



Press Release

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Finalists announced for 2026 student advisor to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

Charlotte, NC – Eleven juniors have been named finalists to become the 2026 student advisor to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education.

The Board received approximately 140 applications from students from almost every high school in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), representing each of the six Board member districts and advocating for a wide range of priorities. High school students from across the District will vote for the candidate they feel best represents their interests. CMS is one of the few districts where high school students determine the winner of the student advisor position.

"This year, the votes will be based on the Electoral Vote (EV) system versus the plurality vote system," explains Dee Rankin, Vice Chair of the Board of Education and one of the student advisor committee's seven members. "This change allows students from small and large high schools the opportunity to serve as the student body's representative on the Board of Education. I am looking forward to meet all finalists and learn who will ultimately serve as our student advisor in 2026!"

Other committee members include Board member and Chair of the Board's Intergovernmental Relationships Committee, Summer Nunn; the Board's 2025 Student Advisor, Lucy Silverstein; Executive Director of GenerationNation, Amy Farrell; current Teacher of the Year, Gregory Gabriel; current Principal of the Year, Tracey Harrill; and Executive Director of Government Affairs, Policy & Board Communications, Charles Jeter.

The student-advisor position was created by the Board of Education in 2016. The winner of this year's competition will be the 10th student advisor to the Board. Under Board policy, the student advisor may advocate for students, offer opinions and ideas, and provide student perspective for Board decisions. The student advisor is not a voting member of the Board.

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The 2026 selected student advisor will serve January through December. The successful candidate is expected to prepare for and attend regular meetings of the Board and participate in Board discussions. The student advisor also serves as an officer of the [Charlotte-Mecklenburg Youth Council](#), CMS's Unified Student Advisory Council, and CMS partner GenerationNation.

Candidates will campaign from October 1 to November 4, Election Day 2025. All CMS students in grades nine through 12 can cast a vote. The voting period runs from October 16 to Election Day. The winner will be announced November 5.

In alphabetical order by last name, the finalists and their high schools are listed below:

Aahana Amraotkar, Ardrey Kell	Shernelle Gil, West Mecklenburg
Sanai Bailey, Independence	Inchara Gopinath, North Mecklenburg
Sofie Cheng, Providence	Winnie Kapuba, Rocky River
Eric Cortez Escalante, Julius L. Chambers	Devin Miller, Phillip O. Berry Academy of Technology
Brianna Da Cruz, William Amos Hough	Nandhana Ramesh, Ballantyne Ridge
Devone English, Hawthorne Academy of Health Sciences	

Questions can be directed to boardcomms@cms.k12.nc.us.