  
Emma Middleton—Baltimore County—Towson University  
Kirsten Wach—Howard County—Towson University

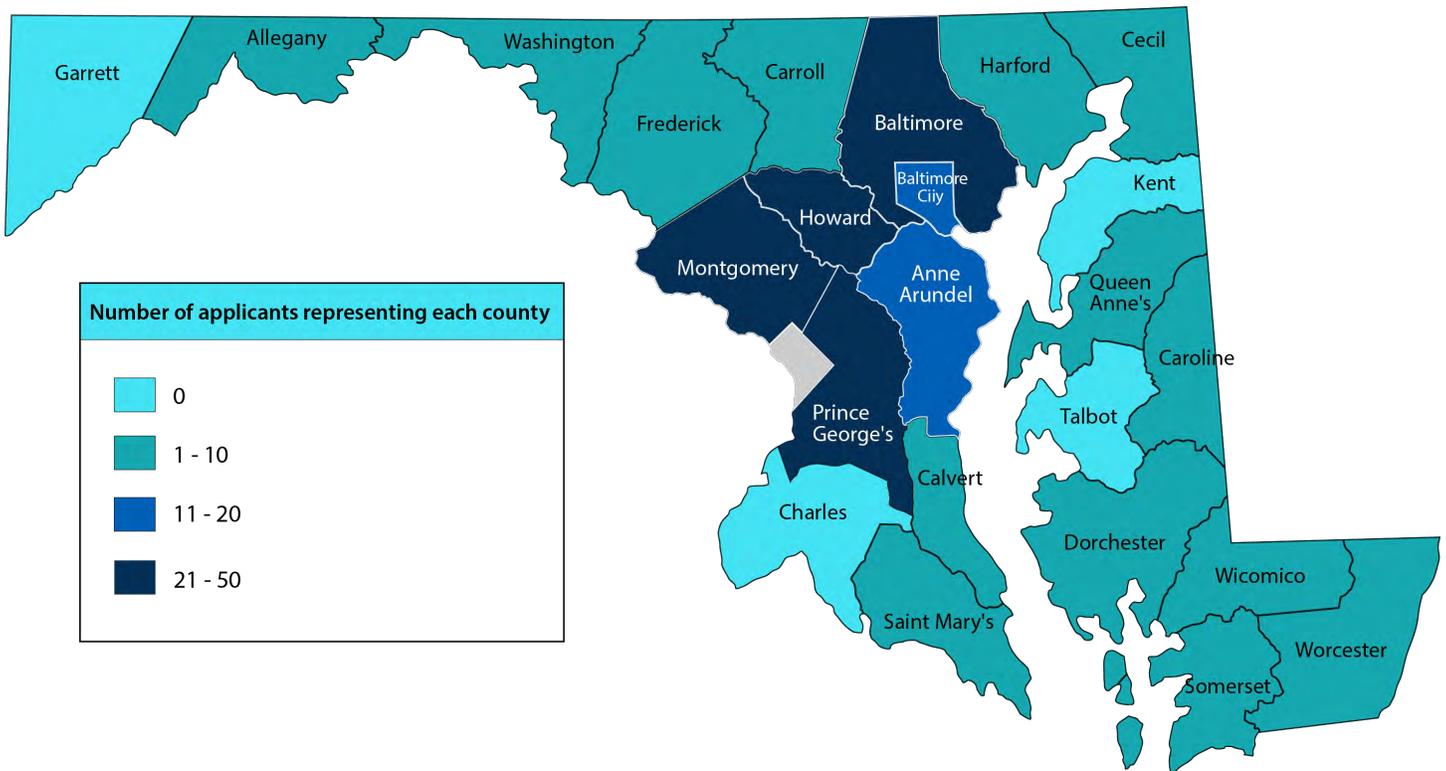
**APPOINTED BY THE MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION—STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

No appointments were made in 2015

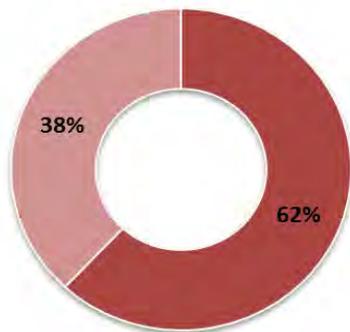
## 2015-2016 Application at a Glance

For the 2015-2016 term, applications were available online on the Governor’s Office for Children website beginning March 1, 2015 to July 1, 2015. The Council expanded application outreach to increase awareness of the Council and encourage a more diverse pool of applicants. The Governor’s Office for Children received 198 applications from 20 counties, representing 108 high schools, colleges, and universities. A significant increase from the 70 applications from 18 counties and 56 schools received for the 2014-2015 application.

