



**Montgomery County Taxpayers League
GUIDANCE FOR VOTERS: BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES, 2024**

Montgomery County Board of Education At-Large

Candidate	Political/Work Experience	Experience: Budget Oversight Large Orgs	Closing Opportunity Gap	MCPS' Biggest Problem/Need	Attract & Retain Effective School Staff	Teen Mental Health Resources	Parent of MCPS Student(s)	Why are you Running for BOE	School Resource Officers (SROs)	Opt-Out Curriculum for Religious Beliefs
Lynne Harris	Incumbent, BOE member	BOE Chair, Fiscal Management Committee	Professional development, geographically accessibility programs, talented teachers in underperforming schools.	Systemwide quality assurance monitoring & proactive collaboration.	Grow your own program, ensure all feel safe, welcome, valued. Strengthen central support for schools.	Increase Psychologists, counselors & School Wellness Centers.	No	Build inclusive & affirming schools	No SROs. Restorative Justice & DHHS interventions.	No
Sharif Hidayat	Retired Police Officer	Finance Committee member for \$1M budget	Early detection, individualized equity intervention & active parental involvement.	Safe learning environment, phone use during instruction.	Safe & professional environment, hold central office accountable to employee complaints.	Limit cell phone usage & screen time in school.	Yes, Elementary School	Safer schools	Yes SROs in MS & HS. Build trust with School Staff & students	Yes
Melissa Kim	DCPS Deputy Chancellor, Teacher, Principal	Not Provided	Expand access to advanced courses, equitable funding models, community engagement & data-driven decisions.	Not Provided	Competitive salaries, wellness programs, career advancement, supportive workplace, address workload & class size.	Expand school clubs & activities, Student-led solutions.	Yes, Elementary School Middle School	Improve the quality of curriculum & innovation	Yes SROs	Yes
Jonathan Long	Director of Operations at Credit Union	Manage \$3M average annual Contracts	Diverse & inclusive curriculum, recruit & retain diverse educators, provide training on DEI & accessibility.	Demoralized Staff, lack of transparency & excessive legal fees.	Work life balance, reduce paperwork & signing bonus for high demand roles.	Sports programs, school counselors, psychologists & social workers.	No, Private Special Education, Middle School	Improve SpEd student outcomes, Teacher work-life balance	Yes SROs in HS. Deescalation & rapid response to emergencies	No
Rita Montoya	Advocate, Public Defender/Attorney PTA Leader	Not Provided	Individualized Teacher led tutoring, small group teacher learning.	Lack of Community trust.	Increase Educator compensation through increased MCPS budget.	School Social workers & Psychologists.	Yes, Elementary School	Give voice to Elementary School, BIPOC & SpEd families	Yes SROs in some HS. Anti-racist/biased Trained	No
Fitzgerald Mofor	Paralegal, Educator	Not Provided	More innovative schools, literacy coaches & personalized learning.	Achievement gap.	Establish oversight committee to investigate anonymous complaints.	School Psychologists, School Wellness Centers, after-school activities.	No	Improve student outcomes, better wage for para-educators	Yes SROs in schools. No Restorative Justice.	Yes

