

DCCBA Black Excellence Award

Exemplifying the traits of a great leader in my community and doing everything I can to influence my peers to do the same has made me the person I am today. Whether I was given a leadership role or not, I have always been able to take charge and make a positive difference. I am hard-working, ambitious and very passionate about everything I do. I have made great accomplishments during my high school career. Some accomplishments include becoming the leader of both the Black Student Union as well as the Equity Committee at my school, accepting the Black History Leadership Award, part-taking in a board broadcasted video about discrimination in our schools, as well as recently becoming a Student Representative on the Black Community Advisory Council in the Dufferin-Peel Catholic School Board. I proudly took these accomplishments and continued to strive for more opportunities. These accomplishments have helped me realize that my purpose is to make a difference and encourage others to reach their fullest potential despite their race, religion or culture.

By expressing my concerns about discrimination within our schools, I made a great impact and helped board representatives realize that there are issues that need to be addressed for the benefit of students and staff. This inspired many of my peers to speak up and express their opinions on injustices in our schools as well. As youth in our community, our voices must be heard. I will never give up on what I believe in and what is best for my community. I was able to make a difference in my school when I joined the Black Student Union and the Student Council. I was also asked to join the Principal's Table club at my school where I was able to express my concerns and make recommendations to help the school community. Being a part of the Black Student Union from grade 9 has helped me learn more about my race and power within my

school. I have learned many helpful skills from these clubs and the teachers who have guided me along the right path.

The impact I have made in my school community and all of the people I have met during my high school career will have a positive long-term impact. In the past 3 years I have spent at my high school, I have taken initiative and used my voice to show administrators as well as students that it is important to stand up for what you believe in. Many students are afraid to express their opinions because they feel that it is invalid but this is not true. When I became a Student Representative on the Black Community Advisory Council, I immediately used it as an opportunity to not only speak for myself but my community as a whole. Students deserve to have a voice just as much as educators. Attending a school where you are not able to express yourself can cause students to feel invisible and discouraged. This is why I am incredibly passionate about justice and equality in schools as well as my community.

I hope that one day I will be able to make as much of a difference in the world as I have within my school board. The issues of inequalities have not rested and neither will I until there is justice and equity for everyone. I have proved that I am a dedicated student and leader on many occasions. Currently, I am working with the Principal of Equity of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board to update a reporting tool that was created for students to report incidents at their schools including bullying. We are currently updating the platform as a way for it to be used to report incidents regarding racism and other issues regarding equity. It is important for students to feel comfortable enough to report their concerns to the school board without feeling ignored or excluded.

In closing, during my high school career, I have exemplified many qualities that all leaders should possess. I have made positive contributions to my school community such as

leading the Black Student Union as well as the Equity Committee and becoming a Student Representative on the Black Community Advisory Council. I took these roles and went above and beyond to show my peers as well as my educators that we need to work together collectively to improve our society and create a safe environment for everyone.