

The People's Voice May 20

ETHICS BALLOT QUESTIONNAIRE

Howard County Board of Education Primary 2022

Congratulations on your decision to run for the Howard County Board of Education. The People’s Voice is a civic/political organization in Howard and Montgomery Counties. We have over 4,000 members in Howard County and sponsor the non-partisan Ethics Ballot. If you would like to seek endorsement please return this Questionnaire to EthicsBallot@Gmail.com by midnight May 24, 2022. Please note that all questionnaires are published on the website, www.EthicsBallot.com. We will be in touch regarding endorsement dates soon after getting the questionnaires back. We pride ourselves in working hard for our endorsed candidates, and look forward to hearing your positions on important County issues. THANK YOU so very much for your time!

Be sure to address all aspects of each question.

Name/District: **Jacky McCoy / District 06029**

Campaign Address/Phone/Email

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Educational History

**Mechanical Engineering from the University of Maryland, College Park
Master of Arts in Secondary Education from Johns Hopkins University**

Languages Spoken/Other Skills/Relevant Experience

English / Workshop Facilitator / 35+ year Educator

1. Why are you running for this office? Describe how your campaign is viable.

I’m running for a seat on the Howard County Board of Education because as an educator who is dyslexic, I bring a unique perspective to the board that would otherwise be lacking. I am committed to real effective education for all students, real access to necessary resources for students and teachers, and real family engagement from preschool to high school. It is my goal to ensure that every student has equal access to opportunities, regardless of where they live within the county. Having taught at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, with over 35 years of experience, and earning a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering, and a Master’s degree in Secondary Education, I have a set of distinct skills and experiences that will benefit the BOE unmatched by any other candidate seeking a seat on the BOE.

2. What qualifications do you uniquely bring to hold this office? What experience do you have with the Howard County Board of Education (committees/PTA,etc.)? Have you ever testified? What positions did you take?

I am an educator with over 35 years in education with a variety of education experiences in elementary, middle, and high school. I serve and have served many organizations and groups. Here is a list of some of those:

- **Board of Trustees of Generation Teach (nation-wide summer learning program) - current**
- **Talk with Me Howard County - current**
- **Howard County NAACP Education Committee - current**
- **Member of Executive Board and facilitator for Speak Up HoCo (formerly Youth in Conversation) - current**
- **Facilitator with Courageous Conversation of Howard County - recurring**
- **Member of the Howard County Racial Equity Task Force - Education Policy Subgroup [Early Childhood Development and Education (0-5)] - completed**
- **Howard County Local Children's Board Racial Equity Committee - completed**
- **Howard Curriculum writing - mathematics - past**
- **Alpha Achievers - brought 2nd chapter to Long Reach High School (led to chapters opening county-wide) - completed**
- **President and 1st Vice President PTSA, Long Reach High School, Columbia, MD - past**
- **Howard County Board of Education Citizen Advisory Council (now Community Advisory Council), Columbia, MD - past**
- **Howard County Public School System Calendar Committee, Columbia, MD - past**
- **Howard County Public School System Middle School Schedule Committee, Columbia, MD - past**
- **Howard County NAACP Youth Branch Advisor, Howard County, MD - past**

I was successful in advocating before the BOE to have the 4 x 4 school class scheduling changed for Long Reach and the other schools using that system of class scheduling. That scheduling made it difficult for students taking AP courses, and students needing additional support, as well as those needing to transfer to other schools. The 4 x 4 schedule put those students at a great disadvantage. All schools have similar schedules currently.

I also successfully testified before the BOE to raise the 3 credit mathematics requirement to 4 credits. That policy is currently in operation.

3. Have you signed the No Dark Money, No Developer Money pledge? If NOT how do you eliminate the appearance of conflicts?

I have not signed the pledge as I see that it could lead to the very thing that the pledge seeks to eliminate. I am a person of integrity and have a clear understanding of outside influence. I do not intend to take money from developers nor will I be influenced by developers. If a person who works for a developer contributes to my campaign, it would be difficult to know that unless they make themselves known or I am made aware of it. My decisions as a BOE member will be driven by what is best for students, educators, and families, not developers.

3. (2nd # 3) What are your top priorities for 2022? Discuss at least three areas in need of change, under the purview of the Board of Education, and how you would address them.

Teacher recruitment and retention, student learning loss, and the social-emotional wellbeing of students and educators are the most pressing needs of 2022.

There is a need to elevate the value of the teaching profession in the long run, and this is one of the high-level objectives of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. We are also seeing challenges in recruiting talented, diverse teachers to the county.

Due to the nationwide teacher shortage, restructuring Central Office staff (trained educators) may be needed all the way up to Directors to fill the classroom teacher gap until Human Resources can grow the classroom teacher numbers. Unfortunately, the size of classes is driven by staff availability. Alternating student class schedules in concert with a hybrid model of instruction may be an alternative worth investigating. A structure of A/B Day scheduling would allow for students to get 5 days of instruction without having to be in the classroom every day. Students would alternate between virtual and in-person classes. This would give the educators the opportunity to work with smaller in-person groups while still providing daily lessons to all students.

In the long run, productive partnerships with universities is a must. Not limiting outreach to the schools of education but broadening the net to other schools within the colleges and universities should be considered. Every possible avenue of recruitment must be explored. Human Resources' employment processes and wages have to be competitive. Support and opportunities for advancement must be part of the package provided to potential candidates along with other incentives such as providing affordable housing vouchers to attract more teachers.

