



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

Montgomery County Board of Education **District 2**

| Candidate                  | Political/Work Experience      | Experience: Budget Oversight Large                 | Closing Opportunity Gap  | MCPS' Biggest Problem/Need   | Attract & Retain Effective School Staff  | Teen Mental Health Resources  | Parent of Current MCPS               | Why are you Running for BOE                                | School Resource Officers (SROs)  | Opt-Out Curriculum |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|--|--------------------|
| <b>Brenda M Diaz</b>       | 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. | <b>Yes</b> , High School             | Improve student outcomes, Accountability                   | <b>Yes SROs</b> in MS & HS. Build trust & positive relations           | <b>Yes</b>         |
| <b>Ricky Fai Mui</b>       | 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.           | <b>Yes</b> , Elementary School       | Improve student outcomes, Teacher work-life balance        | <b>Yes SROs</b> in Schools. Rapid response to emergencies.             | <b>Yes</b>         |
| <b>Rebecca Smondrowski</b> | 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.             | <b>No</b>                            | Improve student outcomes, school safety & climate          | <b>Yes SROs/CEO</b> in MS & ES only. Build trust & positive relations. | <b>No</b>          |
| <b>Aby Thioye</b>          | Clinical Research Co-ordinator | 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.                            | <b>No</b> , Private Religious School | Voice to immigrant families, Accountability & Transparency | <b>Yes SROs</b> in HS. Not involved in discipline, deescalation        | <b>Yes</b>         |
| <b>Natalie Zimmerman</b>   | 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.               | <b>No</b>                            | Improve outcomes for Students & Teachers                   | <b>No SROs:</b> Contributes to School-to-prison pipeline.              | <b>No</b>          |

Authorized by Montgomery County Taxpayers League, Esther Wells, President. Gordon Brenne, Treasurer, April 2024.

**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's 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