

Name/District	Yun Lu/District 5
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Social Media Accounts	www.facebook.com/lu4boe
Education History	Ph.D. in Biostatistics, Johns Hopkins University; M.S. in Statistics, M.S. in Food Science and Technology, Iowa State University; B.S. in Chemistry, Peking University
Languages Spoken/Other Skills/Relevant Experience	English and Mandarin Chinese/Data Analysis Skills/Federal Agency Experience, Teaching Experience, Community Service Experience

1. Why are you running? (1200 characters)

I am running because I want to bring evidence-based decisions and common sense to the BOE. The decisions of BOE have direct impact on tens of thousands of children and their families, as well as all Howard County communities. Everybody is impacted.

I never imagined that I would run for any office until I saw the decision making process at the BOE during redistricting - inaccurate data, flawed analysis, and misinterpreted results. The BOE should make decisions based on solid data and evidence, make sure benefits outweigh risks, and consult all stakeholders. I want to bring common sense and improved decision making to all of the important decisions that will occur throughout the years of my term.

Public education should put our children first. I came from a family of educators and I have two children in Howard County public schools. Seeking election to the BOE is about preparing children for their bright future – improving their academic achievement, physical well-being, as well as social-emotional readiness.

As a Ph.D. statistician working for a federal public health agency, I hope to use my expertise and experience to bring change to the BOE.

2. Explain why you are qualified to hold this position. (1,200 characters)

My expertise and experience as a statistician working for a federal public health agency is very relevant to the BOE position. I have two children in HCPSS, and I am teaching mathematics during the weekends for the Howard County Chinese School. My perspective as a parent and a teacher can also inform BOE decision making.

There are many similarities between public health and public education. Both public health and public education’s decision making should follow existing guidelines and carefully conduct benefit-risk assessment. Both should make decisions based on solid data and evidence, and need statistical knowledge to make valid inference. Both should

consider input from all stakeholders, and involve collaboration with other government agencies.

My data analysis skills, public health regulatory decision making experience, and collaborating skills that I developed in my work are essential in establishing productive working relationships and facilitating evidence-based decision making at the BOE.

3. Have you ever testified before County or State Boards or done public volunteer work? (1,200 characters)

I have testified multiple times in front of the BOE. My testifying topics include opposing massive disruptive school redistricting; raising mental health awareness among students, parents, teachers, and communities; improving student performance through remedial tutoring, especially for students in poverty; promoting diversity through mutual respect and understanding; advocating for proactively preparing food for hungry children prior to inclement weather related school closures or two-hour delays.

I am a passionate volunteer. I have served on the Community HOA Board of Directors for the past three years. I am currently on the Board of Education Operating Budget Review Committee (OBRC). I have been a school MathCounts team coach, a homeroom Mom, a regular volunteer at school, a long time PTA member, and a volunteer at numerous extracurricular and community activities.

4. With regard to school redistricting, what do you believe are the three top priorities, in order, that should be considered as reasons to redistrict, or goals of redistricting? How would you suggest those goals be met? (1,500 characters)

Capacity, stable community, and giving disadvantaged students more resources are the three top priorities for redistricting.

Capacity should be the top priority for redistricting. When a new school opens up, we need to fill the school capacity. When a school is overcrowded, we need to reduce the overcrowding. Capacity should be considered as reasons to redistrict and redistricting should meet the goals of solving capacity issues.

The appropriate level of utilization needs to be school specific, because different schools have their unique situations. For example, Glenelg High School is an older school with narrower hallway, smaller cafeteria, and shared septic system, so the school utilization level should not be as high as some newer or larger schools.

A stable and contiguous community is also an important factor to consider when redistricting. A safe and nurturing environment is essential for a student's studying and well-being, and it takes time to build relationships. We need to minimize the scope of redistricting and avoid unnecessary cascading or domino type of redistricting. We also need to consider enrollment projection change in the next few years in order to prevent moving students back and forth.

