

Maryland Youth Advisory Council 2020-2021 Annual Report



August 31, 2021

Submitted by: Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth,
and Victim Services on behalf of the
Maryland Youth Advisory Council

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Letter From The Chair



As Chair of the Maryland Youth Advisory Council (MYAC), I could not be more proud to present the Council's 2020-2021 Annual Report. The Annual Report is a comprehensive review of the Council's actions and initiatives over the past year. I cannot thank our Council members enough for their hard work and perseverance throughout this year. Despite a pandemic, the Council was able to successfully advocate for and achieve many of our legislative priorities during the 2021 Legislative Session. Thank you to all members of the Council, our dedicated Advisor, Ms. Christina Drushel Williams, and all youth allies for making this year a successful one.



Ian Herd

**Ian Herd, Chair
Maryland Youth Advisory Council**

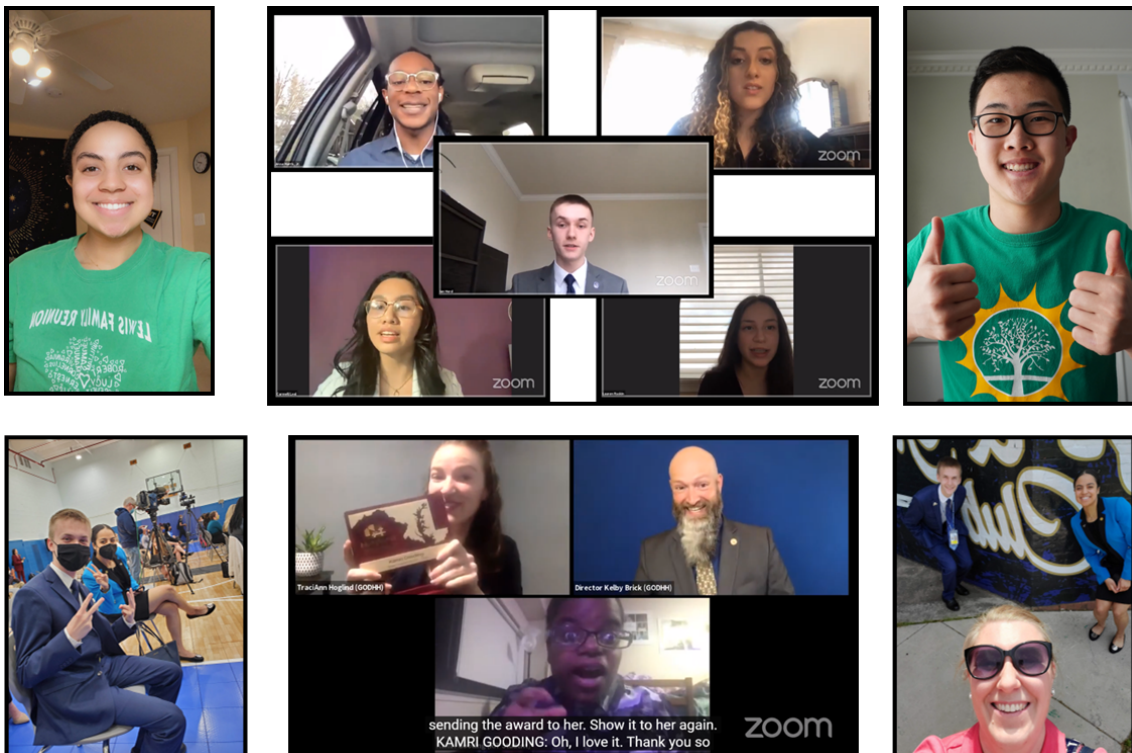
Executive Summary

The Maryland Youth Advisory Council (the Council) has allowed for a group of youth representing the diversity of the State to voice opinions on legislation pertaining to youth; as well as give feedback on various programs and informational materials that benefit the youth of Maryland. By taking on these leadership roles and putting conviction to action, the Council has been able to make a valuable impact.

During the 2020-2021 term, members participated in various activities to voice their opinions and affect change:

- Held nine meetings, exceeding the required four meetings;
- Adopted three connected legislative priorities: youth equity, youth social justice, and youth mental health and well-being;
- Guest-lectured for the Teen Public Health Seminar course at American University;
- Served as panelists at the Mid-Atlantic Public Health Conference;
- Hosted a virtual Community Conversation for youth across the State;
- Participated in the Maryland State Department of Education's Student Support Initiative led by State Superintendent Dr. Karen Salmon;
- Attended Governor Larry Hogan's "Project Bounce Back" press conference;
- Served as Community Champions for the Children's Mental Health Matters! Campaign; and
- Tracked and supported bills of interest, and provided written and oral testimony during the 2021 Legislative Session.

All meeting minutes and bill testimony are available upon request from the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services - Children and Youth Division (Office).



Background and Mission of the Council

BACKGROUND

The Council was established by the General Assembly in 2008 ([Chapter 559 of 2008](#), [Chapter 69 of 2009](#), and [Chapter 620 of 2016](#)) 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.

Council members are appointed by the:

- Governor of Maryland;
- President of the Maryland Senate;
- Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates;
- Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (the successor for the Governor's Office for Children) based on nominations made by the:
 - Maryland Association of Student Councils;
 - University System of Maryland Student Council;
 - Maryland Higher Education Commission Student Advisory Council; and
 - Maryland Association of Local Management Boards.

Council members must be 14-22 years of age and serve a two-year term. The Council year is from September 1st to August 31st of the following year.

MISSION

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

VISION

The Council strives 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.

