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Gooooood morning! I'm Michael Yin, and I'm running to be your SMOB.

If there's one thing that stuck out to me about the SMOB election last year, it was watching the Meet the Candidates video in my US Government class. Many of my classmates had kinda given up, thinking it wouldn't make a difference no matter who won, and I can understand why they felt this way. All too often, students feel alienated from the election process, and many students don't end up seeing the issues they care about being addressed. I'm running to try and spark the flame again, to show students we really can achieve the changes we fight for.

I'll never forget when my classmates excitedly shouted that I should run. They inspired me, and I'll do my best to inspire them, as well as all the other students in MCPS who've been left out of the discussion. The reason most students aren't heard is all too simple: nobody asks. I want to do so at last; I want to ask, because I know that the best ideas don't come from one person, they're created when we all work together.

There are a lot of problems we need to solve, from mental health and the achievement gap to taking care of our environment and making sure we all feel safe in our schools. Most importantly, education should be about inspiring students and preparing them for life after high school, not making students forget their passions and lose their way. It's not just SMOB elections that are leaving students behind; often times, the whole school system is.

We can put off these problems for the next generation, but I don't think that's right at all. We also can't just make a few small changes and say we've finally succeeded. Instead, we need to seriously consider the impact of leaving these issues unaddressed, and realize that every day we waste is a day we don't get back.

We need new ideas, and we need practical solutions. We need to ask every student, not just those who are most visible. We need someone who's willing to put everything aside to lead the way, and I hope to do just that. I'm fortunate to have so many friends supporting me and the campaign, and I'll do my best to earn your support as well.

We have experience, we have ideas, and most importantly, we have the raw passion that it takes to get things done. Together, we can make it happen.

We're Yin it to Win it!

Platform, in Brief

- Guaranteeing mental health training for teachers, in addition to counselors, which can truly save lives and help ensure student well-being
- Combating the achievement gap through greater collaboration with programs like Minority Scholars and Black CAP
- Re-implementing “exam week” to give teachers time to grade and students time to study and destress
- Opposing Governor Hogan’s mandate that schools must start after Labor Day; standardized exams like APs and IBs don’t wait for us
- Fighting to keep our current school start times instead of starting 20 minutes earlier
- Providing funding for students to take the SAT, ACT, and Magnet exams for free
- Expanding free after school dinner programs to more schools in the county
- Creating a centralized service for students to easily learn about SSL opportunities
- Expanding service clubs to provide more SSL opportunities in school
- Minimizing course requirements, so students can choose the classes they’re interested in
- Making it easier for students to have name changes recognized by the school system
- Increasing funding for music and the arts, as well as other electives
- Shifting towards project-based assessments that show a student’s capabilities effectively
- Emphasizing passion for learning over just gaining knowledge, and allowing students the time they need to pursue their passions

Experience

- **Van Hollen for Senate** Campaign Intern (Congratulations, Senator Van Hollen!)
- **Maryland State SMOB** Advisory Board Member, working with MD SMOB David Edimo to improve education here in MCPS and in other Maryland counties
- **Montgomery County Regional SGA** Public Relations Director and Education Policy Deputy, testifying before the Board of Education and reaching out to MCPS students
- **CUPS Club** founder and president, tackling the issue of mental health through a service club that connects people who need someone to talk to with students willing to listen
- **Montgomery Blair High School** SGA web team leader and class president, working to make student leadership more accessible to every student

What are your top three goals for your term? What steps would you take to achieve your goals?

- To bring the role of SMOB closer to the students
- To find practical solutions instead of ideas that just sound pleasing
- To work effectively with the rest of the Board of Education to make real differences

As SMOB, I don't want to be an isolated politician; I believe it is absolutely necessary to respond to every student all across the county, not just a convenient few. I plan to gather as many student opinions as possible, online and in person, and I will work with the rest of the Board to fight for us.

The Student Member of the Board of Education recently acquired a vote on the MCPS budget. If you could allocate ten million dollars anywhere in the budget, where would it be and why?

I would use the ten million dollars to address the issues of **mental health, testing fees, and school food programs.**

For just a small portion of the ten million, we can fund **mental health training for teachers**, who see students every day and can truly make a difference by recognizing signs of mental health problems. Then, by providing **funding to allow students to take tests like the SAT, ACT, and Magnet exams for free**, and by expanding the **free after school dinner program** to more schools, we can go a long way towards tackling student hunger and the achievement gap.