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North Mecklenburg High School junior is the 2026 student advisor to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

Charlotte, NC – Inchara Gopinath, a junior from North Mecklenburg High School, is the 2026 student advisor to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education. Students across the district chose from an impressive pool of 11 finalists from each Board member district of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS).

Gopinath serves as the vice president of North Mecklenburg High's speech and debate team, where she mentors underclassmen, promotes a team culture that values voice as much as victory, and is a three-time nationals' qualifier. Her passion extends to helping others, exemplified by her role organizing fundraisers to support leukemia and lymphoma research. Finally, Gopinath is a golfer who has qualified for regionals and won independent tournaments. She shares that the "real win is learning how to reset after failure." Her experience as a student leader and sports competitor will shape how she represents and advocates for all students.

"I believe the Board's student advisor shouldn't just speak for students, but *with* them, bridging the gap between policy and lived experience," shares Gopinath. "I'm deeply committed to listening across lines of difference and ensuring every student, from every background, feels seen in the decisions CMS makes."

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education is one of the few boards across the country that has a student advisor representative. This non-voting advisory member ensures that the voice of students is part of important discussions and that the Board's decisions continue to be student focused. This was the first year the Board moved to an Electoral Vote (EV) system so that student candidates from high schools of all sizes had an opportunity to be selected.

"Every year, I am impressed by our student advisor's commitment to the Board of Education," Vice Chair Rankin states. "I am even more impressed with their ability to stand up for what they feel is right for students of many backgrounds. The student advisor's ability to commit and speak for their peers is a testament to



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CMS's role in nurturing young leaders of tomorrow. I look forward to working with Inchara!"

The role of the student advisor is made possible through a longtime CMS partnership with [GenerationNation](#) – an award-winning non-profit that works with CMS on K-12 literacy and develops a new generation of civic leaders through student leadership programs including the process to elect student advisors to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education.

"The student advisor program is a unique opportunity for students across the district to build civic literacy, strengthen student involvement in district governance, and elevate student voice," states GenerationNation Executive Director, Amy Farrell. "At a time when many adults are disengaged from civic life, it is especially inspiring to see students leading the way – demonstrating what it means to be informed, thoughtful, and actively involved in their schools and community."

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