RESPONSIBILITIES

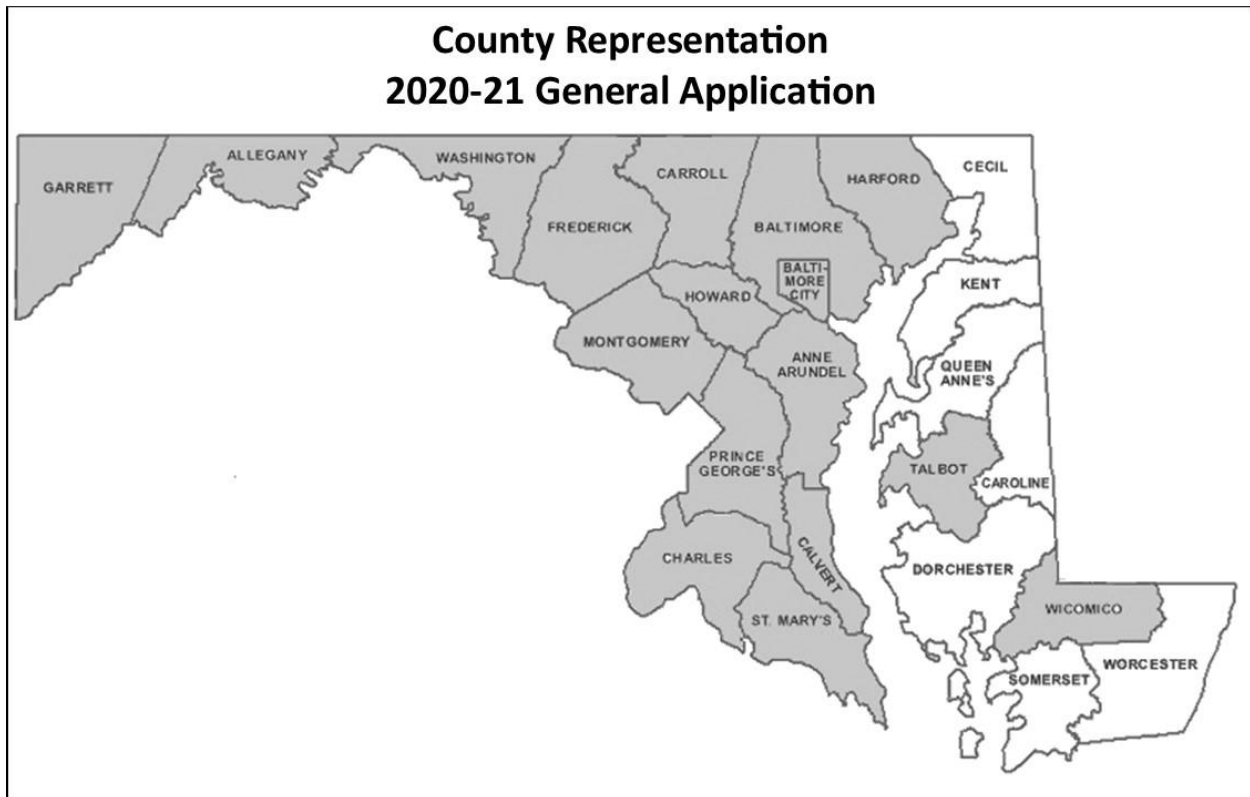
- Inform the Governor and the General Assembly of issues concerning youth, including offering testimony on these issues before legislative bodies;
- Examine issues of importance to youth, including: education, a safe learning environment, employment opportunities, strategies to increase youth participation in local and State government, health care access and quality of care, substance abuse and underage drinking, emotional and physical well-being, the environment, poverty, homelessness, youth access to State and local services, suicide prevention, and educational accessibility issues for students with disabilities;
- Recommend one legislative proposal each legislative session concerning an issue of importance;
- Conduct a public campaign to raise awareness of the Council among Maryland youth;
- Participate in local youth activities or organizations;

- Advise local officials and community leaders on youth issues;
- Collect information from other youth groups in order to inform the activities of the Council; and
- Report its activities to the Governor and General Assembly before the last day of the Council year.