The majority of applicants were from Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties. Applications were reviewed by Governor’s Office for Children staff. Ms. Drushel Williams submitted recommendations for appointment to the various appointing bodies.

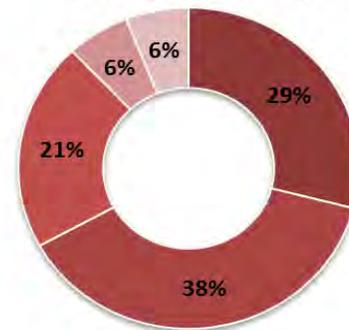


**Gender**



■ Female ■ Male

**Race/Ethnicity**



■ White ■ African American ■ Asian ■ Hispanic ■ Other

## Council Meeting Overview

The statute that establishes the Maryland Youth Advisory Council requires the Council to meet at least four times each year and each meeting must be open to the public. The Council met for a total of six meetings (once a month from September to March, with the January meeting cancelled due to inclement weather). The meetings were held on Saturday afternoons at various Baltimore County library locations and Towson University. These locations were selected because of their accessibility to Council members and the public. All meeting dates, times, and locations were available on the Governor's Office for Children website.

### **MEETING #1: SEPTEMBER 12, 2015 (12:00 - 4:00 PM) PERRY HALL LIBRARY**

The Maryland Youth Advisory Council kicked the year off with an in depth presentation about the history of the Council and parliamentary procedure in order to lay the groundwork for the year. Elections were held for leadership positions and Council members either joined the Public Awareness Committee or the Legislative Committee.

### **MEETING #2: OCTOBER 12, 2015 (12:00 - 4:00 PM) RIVIERA BEACH COMMUNITY LIBRARY**

In one of the most important meetings of the year, Council members, through much discussion, developed their legislative platform for the upcoming year. With over fifty issues ranging from youth leadership to the health of children, after two hours of debate, Council members selected issues the legislative committee would search for proposed bills that the Council could take a stance on.

### **MEETING #3: NOVEMBER 21, 2015 (1:00 - 4:00 PM) TOWSON UNIVERSITY**

Council members began to prepare themselves for the upcoming session of the Maryland State Legislature by working on their ability to engage in meaningful conversation with State officials. The Council prides itself on being a beacon for the voices of the 1.1 million youth in Maryland, so members discussed how they can further encourage youth to be involved with government. This narrowed down into public outreach and how the Council should encourage student governments across the state to be active.

### **MEETING #4: DECEMBER 12, 2015 (12:00 - 4:00 PM) TOWSON UNIVERSITY**

With only a month from the date of the Council's fourth meeting until the Maryland General Assembly convened, Council members spent three hours improving the bylaws of the Council. After much debate and formalities due to Roberts's Rule of Order, the Council made amendments to ensure that the bylaws were grammatically correct and that the Council could operate as efficiently as possible. Also, the Council continued to refine its mission and vision statements.

### **MEETING #5: JANUARY 23, 2016**

Because of the Jonas Blizzard, Council members were unable to meet in-person; however, the Council members proved their commitment to improving the lives of youth in Maryland by running a meeting online. Since no quorum was met at the online meeting, Council members discussed proposed legislation and the course of action the Council should take on those bills.

### **MEETING #6: FEBRUARY 27, 2016 (12:00 - 4:00 PM) TOWSON UNIVERSITY**

The work done at the previous meeting was put to the test as Council members mimicked the actions of elected officials in the General Assembly by debating pieces of legislation and whether the Council should take a stance on the bills. In addition to the heated debate, the Council began to discuss Advocacy Day (March 23, 2016), the day when Council members are able to lobby and network with Delegates, Senators, and other Maryland officials.

### **MEETING #7: MARCH 19, 2016 (1:00 - 4:00 PM) TOWSON UNIVERSITY**

With the General Assembly coming to a close, Council members discussed the state of the bills the Council supported:

SB 16/HB 226 to add another Student Member of the Board to Talbot County

SB 103/HB 446 to restructure the Council; and,

HB 87 to give the Montgomery County Student Member of the Board full voting rights.

