

### ETHICS BALLOT QUESTIONNAIRE

#### Howard County Board of Education – 2026 primary

Name: Linda Frascarella

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#### Educational History:

- BA, Colgate University
- MBA, University of Maryland
- MAT (Masters of Art in Teaching), Johns Hopkins University,
- Advanced Certificate in Global Public Policy, Northwestern University
- Certificate in Financial Planning, Boston University

#### Languages Spoken/Other Skills/Relevant Experience:

English

1. Describe why your campaign is viable and what makes you uniquely qualified to serve on the Board of Education.

I have strong support from friends and neighbors. I have worked in the public school system as a substitute, I have a Masters in Teaching and I have a strong financial background.

2. Are you participating in the Citizens Election Fund (CEF) public financing? Why or why not?

No, it is not available for Board of Education

3. What do you believe are the three most important issues currently facing the HCPSS? What are your plans to address these?

Issue: Improving test scores in Math and Reading for all students.

Plan : Give teachers the resources and time they need to do their jobs

Issue: Declining student population and overall population in the county, resulting in less money for the school system.

Plan: Work with the County Council and school Superintendent to develop a budget that works for everyone.

Issue: Ability to attract and retain talented teachers.

Plan: Honor the commitments made to fund teacher salaries and to hire aides and support staff to ensure that our teachers are not overwhelmed.

4. The Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) Review Committee, posted recommendations for changes to APFO in August of 2025. One of the suggested changes was the elimination of the temporary postponement of development projects in crowded school districts (for up to 4 years). Instead of the pauses, surcharge fee increases based on overcapacity amounts were proposed. Do you agree with replacing the pauses with larger fees? If so, do you believe the larger fees proposed are the right amount?

We need more housing. Building more housing is one part of the supply and demand model that will eventually lead to making Howard County more affordable for teachers and others. So, yes, I agree with the recommendation and believe that the review committee did a thorough job. Per the report:

Depending on the level of crowding, the SOUP could start at a base premium payment of \*\$9.78 per square foot and increase to total charges of up to \$17.93 per square foot.

5. What do you believe are the top financial priorities in the HCPSS budget, given so many competing needs for resources? If forced to make cuts, what areas do you think should be prioritized to not cut?

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The top priority is to strengthen learning and instruction. The FY27 budget is attempting to do that by putting money towards areas that directly impact students, such as increasing the number of teaching positions; while still meeting the state mandated Blueprint goals.

If we are forced to make cuts we need to look at cutting areas that are further removed from the student (e.g. not the teachers). Every time we make someone a direct employee of the HCPSS we add their benefits and pension to the budget. So, where possible, I would try to use contract positions that do not carry the larger ongoing expense and that can be added to or subtracted from as the student population changes. I know that we are already doing this in some areas.

6. Howard County is not immune from the religious and ethnic division that has become a main concern across the country. Provide specifics for what you have done to bring people together.

During my time living in Howard County, I have been involved in volunteer activities. I coached boys youth soccer for over 10 years, I was involved with the Boy Scouts and volunteered in the school system for various teams and clubs. I participate(d) as a judge for HCPSS for the Simulated Congressional Hearings and Unheard Perspectives and have volunteered for Battle of the Books. I coordinate several adult soccer teams and am active with the Sierra Club and the League of Women Voters. I've also worked for many years as an election judge. So, I would say, I bring people together by participating in society and literally bringing people together.

7. Give three examples of HCPSS issues you have supported or opposed. Have you testified before the Board of Education in the past?

I oppose out of school suspension, except for violent offenses.(policy 9200)

I oppose academic eligibility for student participation in extracurricular activities (policy 9070)

I have not testified personally; however I have written testimony for my various volunteer organizations. For example, as a Director for the League of Women Voters we provided testimony regarding the capital budget, the operating budget, and public financing for Board of Education candidates. As a Sierra Club director we have written testimony regarding renewable energy in the schools.

8. How do you believe schools should be prioritized for capital improvement funding? What types of criteria do you believe are fair? How should the HCPSS handle the lack of resources available to keep all schools maintained?

I like the idea of using a decision matrix to help prioritize capital improvement projects. Any "extra" funds in the PayGo account should be dedicated to the HCPSS and used to repair the aging schools. The BOE needs to work closely with the County Council and County Executive to make sure capital improvement projects in the County (e.g. a new library) are not taking money away from our schools. I'd like to see future Capital Improvement Projects include upgrades to renewable energy sources whenever possible (solar panels, etc)

9. What can the HCPSS do to compete with other school systems to obtain experienced teachers and staff?

We have increased teacher salaries to be more competitive. This is a step in the right direction. We need to do a better job of proactively recruiting at the local colleges and make the application and offer process run more smoothly. I personally went through this process (many years ago) and it was cumbersome. In addition, we need to provide a smooth path for those who want to transition from being an 'aide' to becoming a certified teacher. I believe that great strides have been made in this area.

10. How would you improve support of Special Education programs?

This is a difficult area as we see an increase in the number of students on IEPs. The most important thing is to correctly identify the student's special education needs and then group the students together in a meaningful way. When a special education teacher pulls students out to work with them it is most efficient if the students are similar. E.g. a student with dyslexia is not the same as a student who does not speak english is not the same as a student who is non-verbal. It is difficult to create a meaningful lesson plan if a teacher has to teach those 3 students in a one-hour pull-out session. Additionally, I would provide support for writing and responding to the IEPs, so that the teacher can focus on delivering the instruction identified in the IEP. Aside from that I would listen to our special education teachers as they live it day to day and likely have a few suggestions for improving their jobs.

11. The HCPSS budget has ever-increasing needs, and over time has not been fully funded. What ideas do you have to help improve student outcomes given the limited resources directly available to support student needs?

Students need to be physically in the classroom. Teachers should be well trained and have high expectations for their students. We can (and are) getting creative when it comes to delivering instruction. By Breaking students into groups and using peer to peer tutoring, parent volunteers, para-educators, and partners from the business community, we can deliver more personalized instruction.

12. In the past, the Operating Budget Review Committee (OBRC) has been tasked with reviewing only specific areas of the budget by Board of Education members. Currently, the OBRC reviews the entire budget. Which process do you prefer and why? Include how you believe the recommendations may better result in changes to the budget, in your answer.

The budget can be overwhelming. I like the fact that the OBRC reviews the entire budget because only then can they see the big picture and help identify meaningful trade offs. If there is a special area of interest for a member of the OBRC or if the BOE needs help in a specific area, then the BOE can/should request that the OBRC pays special attention to that specific area.