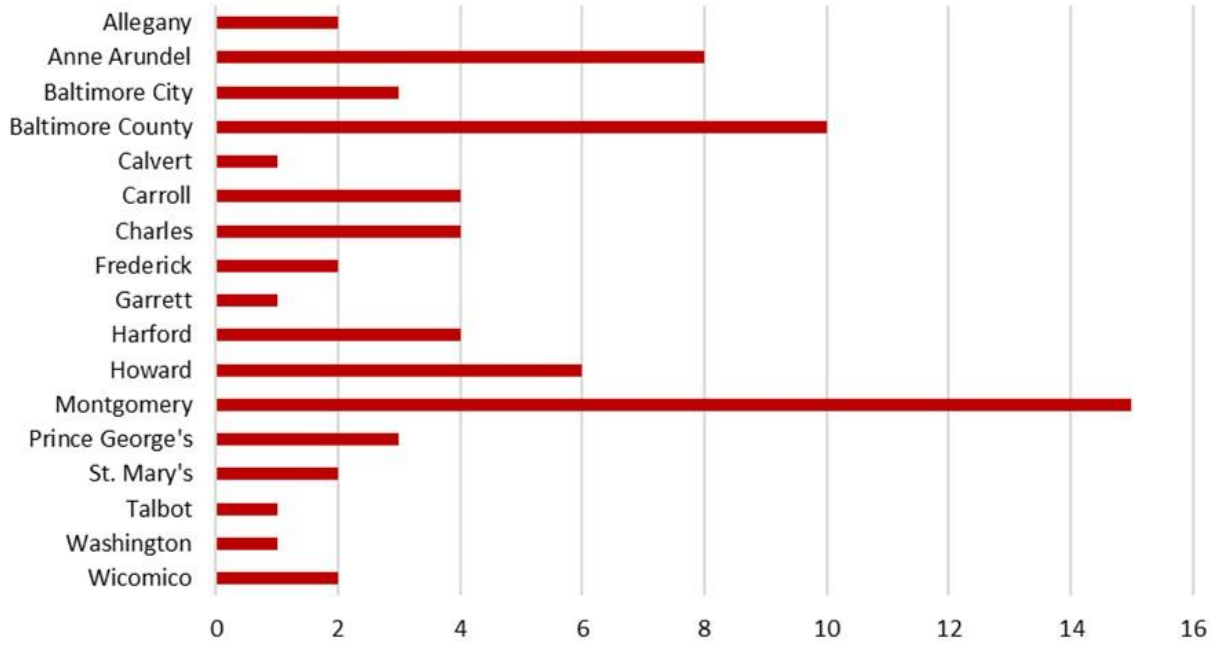
2020-2021 Applications at a Glance

For the 2020-2021 term, applications were available online on the Council’s website from March 1, 2020 through July 1, 2020. Sixty-nine (69) applications were received from youth residing in 17 counties, representing 50 high schools, colleges, and universities. Of these applicants, 67% identified as female, 32% identified as male, and 1% did not disclose their gender identity. The majority of applicants were from Montgomery County. In addition, 77% of the applicants identified as a person of color, of which 38% were African American; 4% of the applicants did not disclose their race/ethnicity.

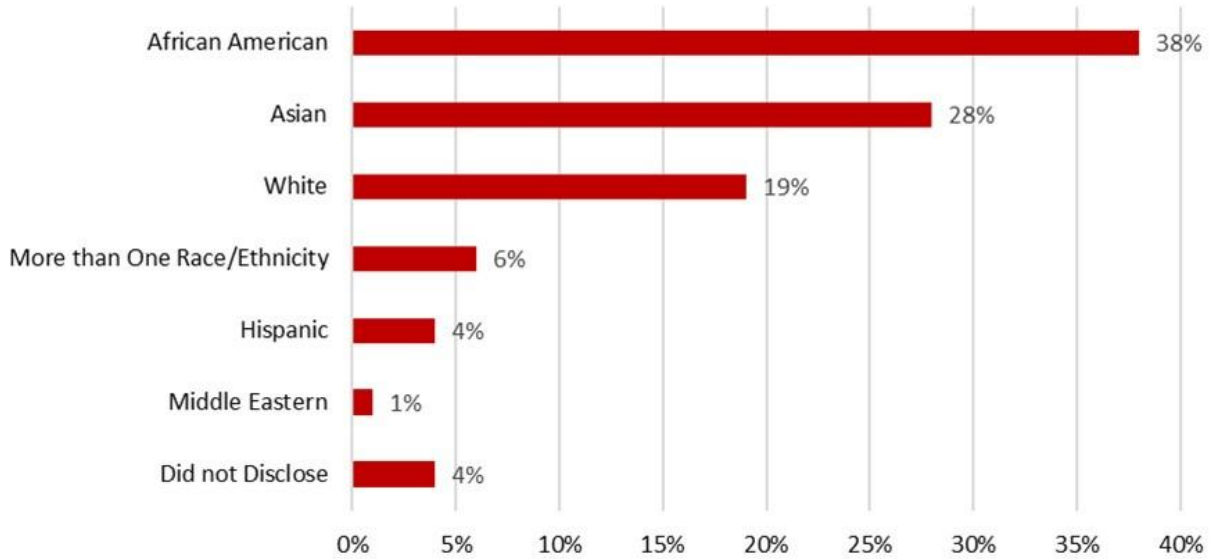
Applications were reviewed by Office staff and submitted recommendations for appointment to the appointing bodies as needed.