The Council is proud to claim that the passage of HB 87 made the Montgomery County Student Member of the Board (SMOB) the second SMOB in the United States and in Maryland to have full voting rights, a monumental step in improving youth voice in government.

Additionally, Council members looked over the past year and made suggestions as to what the Council did well and what it could improve on. Finally, Council members participated in an activity to practice elevator speeches and talking points in preparation for Advocacy and meeting elected officials. This was the last meeting for Council members, but many showed up to Advocacy Day at the State House to lobby and testify on legislation.

See Appendix III for Meeting Minutes

## Revision of Bylaws

The bylaws were revised predominantly during the Council's meeting on December 14, 2015. Significant changes are as follows:

In Article IV, Section 1, explicitly specified duties assigned to the Co-Chair representing the Governor's Office for Children. These duties include maintaining and disseminating minutes from all meetings; preparing, receiving, and maintaining correspondence for the Council; managing RSVPs and communications from Council members; maintaining Council progress reports and a calendar of Council events; providing technical support for Council members; and assisting the legislative committee plan an advocacy/lobby day.

In Article IV, Section 3, the Council added that the Secretary is to aid the Co-Chair representing the Governor's Office for Children in maintaining Council progress reports and a calendar of Council events.

In Article V, it was indicated that the Executive Board was to oversee all Council activities and to advise the Council in addition to its preexisting duties.

The Council created Article VI in the bylaws. Article VI created positions for appointed officers, to be selected by the Youth Co-Chair. These officers include:

- Historian, who shall function as a record keeper for the Council;
- Technology Officer, who shall provide technical assistance to Council members and committees; and
- Parliamentarian, who shall advise the Council on proper use of parliamentary procedure.

The Council also created Article VII, which describes the formation and purpose of committees. It specifies that the Executive Board may create committees as needed, and that the chair of each committee created is to be elected by the Council. Article VII recommends the following committees:

- Legislative Committee, which shall research and propose stances on youth-related bills and help the Council advocate; and
- Public Awareness Committee, which shall publicize the Council through print, online, and in-person resources;

In Article XI, the Council stated that 35% of members, instead of 50% + 1 voting member, constitutes a quorum.

In Article XII, the Council stated that any cosmetic revisions of the bylaws do not require parliamentary action.

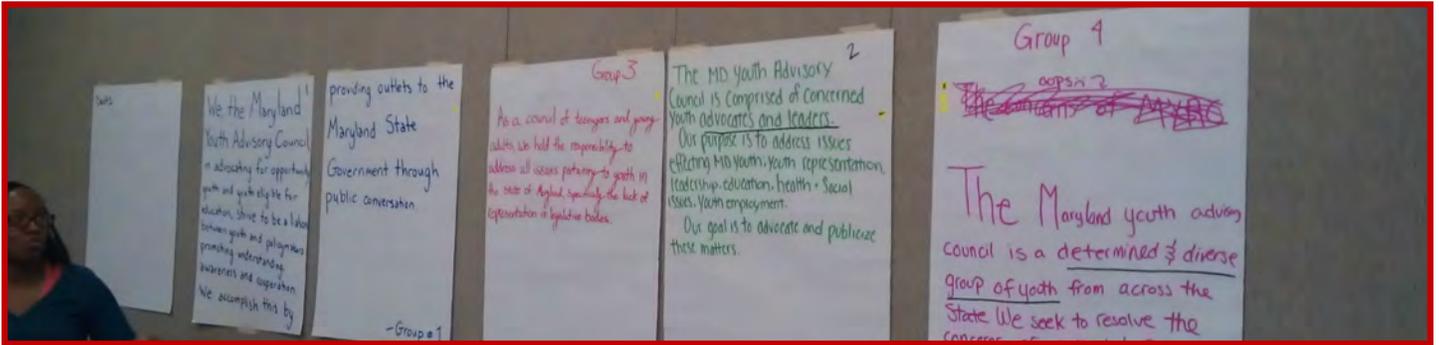
The Council added an Article XIII, which stated that the updated bylaws were to take effect upon approval and shall expire on January 1, 2017.

There were also minor grammatical and cosmetic revisions made to the bylaws.