We also need to give socioeconomically disadvantaged students special considerations and more resources. When redistricting, we can follow the principles of keeping high poverty schools at low utilization to ensure that the students at those schools receive more resources per student.

5. Do you believe that residents should be able to rely on students attending their neighborhood schools? Why or why not? (1,500 characters)

I support neighborhood schools. A stable community is important to build a safe and nurturing environment for students and is also vital for them to develop sense of belonging.

Uprooting students from the school they are currently enrolled in or have strong family ties with could have many negative effects. Moving away from neighborhood schools will increase commute time and potentially lead to increased levels of stress, sleep deprivation, thus negatively impacting students' education, mental and physical health, lifestyle, and could result in negative effects lasting well into their adulthood.

Longer commute times would also worsen traffic congestion and increase the risk of car accidents. Furthermore, due to the longer commute time on the school bus, more students may choose not to take the school bus, which could potentially cause more traffic jams, more car accidents and even casualties, especially for inexperienced high school drivers.

Neighborhood schools make parents easier to get involved with school and community activities. Neighborhood schools make students easier to participate in after school activities.

In summary, I think residents should be able to rely on students attending their neighborhood schools.

6. How do you feel the HCPSS should deal with overcapacity school issues? (1,200 characters)

There are two aspects of the solution: the first one is to address the immediate needs of existing overcapacity issue, and the second one is to prevent overcapacity happening in the future.

For the existing overcrowded schools such as Howard High School (136% utilization), overcapacity should be addressed by redistricting. However, we don't need to make every school's capacity below 110%. The appropriate level of utilization should be school specific, and we need to consider future enrollment trend to avoid overcorrecting overcapacity and moving students back and forth. Students, families, and communities need stability.

To prevent overcapacity issue in the future, I would recommend the BOE and county council work together in long-term planning to prevent over-development and make sure we have new schools that meet the needs of county development. The locations of

new schools need to be chosen carefully. Families that are moving into the Howard County tend to have younger children, and people who live in apartment, town houses, and single family houses tend to have different demographics. In the planning stage, we need to take these factors into consideration.

7. Do you believe developers should contribute more to fund schools? Do you believe developers should have to wait longer to build in overcapacity areas? How do you suggest the County Council and Board of Education work together to address overcapacity issues? (1,500 characters)

Yes, developers should contribute more to fund schools. Howard County attracts people due to its excellent school system. Families are paying high premiums to live here and developers benefit significantly. If the education quality goes down, people would lose their interest in moving into Howard County, and it eventually will hurt developers too. In order to have a sustainable excellent school system, developers should contribute more to fund schools.

Developers should have to wait longer to build in overcapacity areas. Otherwise, new development will make schools even more overcrowded, and students would have to be redistricted out.

The County Council and Board of Education need to work together to address overcapacity issues in the planning stage. County Council and BOE need to discuss the attendance area before a new development starts. This could avoid the issue that happened to Polygon 1171. Polygon 1171 has new development, and their assigned schools were Triadelphia Ridge ES, Burleigh Manor MS, and Marriotts Ridge HS. These three schools form a large triangle with two legs longer than 8 miles. Furthermore, Burleigh Manor MS is already 103% capacity even without Polygon 1171's new development. Polygon 1171 ended up to be redistricted. It would be much better if the attendance area was well thought out in the planning stage before the development started. County Council and BOE also need to work together regarding location of new schools.

8. What does equitable provision of education by the HCPSS, mean to you? How do you suggest that be implemented? (1,500 characters)

To me, equitable provision of education means that HCPSS provides every student the opportunity to achieve their potential. Students have their own interest, strength, pace of study, and preferred way of learning.

I would suggest HCPSS invest time to understand the student needs and to provide a learning environment that fits the needs of the students. First the environment needs to be safe and nurturing. Second the level of teaching fits the needs of the students. If the curriculum is too easy, students may feel bored. If the curriculum is too challenging, students may lose interest. I suggest the HCPSS consider the needs of every student, without emphasizing only a subgroup of the students. We not only need to advocate for

FARM students, special education students, GT students, we also need to advocate for the silent majorities, the students who are in the middle, and make sure every student can grow and thrive. Cutting school programs is not the solution. We need to find innovative ways to increase revenue and reduce spending without cutting programs.