Number of Applications by County 2020-21 General Application

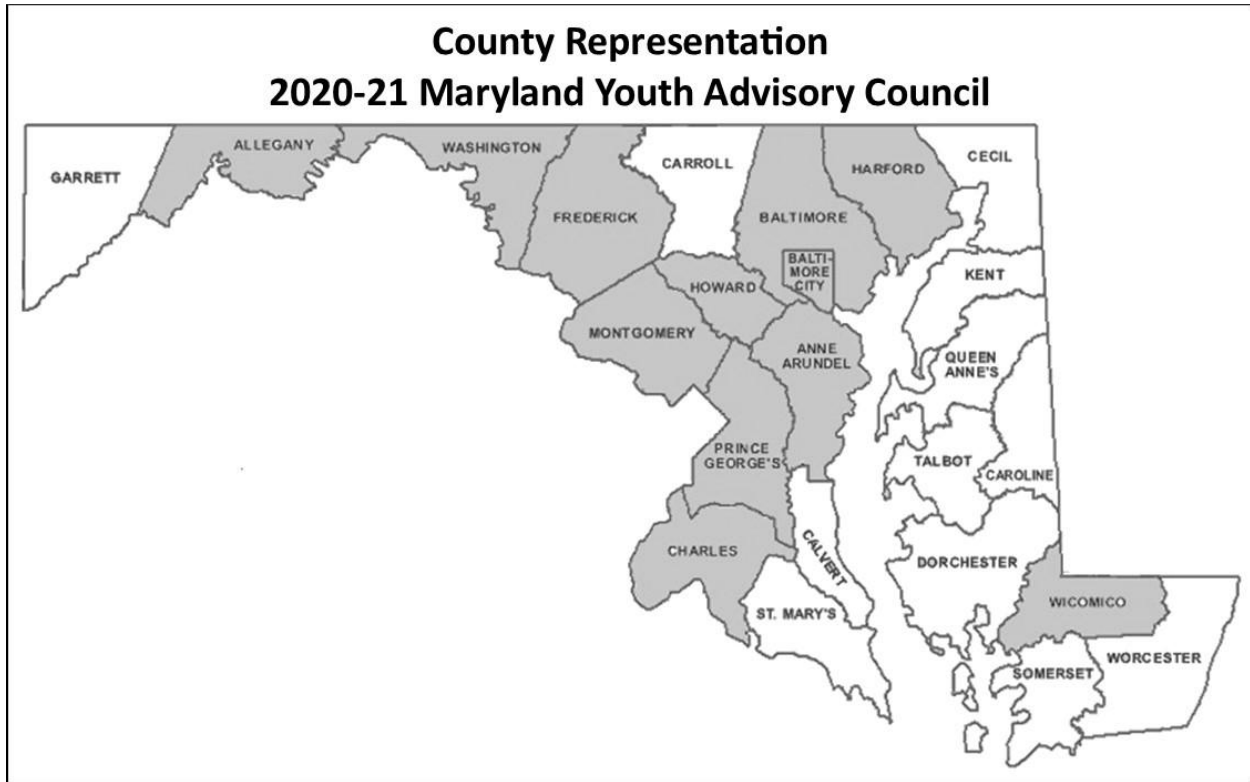


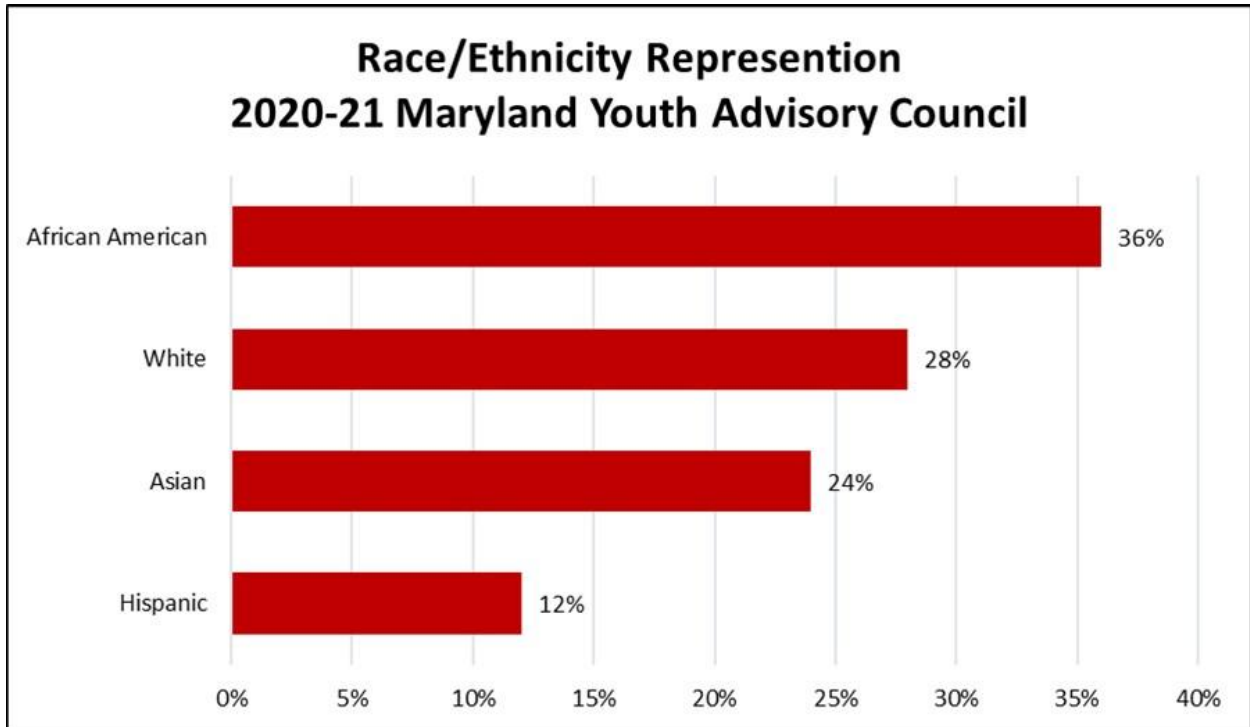
Race/Ethnicity Representation 2020-21 General Application



2020-2021 Council at a Glance

The 2020-2021 Council is composed of 25 members (one member resigned partway through the year and the vacancy was filled), representing 12 counties, 14 high schools, and 8 colleges/universities. The Council includes 14 (56%) members who identify as female and 11 (44%) members who identify as male. Of the 25 members, 13 are returning second-year members and 12 are first-year members. In addition, 72% of Council members identify as a person of color, with African Americans representing 36% of the Council.





2020-2021 Maryland Youth Advisory Council Roster

2020-2021 MARYLAND YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BOARD (elected by Council members)

Chair: Ian Herd

Vice Chair: Marvin Li

Secretary: Maggie Harkins

Legislative Committee Chair: Maya Matava

Public Awareness Committee Chair: Nina Bundy

Executive Board Members: Zahra Allidina, Issac Colbert, Malachi Macon, Benjamin Forrest

Historian: Ricky Bridges

Technology Officer: Jason Park

APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR

Appointed in 2019

Crisaly De Los Santos: Baltimore City - Baltimore City Community College

Kamri Gooding: Charles County - Rochester Institute of Technology

Maggie Harkins: Wicomico County - Parkside High School

Appointed in 2020

Jason Park: Baltimore County - Gilman School

APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Appointed in 2019

Teresa Okello: Baltimore County - Randallstown High School

Appointed in 2020

Ricky Bridges: Baltimore County - Franklin High School

Rosiland Marfo: Baltimore County - Franklin High School

James Mu: Montgomery County - Thomas S. Wootton High School

APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

Appointed in 2019

Nina Bundy: Howard County - Towson University

Malachi Macon: Frederick County - Governor Thomas Johnson High School

Alex Xhane: Baltimore County - University of Maryland Baltimore County

Appointed in 2020

Jayden Shiflett: Anne Arundel County: Old Mill High School

NOMINATED BY THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT COUNCILS

Appointed in 2019

Jesse Harris, Jr.: Prince George's County - St. Mary's Ryken High School

Ian Herd: Charles County - La Plata High School

Appointed in 2020

Tara Kim: Howard County - Mount Hebron High School - RESIGNED

Lauren Raskin: Montgomery County - Poolesville High School

Emily Metheny: Allegany County - Allegany High School

NOMINATED BY THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND STUDENT COUNCIL

Appointed in 2019

Benjamin Forrest: Washington County

Appointed in 2020

No appointments were made

NOMINATED BY THE MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION—STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Appointed in 2019

No appointments were made.

