The most influential part of my high school education has been my work with the Cambridge School Committee. In my Junior and Senior years, I was elected to the Student School Committee at my high school, a body that was created by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1972, for the purpose of being the voice of the student body, for the School Committees in each city or town in the state.

The Chairman of the Student School Committee is mandated by the state to be a non-voting member of each respective School Committee. I was elected Chairman of the body in both years, by the 5 Student School Committee members, and proceeded to assume the duties and responsibilities of a Cambridge School Committee member. Among my tasks were making presentations to the Cambridge School Committee, reporting back and collecting information from the 2500 member student body at the high school, and addressing concerns that the student body had to the School Committee itself.

I initially thought that most of my work would involve low level tasks, mainly dealing with the collecting of information, with a few speeches here and there at School Committee meetings. I didn't think there could be very many issues that students felt needed to be dealt with. I was wrong.

One of the first experiences I had with the committee was dealing with a 2.4 billion dollar budget deficit. The entire Cambridge School Department was in a panic, due to the fact that it seemed layoffs and cutbacks were necessary in order to stay within the confines of the budget. One of the proposed cuts was the elimination one of the two guidance counselors in Pilot.

Pilot is an alternative school housed within the Cambridge Rindge and Latin main campus that I attend. It is part of the Cambridge Public Schools, and receives funding from the city. All throughout Pilot history, there have been repeated attempts to either eliminate Pilot altogether, or to severely cut back financial support for it. Much to the chagrin of the School Department Administration, parents, teachers, and students have rallied around Pilot each time, demanding that funding be maintained for the program, and preventing from any type of major cuts to go into effect.

I was faced with an interesting dilemma, one that I began to realize was commonplace in the political arena. I was a member of the Pilot School, so therefore, I had to fight for the re-instatement of the guidance counselor position. But on the other hand, I was also a member of the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, so I had to represent all of the students in the high school. I decided that I was correct in defending the Pilot School, because due to the fact that Pilot would have been able to survive a loss of one of their guidance counselors, all students, present and prospective, would lose the benefits that Pilot provided them with. This would be a loss for everyone.

A City Council budget sub-committee hearing was scheduled to deal with the problem, and turnout was expected to be heavy. Little did the City Councillors know, Pilot was ready to send everyone involved with it to give the Councillors a strong message.

The 200 or so pilot students, the staff, and parents met one night to decide how to proceed. It almost seemed like we were thrown back 10 or 20 years, with people talking about sit ins, civil disobedience and the like. Once again, I was faced with the believe that not only would
ems to be the best place I know that would allow me to grow, and experience what makes up a "real" college education.