Montgomery County Board of Education District 2

Candidate	Political/Work Experience	Experience: Budget Oversight Large Orgs	Closing Opportunity Gap	MCPS' Biggest Problem/Need	Attract & Retain Effective School Staff	Teen Mental Health Resources	Parent of Current MCPS Student(s)	Why are you Running for BOE	School Resource Officers (SROs)	Opt-Out Curriculum for Religious Beliefs
Brenda M Diaz	Teacher, advocate	Not Provided	Identify disparities & implement strategies based on needs. Utilize Central Staff to fill vacant positions. High Student expectations.	Safe learning atmosphere, improve teacher morale & retention, address disciplinary issues.	Boost teacher morale, keep GoGuardian, host forums & visit classrooms. Enforce student code of conduct.	Collaborate with parents, teachers, school counselors, psychologists, social workers, & school nurse.	Yes, High School	Improve student outcomes, Accountability	Yes SROs in MS & HS. Build trust & positive relations	Yes
Ricky Fai Mui	Veteran, MBA	Developed multi-million dollar Procurement budgets	Regional Career & Technical Education clusters.	Competent leaders that understand how to properly manage \$3.3 Billion Dollar Enterprise.	Supportive administration, live in safe communities, minimized travel & personal financial solvency.	mental health awareness in Environment, hereditary, drugs, or life choices. Normalize help.	Yes, Elementary School	Improve student outcomes, Teacher work-life balance	Yes SROs in Schools. Rapid response to emergencies.	Yes
Rebecca Smondrowski	Incumbent, BOE member	12 years BOE incumbent	Individualized supports & equitable access to resources, rigorous instruction & highly qualified staff. Expand grow your own program.	Improving academic performance by focusing on math & reading skills.	Competitive compensation, more planning time & professional development opportunities.	Expand programs & mental health supports, positive behavioral interventions & telehealth.	No	Improve student outcomes, school safety & climate	Yes SROs/CEO in MS & ES only. Build trust & positive relations.	No
Aby Thioye	Clinical Research Coordinator	Not Provided	Expand gifted programs, magnet schools, tutoring & mentoring.	Failing in its stated mission, failing academics, lack of transparency.	10% pay increase, end wasteful spending, merit pay for performance, implement IG findings, build trust & accountability.	Ban phone use during school hours. Counseling & COVID recovery assistance.	No, Private Religious School	Voice to immigrant families, Accountability & Transparency	Yes SROs in HS. Not involved in discipline, deescalation training.	Yes
Natalie Zimmerman	MCPS Teacher	Managed Congressional campaign budget	Implicit bias training for Educators, equity focused examination of where resources are spent.	Accountability crisis, professional development to build capacity & leadership.	Reduce expectations on workers in MCPS to retain Educators. BOE uphold union contracts, tenable workload & supportive environment.	School behavioral support personnel, excuse students for 4 mental health days per year.	No	Improve outcomes for Students & Teachers	No SROs: Contributes to School-to-prison pipeline.	No

Montgomery County Board of Education District 4

Candidate	Political/Work Experience	Experience: Budget Oversight Large Orgs	Closing Opportunity Gap	MCPS' Biggest Problem/Need	Attract & Retain Effective School Staff	Teen Mental Health Resources	Parent of Current MCPS Student(s)	Why are you Running for BOE	School Resource Officers (SROs)	Opt-Out Curriculum for Religious Beliefs
Shebra Evans	Incumbent BOE member, Treasurer MABE	8 years BOE Incumbent	Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Equitable outcomes for every student.	Improve outcomes for students & communication infrastructure, build trust with families.	Strategic recruitment, build relationships, Certification for support staff, Competitive salary & Grow-Your-Own initiative.	Counseling & mental health services.	Yes, High School	Improve student outcomes, equity focused	No SROs. Current CEO program.	No
Bethany S. Mandel	Journalist and Commentator	Not Provided	Expand science of reading initiatives, prioritize teachers in classrooms.	Falling test scores, rising violence, wasted spending, soaring absenteeism.	Safe & respectful school climate. Re-evaluation Restorative Justice.	Anti-bullying task force, involve parents in mental health concerns. No phone use during school day.	No, Home School Elementary School	Improve outcomes for Students, Respect Parental Rights	Yes SROs in MS & HS. Maintain safe schools.	Yes
Laura M Stewart	Advocate, PTA, music Tutor	6 years PTA Capital Improvement Program tracker.	Universal Pre-K, focus on science of reading, intervention teams, equitable access to quality teachers, tutoring.	Improve outcomes, reform systems & structure from the top down.	Grow-Your-Own initiative. Competitive benefits & Compensation, evaluate exit interviews & MCPS positive growth culture.	Direct outreach programs for extracurricular activities, & lunch bunches. Telehealth access at schools.	No	Improve outcomes, equity, Accountability, Transparency	No SROs, enhance CEO program.	No

Sources of candidate and voting information:

League of Women Voters of Montgomery County Voters Guide 2024

MoCo360 2024 Voters Guide, Board of Education

Montgomery Perspective School Board Questionnaire: MCPs' Biggest Problem

Montgomery Perspective School Board Questionnaire: Experience with Budgets

Montgomery Perspective School Board Questionnaire: Opt-Outs for Parents

Montgomery Perspective School Board Questionnaire: Police Officers in Schools

Vote411 information for Voters

Contact information for all 2024 Board of Education candidates – Maryland State Board of Elections, candidate information by county