

Hello, my name is Quinn Scholtes and I am a Junior at Oakdale High School, here, I am the Vice President of Oakdale's SGA and am involved in multiple other clubs. Before discussing my platform, I want you to get to know a little bit about me, I have lived in Frederick County since I was in 3rd grade, I am a youth leader at my church, am a part of the Leadership Academy at Oakdale, and I am an intern at the Public Health Program. I am so grateful for all the wonderful opportunities I have had living here in Frederick and am grateful to now be running for SMOB and to represent the students at FCPS. Now to my platform, my platform includes focusing on students' mental health, social justice issues and returning back to school safely in the midst of COVID-19. First, I want to discuss mental health. The National Alliance on Mental Illness says that 1 in 6 youth from ages 6 to 17 in the United States have a mental health disorder, these are just the numbers for youth who have been diagnosed, there are thousands of youth who struggle in silence. I believe that schools have a responsibility to guide students in improving their mental health and to give them resources to aid them in their mental health struggles. There should be mandatory 5-10 minute brain breaks for students in their classes so they can have a moment to collect themselves. Also, there should be assemblies during the school day once every two months where stories and information are shared about mental health. If possible, FCPS should have contracts with a helpline company or pay for psychologists who can be on call for phone calls from students around the county. The second part of my platform focuses on promoting awareness of social justice issues in our schools. Many students and people in general are not aware of many social justice issues in this county, state, country and world. Therefore, it is highly important that our schools educate students, even from a very young age about these issues. Every single school in the county should have a club or program that focuses on educating students about social justice issues in our community. Also, conversations about social justice issues should be implemented in class discussions and school assemblies, so this is not an issue that is overlooked simply because people are scared to discuss it. It should be a learning experience for many children and a way to empower them to have their voices heard. The final part of my platform is going safely back to school, in person during the COVID-19 pandemic. The American Academy of Pediatrics has stressed the importance of going back to school for the student's emotional and educational development. In person school is very important for students, as they also cannot learn to their full potential virtually, however with the pandemic, going back must be done in a safe manner. It should be ensured that all students wear masks the entire day, constantly wash their hands, are not sharing any food, maintain social distancing and that surfaces of the school are being cleaned in a way that meets the CDC's protocol. Schools should begin going back to school hybrid and then as more advances are made, schools should go back fully in person. It is important to me that I represent all students in FCPS and ensure their needs are being met, including the needs of their guardians and families. With my platform I hope to create a safe space for students in schools, where they feel they are being heard and understood and can grow to their full potential.