These bylaws were adopted on February 27, 2016. Many revisions in the bylaws reflect the changing goals of the Council, and will therefore aid the Council in functioning more smoothly and efficiently in the future. Furthermore, many edits were made to remove ambiguity in position and committee descriptions.

See Appendix IV for Updated Bylaws

# Mission and Vision Development



During the year, Council members felt it was important for the Council to have a mission and vision statement to guide its work in the future and to better describe the Council to others. Sierra Boney, Policy Analyst, State of Maryland, facilitated the mission and vision development process. Mrs. Boney has a Masters of Public Administration from the University of Baltimore, has served two terms in AmeriCorps and has worked in the nonprofit sector for six years. The Council broke into smaller groups to draft mission and vision statements and then came together as a larger group to combine all ideas into the final statements.

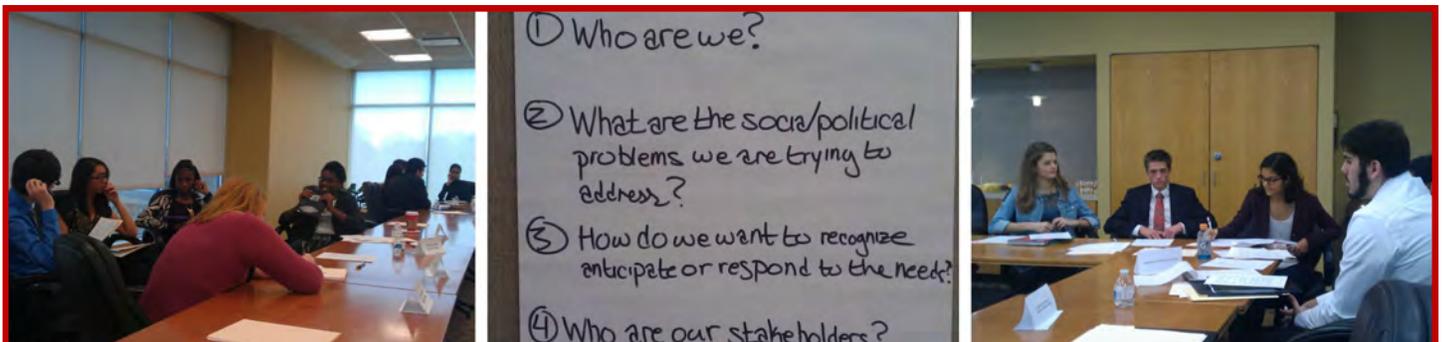
## MISSION:

As a coalition of diverse young advocates and leaders from across the State, we, the Maryland Youth Advisory Council address relevant issues by influencing legislation, spreading public awareness and serving as a liaison between youth and policymakers.

## VISION:

We strive to be an effective voice that:

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- Educates youth on political issues, and
- Is respected by legislators and other stakeholders on youth issues.



## 2016 Legislative Session

### LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM REVIEW

During the 2014-15 term, the Legislative Committee spearheaded the development of a Council Legislative Platform as a way to codify the views of the Council and Maryland youth. The platform spans seven broad subjects: Youth Representation, Youth Leadership, Education, Health and Social Issues, Youth Safety and Student Discipline, Environmental Issues, and Youth Employment. Contained within the platform are over 70 planks indicating either an area of support or opposition in relation to the seven subjects. The platform was reviewed, additions were made, and the Council approved the 2015-2016 Legislative Platform during the October meeting.

The goal of the platform is multifaceted. Firstly, the platform allows the Council to share its views and recommendations for Maryland through a central, easy to follow document. Secondly, the adoption of a platform enables the Council to advocate more broadly for youth and individual Council members will be empowered by this document as youth advocates. Finally, this document serves as a testament to the abilities of youth to be informed on a wide array of subject matters enough to make specific, action-oriented comments and recommendations.

The Maryland Youth Advisory Council Legislative Platform serves both the Council and its peers across the state well. The platform promotes informed advocacy, future Council discussions, and ultimately a better defined and organized Council. As a living document, the platform is sure to evolve with the needs of youth and continue to influence change for years to come.