Appointed in 2020

Shreeyam Mishra: Harford Community College

Marie Oluebube Ofoegbu: Stevenson University

Sal Suarez: Goucher College

NOMINATED BY THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL MANAGEMENT BOARDS

Appointed in 2019

Zahra Allidina: Howard County - Oakland Mills High School
Marvin Li: Wicomico County - James M. Bennett High School
Maya Matava: Wicomico County - James M. Bennett High School

Appointed in 2020

Issac Colbert: Anne Arundel County - Anne Arundel Community College

Council Meeting Overview

[Chapter 559 of 2008](#), [Chapter 69 of 2009](#), and [Chapter 620 of 2016](#) require the Council to meet at least four times each year and each meeting must be open to the public. However, the Council determined that meeting only four times a year was not sufficient to complete the Council's intended work; therefore, the members decided to meet on a monthly basis. During the 2020-2021 term, the Council met virtually once a month from September to May, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Meetings were held on Saturday afternoons. All meeting dates and times are available on the Council's website at <https://goc.maryland.gov/myac/>.

MEETING #1: SEPTEMBER 12, 2020

The Council kicked off the year with an invigorating icebreaker activity—members finding something special or important to them to share with the group. While becoming acquainted with their fellow teammates, new and old members learned the ins and outs of the Council, member responsibilities, the legislative process, Maryland's youth policy structure, and parliamentary procedures. Finally, the Council elected its officers for the year.

MEETING #2: OCTOBER 10, 2020

The Council learned about community conversations and the best ways to structure and facilitate those discussions, with the ultimate goal of hosting its own community conversation. Council members also practiced in a community conversation exercise. Finally, Council members chose to participate in either the legislative or public awareness committee and became acquainted with their new committee responsibilities.

MEETING #3: NOVEMBER 21, 2020

The Council recognized Kamri Gooding for her receipt of the Youth Activism Award by the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Council members who attended the American University Teen Health Seminar shared their experiences. Participants were able to discuss teen health policy in a seminar course as well as discuss health education, trauma-informed practices, and the impacts of COVID-19 on students' mental health and education. The Council learned about an opportunity to collaborate with Maryland MENTOR on a Racial Justice and Equity community conversation as well as the opportunity to co-host a community conversation on Juvenile Justice Reform with the Emerging Leaders Committee of the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Group. Finally, the Council hosted its own virtual youth community conversation and debriefed at the end of the meeting.

MEETING #4: DECEMBER 12, 2020

The Council worked to develop two project proposals to submit to the Children’s Cabinet to support the mental health of Maryland youth: a youth-specific resource landing page, and collaborating with other agencies to spread awareness and host virtual forums. The Council reviewed and amended the legislative platform from the previous year and voted to adopt the legislative platform for the year 2020-2021. Jonathan Dipietro and Hunter Craig presented to the Council a resolution to protect student protesting rights in Maryland. The Council voted to support the resolution as presented. Finally, Executive Board member positions were announced.

MEETING #5: JANUARY 16, 2021

The Council learned about the planning of the Racial Justice and Equity community conversation as well as the information presented at the Mid-Atlantic Public Health Partnership Conference. The Council was able to use the conference to share information from the community conversation and the mental health struggles that students faced during the pandemic. The Council discussed the 2020-2021 legislative priority and chose to focus on youth equity, youth social justice, and youth mental health and well-being. The legislative priority was approved for the year. Council members learned how to navigate the Maryland General Assembly website. The legislative committee presented pre-filed bills and the Council discussed and voted to support a number of them.

MEETING #6: FEBRUARY 20, 2021

The Council learned about the Biden-Harris transition team conversations with youth leaders and received updates from the January Children’s Cabinet presentation. The Council also received updates on the HB 629 bill hearing where several current and former Council members provided testimony and garnered support to ensure the bill received an unfavorable report. Lauren Graziano from the Department of Human Services presented to the Council on the Department’s responsibilities and priorities for the year. Joni Holifield of HeartSmiles and her “heartbeats” participated in a panel-style discussion where they shared the story behind the organization and their experiences as youth leaders. Finally, the legislative committee shared updates on bills that the Council had left for review.

MEETING #7: MARCH 13, 2021

Council members who participated in Real Talk: Maryland High School Students Forum on Racial Equality provided details about the event and shared takeaways. The Council received updates on Maryland Association for Student Councils’ (MASC) legislative session and the bills it supported that align with the Council’s goals. The Council’s mental health project proposal was sent to the Children’s Cabinet for review. The Council voted to pursue an opportunity to collaborate with the Foster Youth Ombud to plan a Foster Youth Advocacy Conference. The 2021-2022 application was released and the Council decided to host a virtual application Q&A session. The legislative committee provided bill updates and the Council discussed multiple Student Member of the Board (SMOB) bills. Finally, the Council learned about the organization Girl Be Heard and its menstrual equity advocacy event.

MEETING #8: APRIL 10, 2021

The Council received a summary of the Girl Be Heard: Menstrual Equity Event and received updates on the planning of the Foster Youth Advocacy Conference. The Council learned about an opportunity to

collaborate on a Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Student Support Initiative. The Council voted to participate in the Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week by using social media to spread information and awareness. The Council also signed on as community champions with the Mental Health Association of Maryland. The legislative committee provided updates on bills that the Council had been following. The public awareness committee shared graphics that were created to spread information on Council-supported bills to be shared on social media. They also shared graphics to advertise the Council’s application and Q&A event. Finally, the Council began planning for the annual report.