9. What do you believe Board of Education Members can do to achieve the highest level of achievement for all? Please include in your answer what you believe should be done to close any achievement gaps, be specific. Please also include in your answer, applicable related positions on homework and GT programs. (1,500 characters)

Research by 2019 Economics Nobel Laureates Banerjee and Duflo identified a true barrier to student achievement: teaching approaches not sufficiently formed to student need.

I think the Board of Education Members can seek input from the parents and students to truly understand their needs. So the school system can adopt teaching methods that sufficiently shaped to student need to remove the true barrier to student achievement. The Board of Education Members can advocate for the school system and parents spending time to understand students well. There is no quick fix. Just like improving public health, improving public education takes time and effort.

In order to close achievement gaps, we need to identify achievement gaps and figure out the root cause. There are individual differences, and each student has his/her own strength and potential. We really need to look at each student's performance longitudinally to see whether they are improving. There is no uniform measure to define achievement. We need to acknowledge individual differences and provide teaching approaches that best suit the students. Some students need homework to understand class subject well, other students may find homework burdensome, some students think GT is too difficult, other students think non GT class is not rigorous enough. I want the Board to provide as many choices as possible for the students.

For the students who do need help, remedial tutoring has been shown to be very effective by the 2019 Economics Nobel Laureates. For the past three years, CAPA HC has recruited high school students to provide free tutoring services to title I elementary school students. This type of free tutoring service not only helps students in poverty, it also provides high school students opportunities to serve the community.

10. Do you believe the Board of Education race should remain non-partisan on the ballot? If so, how is your campaign remaining non-partisan? (1,200 characters)

Yes, the Board of Education race should remain non-partisan on the ballot. I firmly believe that politics should have no place in the BOE's decision making process. My campaign is a grassroots campaign, and it is not influenced by any political party. I will keep advocating for children and communities. To me, seeking election to the BOE is

about preparing children for their bright future – improving their academic achievement, physical well-being, as well as social-emotional readiness.

11. If elected, what are the top three goals you would want to work upon in your first year in office? (1,200 characters)

The top three goals I would want to work upon are to bring evidence-based decision making to the BOE, to foster collaborations between the BOE and county council, and to improve students' mental health.

BOE's decision making process needs to be based on accurate data, valid analysis, solid evidence, and needs to take input from all stakeholders to serve the best interest of children and communities. I want to bring evidence-based decision making to the BOE.

When school board and county council don't work together, students and communities suffer. I aim to foster collaborations between the BOE and county council in long-term planning regarding school planning, budget planning, and development planning.

Mental health is a serious issue in Howard County. Suicide is the leading cause of death for youth in Howard County. I want the school to play an important role in nurturing students' social-emotional development because it is equally important as academic achievement and physical well-being for children's bright future. It is essential to raise awareness of mental health issues among students, parents, teachers, and communities.

12. Do you believe the Superintendent's requested budget is too high, too low or just right? If too low, how much should it be, and what other county budget items should be cut to fund it? If too high what should be cut from the request? (1,200 characters)

Superintendent's requested budget is different from the approved budget. Historically speaking, the requested budget is always higher than the approved budget. It is a negotiation process and it makes sense to ask for a higher budget.

When looking at the budget, it is about revenue versus spending. I don't want to cut programs. Cutting programs are not sustainable and we suffer from decreased education quality. I would rather see the BOE seek opportunities to increase revenue and look at contracts more closely to find ways to attract more bidders and effectively lower the contracting prices. When renewing contracts, especially for the sole source contracts, the BOE needs to make sure they still provide best values for the school system.