See Appendix V for the 2015-2016 Legislative Platform



### 2016 LEGISLATIVE BILLS

During the 2016 Legislative Session, the Council provided written and oral testimony in support of three proposed bills. The Council contributed to the successful passage of all three bills. The first bill, SB 103/HB 446, was the Council's own bill making revisions to the Council's membership and duties in an effort to increase the Council's effectiveness. The two remaining bills focused on Student Member of the Board of Education in Talbot and Montgomery Counties, SB 16/HB 226 and HB 87 respectively. Throughout the course of testimony, Council members expressed the importance of including young people in policy-making discussions and positions of leadership. Additionally, the presence of the Council members in bill hearings and providing testimony demonstrates the desire and capability of young people to be involved in the legislative process.

**SB103/HB446 STATE GOVERNMENT—MARYLAND YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL—REVISIONS**

Altering the membership of the Maryland Youth Advisory Council; specifying that the members must be residents of the State; altering the factors that specified persons are required to consider in deciding which youths to nominate as members of the Council; altering the duties of the Council; altering the duties that the Governor's Office for Children has in relation to the Council; providing that the offices of the Senate President and Speaker of the House of Delegates shall serve as advisors to the Council; etc.

See Appendix VI for the bill and submitted letters of support



**SB16/HB226 TALBOT COUNTY—BOARD OF EDUCATION—STUDENT MEMBERS**

Increasing the number of student members of the Talbot County Board of Education from one member to two members; requiring that one student member be a student from St. Michaels High School and one student member be a student from Easton High School in Talbot County; and making specified conforming changes.

See Appendix VII for the bill and submitted letters of support



**HB 87 MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION—STUDENT MEMBER—VOTING MC 11-16**

Repealing certain voting rights exceptions for the student member of the Montgomery County Board of Education so that the student member is required to vote on matters relating to capital and operating budgets; school closings, reopenings, and boundaries; and collective bargaining. Also authorizing the student member to attend executive sessions that relate to collective bargaining.

See Appendix VIII for the bill and submitted letter of support





## ADVOCACY DAY

On March 23rd, 2016 members of the Maryland Youth Advisory Council spent the day in Annapolis for its Advocacy Day. Council members met in the State House Lobby and divided into two groups. One group went to the House Chambers, while the other went to the Senate Chambers to watch floor proceedings. The Council was recognized in each chamber during special announcements.



After watching floor proceedings, Council members were able to explore downtown Annapolis during their lunch break. This was a great opportunity to strengthen friendships as Council members and discuss plans for the rest of the Council year. During the lunch break, Council officers including the Co- Chair and members of the Executive Board and the Legislative Committee met with a staff advisor in Senator Joan Carter Conway's office to discuss the Council's own bill, SB103. This was an opportunity to share information about the bill, the Council, and why it was important for this bill to pass favorably by her committee.



After the lunch hour, members reconvened in the House Building for the Governor's Office for Children's Ice Cream Social. This was an opportunity to talk with Senators, Delegates, Secretaries, and Local Management Boards to raise awareness about the Council and meet people. Plus, the ice cream was a bonus! During the Ice Cream Social a small group of members left to attend a Senate Committee Hearing to testify in support of HB87.



After the Ice Cream Social and bill hearing, Council members went on office visits to their State legislators. To finish up the day, the remaining Council members not at the committee hearing went on office visits. This was an excellent opportunity to build relationships with elected officials as well as encourage passage of the Council's three supporting bills. Council members left a legislative packet with each legislator or staff member that included a one-page information flyer about the Council, the Legislative Platform, and contact information.

All in all this was a great experience to everyone involved and the Council hopes to continue this in the 2016-17 council year.

## Other Meetings and Events

### CHILDREN'S CABINET MEETING

The December 17, 2015, Children's Cabinet meeting was one of the Maryland Youth Advisory Council's first public events outside of the annual public forum. Members of the Council's Executive Board prepared an hour-long presentation highlighting the Council's history, structure, mission, legislative platform, and past work. The presentation also included the Council members' vision for the future and how the Children's Cabinet can help the Council succeed. The agency heads in attendance then posed questions to the Council members.

As a result of the meeting, the Council gained greater publicity and future connections within the Children's Cabinet. This meeting was the first opportunity for many of the recently appointed agency heads to become acquainted with the Council, along with the Council's ability to connect the Children's Cabinet agencies with youth in the community. During the question portion of the meeting, agency heads asked for youth perspectives on some current issues with which their agencies are dealing. To maintain communication between agencies and Council members, the Council paired a member with each of the Cabinet agencies.