MEETING #9: MAY 8, 2021

The Council received updates on the MSDE Student Support Initiative. Council members who attended the Governor’s Project Bounce Back press conference shared their experiences and the information announced. The Council discussed the social media initiative that took place during Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week. The Council learned about an opportunity to participate in the Baltimore City Youth Diversion Workgroup for juvenile justice diversion. The legislative committee shared an overview of bills that the Council interacted with this year. The public awareness committee shared updates on Towson’s Honors Civic Engagement night. Finally, Council members participated in an end-of-year reflection exercise and an end-of-year celebration.

Committees

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The legislative committee serves to identify bills that align with the Council’s legislative platform and priority areas. Throughout the Maryland legislative session, the legislative committee brought many bills before the Council for consideration of a formal position and action. The legislative committee was also tasked with providing additional research on bills and reporting back with the potential impacts on youth. As a result of the legislative committee’s efforts, the Council was able to successfully advocate for several bills during the 2021 Legislative Session.

PUBLIC AWARENESS COMMITTEE

The public awareness committee continued its efforts to expand the Council’s online presence and examine ways to connect and engage with youth more effectively. The public awareness committee planned the Council’s virtual Community Conversation and Application Q&A session as a way to engage and learn from other young people on important policy issues and raise awareness about the Council. The public awareness committee members also designed graphics to share information about the Council’s legislative bill positions and how other young leaders can learn more about the bill and take action. The Council also created “Meet the Council” graphics that were shared on Facebook for the public to learn more about Council members.

2021 Legislative Session

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

During the 2014-2015 term, the legislative committee spearheaded the development of a legislative platform as a way to solidify the views of the Council. 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 100 statements to ensure that youth and young adults are supported and thrive in Maryland.

The platform allows the Council to share its views and recommendations for Maryland through a central, easy to follow document. Additionally, this document serves as a testament to the abilities of youth to be informed on a wide array of subject matters. The platform promotes informed advocacy, future Council discussions, and ultimately a better defined and organized Council. As a living document, the platform evolves with the needs of youth and continues to influence change for years to come.

Each year, the Council determines an area(s) to focus on during the legislative session. From information collected from Council members' experiences and community conversations, the Council voted to focus on legislation regarding three connected priorities: youth equity, youth social justice, and youth mental health and well-being. The Council recognizes that young people are concerned about these issues in their communities and schools. Through further discussion, the Council also agreed that legislative action can be expanded beyond the priority areas as bills are identified as relevant to the Council's wider objectives and legislative platform.

2021 LEGISLATIVE BILLS

Maryland Advisory Youth Council
HB01060/SB0749
Charles County Board of Education Membership Alterations

- Altering the manner of the election for certain members of the Charles County Board of Education by specifying that the members are elected from a certain county commissioner district.
- Providing for the ballot requirements for a certain election.
- Requiring the State Board of Election to declare the election of the certain candidate.
- Providing for the qualifications of the elected members of the county board.
- Authorizing the student members of the County Board to vote on all matters before the board, with the exception of the certain matters, etc.

SUPPORT

For more info, please scan this QR Code.

MYAC Position: Support
-HB0205/SB0427-
Public Schools- Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products- Requirement
Legislative Session Voting Date: February 23, 2021

- Requires all public schools to have free menstrual health product dispensers in its restrooms.
- Public middle and high schools must have these dispensers installed in at least 2 restrooms by October 1, 2021
- Public elementary schools must have these dispensers installed in at least one restroom by October 1, 2021.

VOTE

Maryland Advisory Youth Council
HB0975
Prince George's County Board of Education Student Member Voting and Member Candidacy PG 306 21

- Authorizing the student member of Prince George's County Board of Education.
- Make sure to vote on all matters before the County Board, with the exception of certain teacher and administrator disciplinary matters.
- Repealing a prohibition on members of the County Board from being candidates for a public office other than the position on the County Board.

SUPPORT

For more info, <http://mabq.maryland.gov/record/legislation/Details/2021/0975>

HB0753
STUDENT ORGANIZED PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS

- This bill prohibits a public school from prohibiting a student from engaging in a peaceful demonstration.
- Prohibits a school from imposing a disciplinary action on a student that is greater than the consequence for an unlawfully absent student.

MYAC'S POSITION: SUPPORT

For more information, check with the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs committee.

Over the course of the 2021 Legislative Session, the Council provided written and/or oral testimony for the following bills:

HB 205/SB 427 - Public Schools - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products - Requirement

Position: Support

Action: The Council provided written testimony for this bill.

Outcome: The bill passed both chambers and was enacted into law.

HB 629 - County Boards of Education – Student Member – Voting

Position: Oppose

Action: The Council provided both written and oral testimony for this bill.

Outcome: Following a multi-organization collaborative effort with youth advocates, the bill received an unfavorable report by the House Ways and Means Committee.

HB 753 - Education - Student-Organized Peaceful Demonstrations - Student Discipline and Policy

Position: Support

Action: The Council provided a letter of support.

Outcome: The bill passed the House and received a hearing in the Senate Educational, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee on April 1, 2021, but never progressed beyond the Committee and did not receive a report.

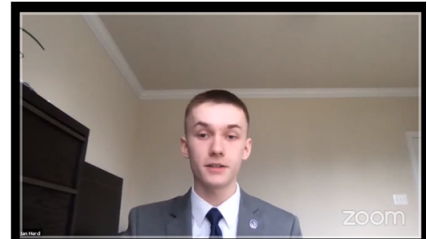


HB 975 - Prince George's County - Board of Education - Student Member Voting and Member Candidacy PG 506-21

Position: Support

Action: The Council provided written testimony for this bill.