13. What is your position on each of the current local Howard County State bills? (1,500 characters)

I oppose HoCo 1-20, Howard County – Board of Education – Redetermination of Geographic Attendance Areas:

It requires the BOE to annually calculate the capacity of certain schools and could potentially lead to more frequent school redistricting. A stable community and sense of belonging is essential for students.

I oppose HoCo 1-40, Howard County – School District Boundary Changes and Sales of Residential Real Property – Notices:

It requires a contract for the sale of a single family residential real property in Howard County to contain a certain notice concerning school district boundary changes. Howard County does not have many job opportunities, and people move here because of the excellent school system. Possible frequent school district boundary change will turn away many potential buyers and will hurt Howard County economy in the long run.

14. Do you feel class sizes are too high or too low? Why? (1,200 characters)

Many factors need to be considered in order to determine whether a class size is too high or too low. It depends on the teacher, student characteristics, the course, the environment, and many more factors.

First I understand the benefit of small class sizes. Students can receive more attention from the teachers, it is easier to facilitate class discussions, and teachers can tailor the teaching method to student needs more easily.

However, given the budget constraints, I think increasing class size by 1 would cause less long term damage to the kids' education than cutting programs or teaching positions. If we have more budget in the future, we can always restore the class sizes. If we cut programs, it is more difficult to restore the programs even when we have money in the future.

15. How should performance be measured, of students, of teachers? (1,200 characters)

Every student is different, and each has his/her own strength and potential. We really need to look at each student's performance longitudinally to see whether they are improving. As long as the students are learning, have interest in studying, and are physically and mentally and emotionally healthy, they are fine.

There is no uniform measure to define teacher performance because each student is unique and different schools have different cohorts of students. We should not focus too much on test scores. For example, some schools have high percentage of transient students and their test scores appear to be lower. However, the students are improving. We should not use their absolute test scores to evaluate teacher performance, and we need to look at the progress and improvement of the students.

16. What do you believe should be done to attempt to improve physical safety in schools? (1,200 characters)

Foster a welcoming, caring, safe, nurturing environment is important to improve physical safety in schools. A good environment benefits everyone and it brings the best out of each other.

To improve physical safety in schools, preventative approaches need to be taken such as limiting entryways to schools, monitoring visitors and school properties.

Similar to public health, education, early detection, and early intervention is essential to improve physical safety in schools. The school system needs to provide trainings to students and staff regarding physical safety, provide preparedness procedures, establish reporting system and monitoring system to detect potential physical safety threats early, and act accordingly.

17. How would you as a Board Member oversee your only employee and review and instruct the Superintendent? Are you pleased with the current Superintendent? Would you vote to renew his contract? Why or why not? (1,200 characters)

As a Board Member, I would need to make sure that the Superintendent follows appropriate procedures and seek input from all stakeholders.

There is no perfect employee and we need to evaluate performance case by case. I am not pleased with how the current Superintendent handled the redistricting process including the selection of AAC members and the dramatic change from the feasibility study to the Superintendent recommendation. However, I am pleased with the Superintendent's effort of promoting mental health and raising mental health awareness.

The current Superintendent's term has another two years. In the next two years, additional information will come in and contribute to the decision whether to renew his contract. I would need more information to decide whether to renew his contract, but I will make sure my decision making is based on accurate information and solid evidence.

18. Do you believe the HCPSS is serving the needs of the Special Education community? If not, what needs to be changed? (1,200 characters)

The HCPSS is serving the needs of the Special Education community better than many other counties in the US, however, we are still facing challenges.

Many families with special education students decided to move into Howard County because of the good special education program and excellent school system. We are welcoming new families to Howard County, but at the same time, the increasing number of special education teachers does not meet the needs of the increasing number of special education students. As a result, the special education student to teacher ratio increases, which makes the work of special education teacher more

demanding. The number of special education students not only increases by school year, it also increases within the school year. The County Council and BOE need to work together in the budget planning stage to take into account the increasing trend of special education students. One way to relieve the situation is to advocate for state or federal funding for special education program, similar to the Free and Reduced Meals program, which is funded by USDA.