From public speaking practice to important conversations to future communication, the Children's Cabinet meeting further enhanced the Council's role in Maryland government.



### ALLEGANY COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S MEETING

On March 24th, 2016, Maryland Youth Advisory Councilman Jonathan Dayton, along with Co-Chair Christina Drushel Williams, attended the Allegany County Commissioners Public Business Meeting. At this meet Mr. Dayton was given several minutes to address the Commission on what the Maryland Youth Advisory Council, an advocacy group serving youth, does as well as give them an update on the activities of the Council during the year.

After the meeting concluded, Mr. Dayton and Ms. Drushel Williams took a photo with the Commissioners. The entire meeting was filmed and placed on the Commission's YouTube channel. This was a wonderful opportunity for the Council to spread its name across the state, particularly in Western Maryland. Hopefully with the help of the Commissioners, awareness of the Council will be spread throughout Allegany County more effectively.



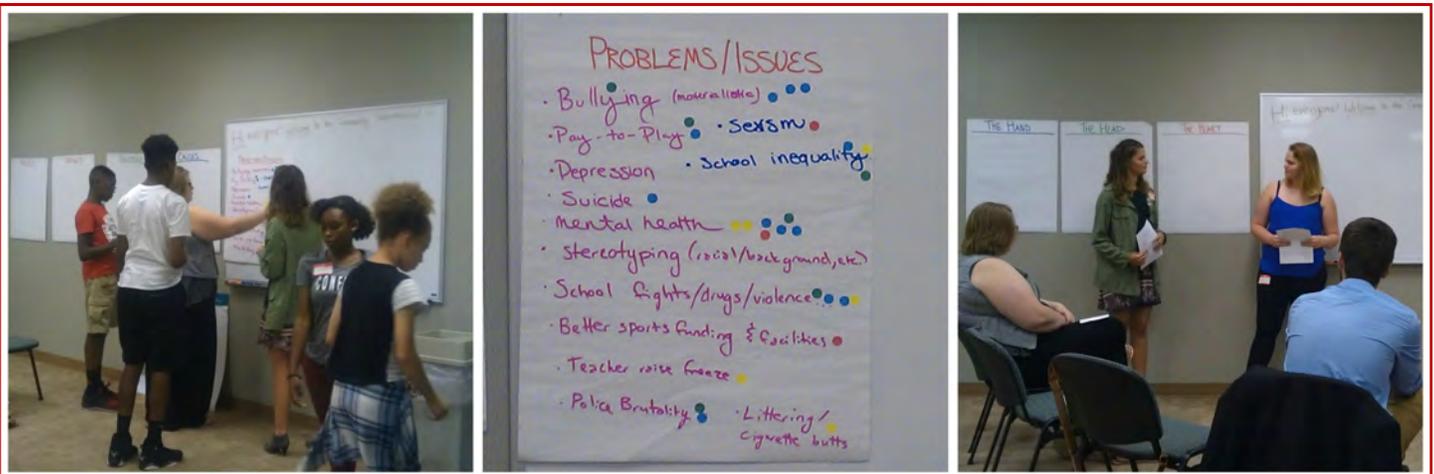
## HARFORD COUNTY YOUTH COMMISSION MEETING

On April 11th, 2016 Youth Cho-Chair Alison Smith and Co-Chair Christina Drushel Williams met with members of the Harford County Youth Commission and gave a presentation to the Commission about the Council. The Commission was in the process of developing a new strategic plan and wanted the opportunity to learn from another youth organization. Ms. Smith talked about the importance of youth being a part of the work of the Commission and commended the youth commissioners on their commitment to serve their county and communities.

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

During the 2012-13 and 2014-15 Council year, members of the Council were trained on how to facilitate Community Conversations by Youth As Resources, a youth-led grant making organization in Baltimore City. Community Conversations provide an opportunity for a community to identify and prioritize its needs and develop solutions and action plans through a facilitated conversation. The conversation guides participants to identify the community's assets and problems, the causes of each problem, and the solutions to the problems based on the identified causes. The group then develops an action plan which includes identifying targets for demands and allies for support.

The Council focuses Community Conversations towards youth and young adults as a way to engage young people in creating community change and allowing the Council to share the thoughts and ideas of Maryland youth to the Governor, State agencies, legislators, and community leaders. The Council hosted two Community Conversation in August, one in Harford County and one in Calvert County. The Council will continue to host conversations throughout the state in the 2016-17 Council year.



