

I am Caroline Ricardo, a rising senior at High School in the Community Academy for Law and Social Justice, and I am running for a student position on the New Haven Board of Education. I moved to the city of New Haven in 2011 and since then, I've been to four schools. I've had good and bad experiences in the NHPS system because every time I started to feel comfortable in a place, I was changed to another and I had to meet and make new friends over and over again. I love that I have had the opportunity to attend so many different schools because it has introduced me not only to one side of New Haven but to many different cultures and students who have faced the same circumstances as me.

As an ELL student, it was very difficult for me to know what was going on in the classroom. I did four years of school in the United States without knowing fluent English, but I was an honor roll student. The fact that I was put in regular classrooms, in a sink or swim situation, gave me the opportunity to challenge myself and reach goals that I never thought about before and I am thankful for that. I now am volunteering at the Youth Court with New Haven's Juvenile Justice System and Yale Law School, I am part of the Wilderness Inspired Leadership Development (WILD) production company at HSC, I was a thrower for the Wilbur Cross Track & Field team, I will be going into my second college class at Gateway Community College next fall, and during the summer I will be attending Aspirations For Higher Learning at the Yale University Campus. These experiences are very important to me because I never in a million years would've thought I could be part of these great opportunities due to how much I struggled to even understand the lessons in 7th grade. I believe that with extra help, other students like me will believe and put themselves in the best spot there is for them. Schools should let their students know about the opportunities that are there for them and that they have the potential to do anything they set their minds to. I would like to give back to my city and make the NHPS experience for other students better. I believe that I can contribute to that change.

I want to be the voice at the Board of Education that we, the students, need. I want to promote empathy for students who have added home responsibilities because some schools need to understand that life for some of their students isn't the best. Students are expected to make school their first priority, however, that is not the case for some students that need to be the head of their households or do not have the personal support every student needs to go through school. I want to promote extra academic help and support during and after school for students who would like to challenge themselves, for those students who would like to raise their grades and graduate successfully, for any students who believe they can do it. I want to see that opportunity being given to every NHPS student. I would also like to ensure that the Board of Education understands the reality of ELL students and others who don't have a voice in our schools. I did not have anybody who could speak up for me when I was struggling, so I want to be the one who will speak up for my peers.

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