Outcome: This bill received a hearing in the House Ways and Means Committee on February 24, 2021, but never progressed beyond the Committee and did not receive a report.

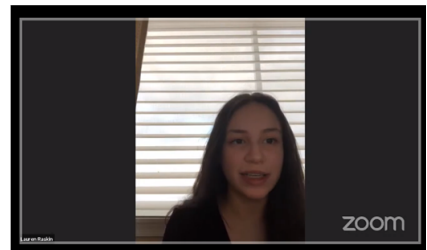


HB 1060/SB 749 - Charles County - Board of Education - Membership Alterations

Position: Support with amendments

Action: The Council provided both written and oral testimony for this bill.

Outcome: The Charles County Board of Education Membership Alterations bill was passed by both chambers and enacted into law.



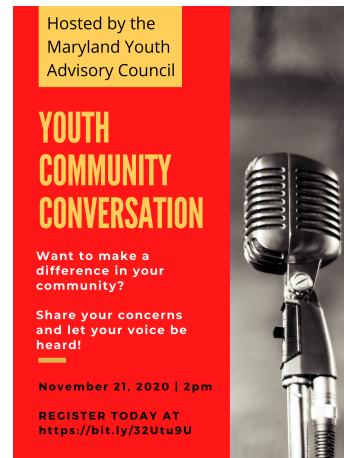
Other Meetings, Events, and Activities

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY TEEN HEALTH SEMINAR

The Council was invited to share how it develops policy recommendations and feedback on adolescent health/wellness for students taking a newly developed Teen Health course at American University. Members gave general background on the Council regarding its mission, responsibilities, process for appointed members, and county based representation on the 2020-2021 Council. Members gave a detailed presentation outlining past Council legislative priorities/platform points along with the bills for which the Council took a position relating to teen health, such as health education, life skills, trauma-informed care, and safety and student discipline. After the presentation, Council members opened the floor to the students taking the Teen Health course and allowed for any questions, concerns, and/or suggestions. Members were very excited to have the opportunity to share information about the Council and the ways it has advocated to improve teen health through the legislative process.


VIRTUAL COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Through the initiative of the public awareness committee, the Council hosted a virtual community conversation to identify and develop solutions to community problems, engage young people in creating community change, share thoughts and ideas to policymakers, and help young people learn and engage with the Council. The Council received support and assistance on how to host a virtual community conversation from Maryland Mentor and the Maryland Out of School Time Network. The community conversation was a very interactive, collaborative, and included student-led debate. The Council gained much insight into the concerns of youth in the context of the ongoing pandemic. This conversation not only informed the policy agenda but also gave members a rewarding experience of directly interacting with its constituency and peers.




MID-ATLANTIC PUBLIC HEALTH CONFERENCE

The Council was invited to present at the 2020 Virtual Mid-Atlantic Public Health Conference to provide a youth perspective on youth-focused health policy and the impacts of COVID-19 on young people. Attending members gave a thorough overview of the legislative priorities of the Council for the previous legislative session, outlining subjects such as educational equity, financial literacy, and health education among others. Notably, the Council was able to bring a very specific and unique perspective of the impact of COVID-19 on youth education and health, putting into perspective the stress, isolation, lack of resources, and inequity that many have faced during this time.




STRESS

- Feeling overwhelmed from COVID-19, racial injustice, and academics
- Taking on adult responsibilities




ISOLATION

- Disconnected from family, friends, supportive adults, activities
- Stigma or fear of asking for help



RESOURCES

- Mental health/emotional support
- Academic
- Economic



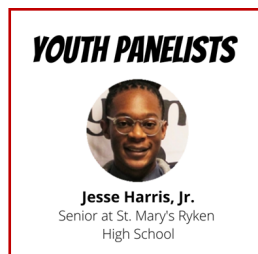
INEQUITY

- Access to education and virtual learning
- Students with disabilities
- Poverty/economic stability

The presentation further discussed defining traits of a healthy Maryland, citing positive affirmation and support, building of community, equity hubs, and youth-specific resources as key characteristics of an

ideal world. Finally, the Council outlined legislation regarding trauma-informed care (HB 277) and the specific portions of the bill that pertained to the health subjects at hand during the event. Members were honored to share both information regarding the Council’s role in the community as well as the change that they hope to see for young people across the state.

MARYLAND MENTOR REAL TALK YOUTH FORUM



Council member Jesse Harris, Jr., served as member of the planning committee and panelist for Maryland MENTOR’s youth forum, “Real Talk: Maryland High School Students Forum on Race Equity.” This youth-led forum included a youth panel discussing their experiences with racism and inequality, the introduction of terms like “intersectionality” and “systemic power,” and a conversation on what youth can do in the future to continue the fight against racism and inequality.

GIRL BE HEARD - MENSTRUAL EQUITY EVENT

Council member Lauren Raskin planned and supported “Let’s Talk: Menstrual Equity MD Event” sponsored by G-Leads MD, an extension of Girl Be Heard, NY - an intersectional feminist organization - which seeks to empower the voices of young females and female identifying individuals through public speaking and performing arts. Panelists educated participants on menstrual equity, specifically what menstrual equity is and what implementation of menstrual equity looks like in the State of Maryland. The event primarily focused on three menstrual equity related bills in the Maryland General Assembly, of which one (HB 205/SB 427) was supported by the Council. The event also shared how youth advocates can write and present testimony in support of these bills during the legislative session.

FOSTER YOUTH ADVOCACY CORPS CONFERENCE PLANNING

The Council established a long-term partnership with Loney Nguyen, the Foster Care Ombud at the Department of Human Services. The role of the Ombud is to serve as an advocate for youth in foster care and investigate complaints against the Department on behalf of the youth. Through the initiative “Foster Youth Unite,” foster youth advocates and allies will participate in a four-week program in the month of October to learn about the legislative process and how to be self-advocates. Council members have the pleasure of lending their first-hand knowledge of the legislative process as well as advocacy. Throughout these workshops, youth with foster care experience will be able to use what they have learned to ensure their voices are heard when legislation is created by elected officials. The Council is ecstatic to contribute to the planning of the workshop, building connections with other youth leaders, and learning from the experiences of other young people.