Our system and patterns have been broken and students need to reestablish learning continuity. Not only will it help general education students to make up for lost learning but it will be extremely beneficial for students receiving Special Education and students with special needs.

These are some of my recommendations for addressing learning loss:

- Assess to determine the actual gaps in learning.
- Provide focused instruction based on the needs of students grouped according to their assessment results.
- Supply additional supportive work aligned with the focused instruction as homework or during after-school programs.
- Engage families and other caregivers to help by providing resources to assist them as they support the children at home.

Checking in with learners using social-emotional learning practices and monitoring the pulse of a classroom can help to address some of the challenges brought on by undue stress due to COVID and issues with managing impulse and maintaining self-control. Setting the environment for learning is a necessary step to engage students in academics.

4. What do you believe are the strengths and weaknesses of the current Board? How have you demonstrated your ability to work with people who have diverse opinions and party affiliations?

The strength of the BOE is that it has well-educated members who bring a variety of skills and experiences. The weakness is that there is not the depth of knowledge and understanding from the educator's perspective. As the facilitator and co-founder of Changing the Lens, a community building movement, I work with a wide range of people from diverse backgrounds as we examine the science of bias and look into the history of the division in our nation. Those experiences, my experience as an educator, and my engagement with the groups that I listed in question 2 give evidence to my ability to work with people of diverse opinions and party affiliations.

5. In the recent past, the County has funded far less than the requested HCPSS budget. How would you bridge the gap?

This is an ongoing issue that in many ways is beyond the control of the Board of Education. As a member of the board I will work collaboratively with the superintendent and the County Council throughout the budgetary process and maintain persistence so that what is needed is requested and funded to the level possible.

The system should also rigorously pursue outside funding such as applying for [The Maryland Leads Initiative](#) which is a new grant created for Local Education Agencies. The program is designed to utilize "federal funds to overcome the learning loss resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, accelerate student learning to narrow opportunity and achievement gaps, and provide more targeted support for historically underserved students and their communities." It also supports and addresses the teacher shortage issue.

6. What HCPSS policies do you believe should be changed regarding protections of marginalized groups?

There should be a more effective process for educating and assisting educators in their engagement with students. Addressing biases and attitudes must take place and efforts to create a welcoming environment for all students is vital. Accountability is a major component to supporting students who are marginalized. Regular check-ins with educators and students by administrators and instructional teams is essential.

7. What criteria should be prioritized in redistricting?

Policy 6010 addresses the criteria for school redistricting. Community Stability and Demographic Characteristics of Student Population are addressed in the policy. The process of redistricting should be done with great care and concern for the impact on students. Research has shown the value of diversity; however, achieving diversity without the proper preparation of the staff and students of the receiving schools as well as the students being redistricting is misguided.

8. What do you believe are the best ways to address overcrowding in schools? What steps would you take as a Board Member to address this concern?

Policy 6010 was established and must be honored to address attendance areas. Over forty percent of schools are in need of additional capacity. There is a need to consider building up rather than building out. Continual use of portables is unacceptable.

10. (no Question #9) What is your position on HCPSS continuing to provide virtual learning?

No matter the tool, educators must be sufficiently skilled in the use of that technology and accompanying resources in order for them to be used productively. Virtual learning is only as useful as the providers and users make it. Students and caregivers also must be given effective training in the use of the technology provided by the school system.

The Digital Education Center provided by HCPSS has been beneficial for many but was a bit overwhelming for some students and families to navigate. Providing effective support for those who may need and want the support is essential in order to provide equitable access and use of the technology.

11. How should security be handled in schools? What staffing and/or training changes do you believe should occur?

There is no one person who can protect students and schools. Teachers and school staff are usually the first responders when situations happen in schools. It takes a concerted effort. Developing a school environment where teachers, administrators, and staff are equipped with tools for de-escalating situations that arise in the classroom and on school grounds is essential. If SROs are brought into the school environment they must be given ongoing training that helps to assist them in addressing their biases as well as training in the understanding of the social-emotional needs of students along with the other specific training they receive. There would need to be the understanding that the placement of SROs is not a substitute for creating a school environment that is welcoming and where students feel they belong.

12. Special Education has not been funded to the level deemed necessary by the HCPSS to provide adequate services. What would you do to make necessary improvements to services with limited funding?

We need to fully fund Special Education and Related Service Provider positions. The Federal Law providing Special Education has clear parameters describing who qualifies for services and who does not. MSDE provides additional funding for individual students from families experiencing low income. HCPSS should use Medicaid enrollment as a metric to expand the way that they identify students from low-income households in order to gain access to the additional funding provided by MSDE.

There should be sufficient academic support for students who have Special Education needs as well as those who do not qualify for Special Education but are still falling behind. Families need help in understanding how to support their children. It would be helpful to provide special opportunities for parents and teachers to collaborate before the school year begins to establish good partnering relationships. Here is where virtual conferencing would be of great benefit.

13. What will you do to hold the HCPSS accountable for consistent, equitable student outcomes across the County?

A second and more complicated thing HCPSS can do to ameliorate the impacts of economic inequity is to ensure that equity actually plays a role in determining how the school system maximizes the opportunities presented in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Accountability at all levels is key.

Next, Howard County Public Schools should develop a **Community School** model that capitalizes on resources and assets of neighborhoods. Community Schools can "efficiently and effectively utilize" those resources and assets to support children.

By Authority: The People's Voice, Lisa Markovitz Treasurer