## **HARFORD COUNTY COMMUNITY CONVERSATION**

The Harford County Community Conversation was hosted on August 1st, 2016 from 4:00—6:00 pm at the Abingdon Branch Library. Council members Alison Smith and Grace Hageman planned and facilitated the conversation. Ms. Smith and Ms. Hageman designed the event flyer which was shared on the Council's Facebook page, the Governor's Office for Children Twitter account, and by email to the Harford County Local Management Board, the Harford County Library, the Harford County Student Member of the Board of Education, and the Harford County Youth Commission.

In addition to Ms. Smith and Ms. Hageman, a newly appointed Council member for the 2016-2018 term from Harford County attended in order to observe the process and take part in a Council activity. There were also six other youth that attended, along with five adults of varying positions around the county. The adults that attended took note of what the youth had to say and were interested in taking their ideas on to share with other youth advocates, policymakers and county leaders.

The meeting began with a brief introduction about the Maryland Youth Advisory Council led by Ms. Smith and Ms. Hageman. This was followed by the introduction of everyone else attending the conversation and an ice breaker led by Christina Drushel Williams, Council Co-Chair. The icebreaker, "The Hand, the Head, and the Heart", was used to help the youth identify strengths that they each had which they could use to address issues identified in the conversation. For the head the youth were asked to each identify something that they felt confident about their knowledge in. For the hand they were asked to identify a task that they are good at performing which is physical in nature. For the heart they were asked to identify something which they were passionate about.

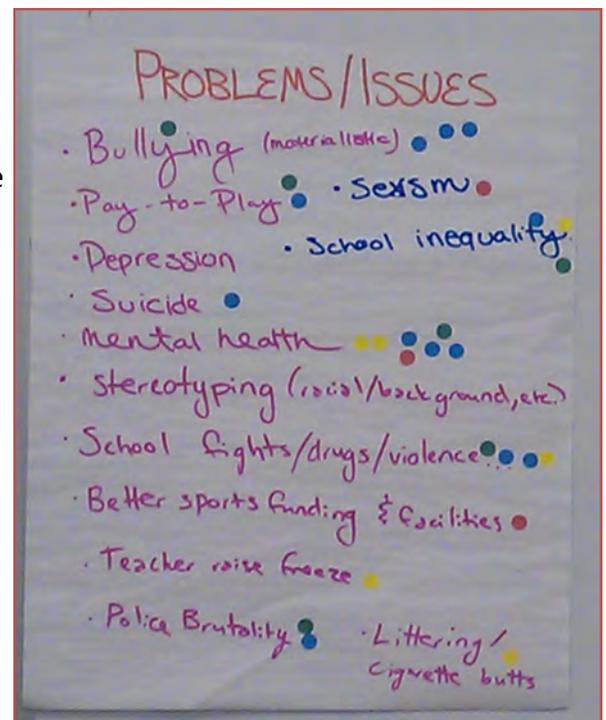
During the conversation, the youth participants had many issues that they were eager to address within the county. However, after voting, the youth chose two main issues that they wanted to revolve the conversation around. Those issues were as follows:

### ***Stereotypes about Certain Areas and Schools in the County***

The youth in the group all seemed to recognize that in areas of the county with a lower socioeconomic status, the people living there as well as the school have developed an unfavorable reputation. Many of the students in the group attended those schools and were familiar with their reputations. The students felt that the reputation was false and many of the rumors about the schools were not only untrue but detrimental to the population.

### ***Bullying (by authority figures towards children)***

The youth in the group also believed that in our changing world, the importance of tolerance and education is tremendous for all authority figures. The youth identified instances in their lives and the lives of their peers when adult role models were intolerant towards youth because they differed in their belief system. Specifically, for LGBTQ youth, many of the conversation participants believed that older adult figures like some teachers aren't aware of the significance of identity among youth and how their actions towards these youth could prove to be detrimental.



The youth participants made many suggestions as to how reasonable and impactful solutions could be implemented in the community. These ideas are listed below.

- Create Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to play at all of the public schools

- Form a club of students to put together those PSAs
- Hold mandatory trainings for all of the teaching staff in the public schools to provide them with up to date information on how to handle new problems that their students may have.
- Make a transparent disciplinary system that is available to all public school students.
- Meet with all of the principals in the school system and encourage them to adopt stricter tolerance policies.