MSDE STUDENT SUPPORT PLANNING COMMITTEE

With the Council’s focus on youth mental health and well-being, the Chair was invited to present to the MSDE Student Support Initiative planning committee. The Council shared the results of the virtual community conversation, where participants and Council members were asked to share their vision of a healthy Maryland. This healthy Maryland includes:

- Positive affirmation;
- A strong sense of community, connection, and support;

- Easily accessible, youth-specific resources;
- Community hubs for activities, resources, and supports; and
- Trauma-informed schools and communities.

Many of these goals align with the work of the MSDE Student Support Initiative to bring mental health support and resources to students and families in response to COVID-19, and preparing for students returning to school buildings. The Chair was asked to join the workgroup, and attend and participate in all future meetings to provide the youth/student perspective and needs during the planning process.

BALTIMORE CITY JUVENILE JUSTICE DIVERSION WORKGROUP

The Baltimore City Mayor’s Office of Children and Family Success leads the Youth Diversion Workgroup. This workgroup brings together stakeholders, including youth with lived experience and youth leaders to support the diversion of youth from the juvenile justice system and system reform. The Council was connected to this workgroup through its priority of youth justice. Members of the Council will attend future workgroup meetings and collaborate on policy and legislative actions.

CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS! CAMPAIGN

The Council has focused on the mental health and well-being of Maryland’s youth and young adults for more than five years, including its legislative priority for two consecutive years. May is Mental Health Awareness Month and a week is dedicated to raise awareness about children’s mental health. The Council voted to participate in the Children’s Mental Health Matters! Campaign and signed on as community champions to share information for children and youth about supporting their mental health and well-being. Using materials provided by the campaign, the Council created daily self-care and coping tips for the day. These were shared on the Council’s Facebook page and members also shared posts using their personal social media.

Self Care Skill of the Day
A Good Night's Sleep
 It is important to try to sleep between 8 and 10 hours each night.
 If you're having trouble falling asleep, try putting away electronics (phone, tv, computer, video games, or tablet) an hour before bed, or do something relaxing as part of your bedtime routine such as reading a book, writing in a journal, taking deep breaths, imagining being in your favorite place.

GO GREEN for Children's Mental Health Awareness!

Coping Skill of the Day
Talking to a Friend
 Sometimes you just need to be heard. Having a friend that listens without judging can really help when you are feeling worried, overwhelmed or depressed. Research shows that social support is one of our best buffers against stress, and positive friendships are important for our overall well-being.
 Friends are like life jackets, sometimes you really need them, and sometimes it's good just knowing they are there.

2021-2022 APPLICATION Q&A SESSION

On June 5, 2020, the Council hosted a virtual application Q&A session. This was an opportunity for applicants to learn more about the Council, the roles and responsibilities of members, the experiences of members’ time serving, and answer questions about the application process.

GOVERNOR LARRY HOGAN’S “PROJECT BOUNCE BACK” PRESS CONFERENCE

On May 6, 2021, Chair, Ian Herd, and Public Awareness Committee Chair, Nina Bundy, attended the Governor's press conference at the Boys & Girls Club in West Baltimore to announce the launch of Project Bounce Back. The Council was recognized by Glenn Fueston, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services and Dr. Karen Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools of the Maryland State Department of Education for its efforts to bring the voices and experiences of youth and young adults to state agencies about their needs, especially during the pandemic. The Council supports the expansion of Boy & Girls Clubs throughout Maryland as a safe space for young people to learn and grow in their communities, and the deployment of additional mental health support in schools for students and their families through the Student Support Initiative.



Recommendations for 2021-2022 Council

At the final meeting of the year, Ms. Drushel Williams facilitated a reflection activity for members to think about the Council year, focusing on: (1) what worked, (2) what did not work, and (3) recommendations for improvement next year. Below are the results of the reflection activity. The Council recommends to the 2021-2022 Council to review and consider these ideas for the improvement of the Council and related activities during the 2021-2022 term.

WHAT WORKED? WHAT DID YOU LIKE? WHAT SHOULD WE KEEP NEXT YEAR?

- Virtual access
- Collaborating with other organizations and youth-led initiatives
- Good committee structure
- Good communication between members and Ms. Drushel Williams
- Good virtual environment, feeling comfortable to speak and share, ice breakers, feeling supported by members
- Presentations from other youth-led projects and guest speakers during meetings
- Virtual testimony during legislative session
- Variety of opportunities to attend presentations, conference, outside of regular council meetings
- Community conversation
- Ricky's words of wisdom

WHAT DID NOT WORK? WHAT DID YOU NOT LIKE?

- Google Meet did not have the functionalities that were needed, many members preferred using Zoom
- Members felt disconnected from other members because side conversations during breaks and before and after meetings were not happening
- Need for informal communication with members between meetings
- Events or additional opportunities were not well promoted/communicated to members, sometimes things felt last minute
- Slack/GoogleDrive were not well utilized to create collaborative working space for members
- Wanted to host more community events

WHAT CAN BE BETTER NEXT YEAR? WHAT SHOULD BE DIFFERENT?

- Utilize more breakout rooms and create space for members to interact and learn more about one another
- Create more breaks and incorporate games or interactive activities during meetings
- Have more executive board and committee meetings, and consider more general Council meetings
- Review on-boarding materials for new members
- Utilize Groupme for reminders and use less email
- Begin legislative session training earlier in the year, and provide more information about past legislative priorities and bills
- Collaborate more with schools and other organizations to encourage the public to attend Council meetings