Following the meeting, all of the individuals who took part were emailed an application to Harford’s H.E.L.P.E.R.S., a group started by the Youth Co-Chair Alison Smith in order to provide more opportunities for discussions like the Community Conversation and youth advocacy. The group is being sponsored by the Harford Youth Commission and is open to all youth and adults in the area that are interested in youth issues.

### **CALVERT COUNTY COMMUNITY CONVERSATION**

The Calvert County Community Conversation was hosted on August 13th, 2016 from 12:00—2:00 pm at the Prince Frederick Branch Library. Council members Emma Gilligan and Antonio Morrell planned and facilitated the conversation. Ms. Gilligan and Mr. Morrell designed the event flyer which was shared on the Council’s Facebook page, the Governor’s Office for Children Twitter account, and by email to the Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary’s County Local Management Boards. The group focused on solutions for lack of youth involvement and lack of gender neutral equality.

See Appendix IX for Community Conversation Notes



# Improvements and Recommendations for the 2016-2017 Council Year

During the final meeting of the year, Ms. Drushel Williams facilitated a reflection activity for members of the Council to think about the Council year, focusing on 1.) what worked, 2.) what didn't work, and 3.) suggestions of improvement for next year.

Below are the results of the reflection activity.

## WHAT WORKED? WHAT DID YOU LIKE?

- Legislative Committee narrowing bills down to review
- Children Cabinet presentation
- Salisbury group presentation
- Location
- Polls on bills
- Written testimony and opportunities to provide oral testimony
- Snacks :-)
- Vision and mission statements
- Creation of the MYAC Google Drive
- Council emails
- Dedication and Commitment of certain members
- Email updates
- Participation outside meetings
- Access to past council materials
- Attendance
- Digitalization of council materials
- Google Hangout (meeting cancelled)
- Advocacy Day
- Ms. Christina's advice
- Opportunities to go to Annapolis
- Productivity of meetings
- Group diversity on council
- Monthly meetings

## WHAT DID NOT WORK? WHAT DID YOU NOT LIKE?

- Google hangout (technical difficulty)
- Attendance
- Communication between meetings
- Size of the executive board is too big
- Workload balance between the public awareness and legislative committees
- Disconnect between council issues and legislative bills
- Lack of feedback
- MYAC email accounts
- Process of introducing bills
- Lack of community conversations
- Lack of connection to community
- Lack of a newsletter
- Lack of involvement from the entire council

## WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER NEXT YEAR? WHAT CHANGES WOULD YOU MAKE?

- Members are more connected to legislators and local officers
- Better collaboration with other youth organizations (USMSC, MHEC, etc.)
- Legislative hotlists with weekly proceedings \*who would care about this content\*
- Scholarships?
- Plan public forum before session
- Improve knowledge of Robert's Rule of Procedure
- Standardize email signatures
- Better orientation
- Location centralized
- 1<sup>st</sup> year training mandatory
- Call in options/skype/virtualization of meetings
- Read receipts
- Webinars
- Creation of technology officer
- Peer mentors/buddy system for first and second year members
- Leadership positions for 2<sup>nd</sup> year members
- Balanced membership of subcommittees
- Meaningful work and roles in subcommittees
- Share with other student groups and invite to meetings to present and participate
- Difference between mandatory and non-mandatory meetings?
- Online meetings should be held between in person meetings
- Involvement of various community groups
- Plan extra meetings during winter/session
- Travel meetings like USMSC where meetings are held at a new location every other month
- Officers attend committee meetings and every other meeting
- Field trips? Conferences?
- Outside of meeting activities
- Social events
- Accessibility of MYAC website and documents
- Presentations to present issues
- Send members to conferences
- Travel reimbursements (as available)
- Money for MYAC
- Voting of officers
- Fundraisers
- Better council transition (summer)
- Schedule next year's meetings ASAP
- MYAC calendar distributed at the beginning of the year
- More meetings with Children's Cabinet and legislators
- More member involvement
- Social media campaign
- Outreach VIA YouTube, WBAL, Baltimore Sun
- Remind 101 texts
- Parliamentary procedure mock simulation
- SMOB outreach

The Council recommends to the 2016-17 council members to review and consider these ideas for the improvement of the Council and related activities during the 2016-17 term.