

The People's Voice, LLC

Ethics Ballot™

3600 Saint Johns Lane, Suite D, Ellicott City, MD 21042

ETHICS BALLOT QUESTIONNAIRE

Howard County Board of Education Primary 2024

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 4,800 members in Howard County and sponsor the non-partisan Ethics Ballot. If you would like to seek endorsement to The Ethics Ballot please return this Questionnaire to EthicsBallot@Gmail.com by midnight Tuesday March 26. 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. Feel free to add additional pages with question numbers noted to provide more information on each question as needed, or fill in more space herein. Be sure to return via email in Word or text format.

Name/District: Dr. Andre Gao, District 1

Campaign Address/Phone/Email/Social Media/Website (if not on MD Board of Elections site)

P. O Box 1340, Ellicott City, MD 21043

Email: Andre4bcboe_d1@yahoo.com, website: Gao4hcboe.org, Facebook: Andre for HC BOE

Campaign manager: Yang Cheng

Educational & Employment History

Ph D, Duke University, employed in high education institute and financial industry over 30 years, nearly 20 years at management position.

Relevant Experience (including fiscal and budget management)

Economics and financial research, investment project review and evaluation, corporate planning, budget management for religious organization and HOA

Causes financially supported, fund raising work promoted

No corporate or organization support, only individual contributions so far.

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1. Why are you running for this office?

What qualifications do you uniquely bring to hold this office? Describe why you feel you have a viable campaign.

I am running for BOE to address the operating budget issue, the school renovation and maintenance issue, and to prepare our students for the future. My education with Ph D, 30 years experience in financial industry at Fortune 500 companies, and nearly 20 years management positions make me uniquely qualified for Howard County BOE position.

2. What experience do you have with the HCPSS? Have you ever testified before the Board of Education? What positions did you take? (Those with vast experience, pick most important to you.)

I testified before BOE on redistricting and budget issues before. However, the most relevant experience for the current BOE is the financial industry experience for budget management and people manager experience to supervise HCPSS, which I have.

3. Funding all the needs of the HCPSS community is harder than ever, given added mandated funding of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future program, and the past use of one-time Covid funds for recurring costs. How do you believe funding shortfalls should be addressed? What areas of the HCPSS budget do you believe are the best areas to cut in order to meet funding needs? Are there areas that you believe should be the last to ever have funding cut?

The funding shortfall should be addressed by having forward looking planning and budgeting, by getting more funding from county and state, and as the last resort by cutting some programs. Ideally the programs that were added by using the one-time COVID funds should be the one to cut when the one-time COVID funds go away. The areas that are valued the most by students and parents should be the last to ever have funding cut.

4. Where do you think school construction should be prioritized? How would you address getting schools built faster where they are most needed? Include your thoughts about how to juggle maintenance needs as well.

The county should have a good planning in terms of how fast we allow the new houses to be built, where to be built, and the impact to school capacity to be fully assessed. Forward looking planning and budgeting means that we should know ahead of time when do we need to construct new schools, and we have the funding ready when the schools need to be built. We need to be proactive, not reactive. If we plan well, we will have funding ready when the schools need to be built. We do not need to wait. School maintenance is the same thing. We know how old each school building is, we should know when the major maintenance and renovation are needed, and we should have capital funds build up for this purpose.

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5. How do you think overcapacity school concerns should be addressed? Do you believe current enrollment projection methods need to be changed? If so, how? What, if anything, should be done, when enrollment ends up significantly higher than projected project estimates?

Over capacity should be addressed by renovation and expansion of existing schools and construction of new schools. The current enrollment projection methods need to be changed to a better method. HCPSS and county development and zoning department should work closely together to have better enrollment projection. If the enrollment ends up significantly higher than projected estimates, then we need to find out why. Is this due to a bad method, one-time miss, or long-term trend? Then we can plan to address it accordingly.

6. Do you believe the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) should be strengthened, weakened or left the same regarding school capacity? Why? Note any desired changes. Note how you feel the Board of Education can or should be involved in APFO.

APFO should be strengthened, because for a long time the school impact has not been fully addressed. Board of Education should be part of APFO process. New development should only be approved when the impact on school capacity is fully address and certified by school board.

7. Describe positions you have taken, votes you have made, or testimony you have given that you feel is the most important regarding HCPSS issues. Describe how you championed causes, include at least one example of any of your positions or votes that you regret, or about which you feel differently.

I fell that county should fully fund HCPSS budget. We should not cut the very valuable programs that students and parents value the most. I testified at the county budget hearing. I also protested in front of county office building against cut on ES GT and 3rd grade string programs.

8. How do you feel altercations should be handled in schools? Include any staffing changes you believe should occur.

Students should be taught to respect each other and to handle the difference / conflicts in a civilized way. School staffs should be trained to handle altercations appropriately.

9. What HCPSS policies do you believe should be changed regarding protections of marginalized groups? Include in your answer your views on how to address achievement gaps.

Every group should be protected, especially the marginalized groups. Achievement gaps should be addressed with input and cooperation from students, teachers, parents, communities, and HCPSS. The root cause of the achievement gaps should be identified then the appropriate actions can be taken. If it is due to students have difficulties to understand what teachers taught then the different and more effective

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teaching methods should be used. If it is due to the materials used then different teaching materials should be used. If it is due to homework difficulties then the homework workshops can be provided. We can also encourage and organize Howard communities to provide free online tutoring and mentorship to the students who want to learn but with challenges. It takes an entire village to raise a child.

10. What criteria should be prioritized in redistricting?

School capacity, feeder schools, community integration, proximity, and other criteria from parents and communities.

11. Special education funding has increased over the last several years, but special education student outcomes have not improved. How would you address the legal requirements for students with disabilities to ensure positive outcomes?

We should look for new teaching methods for special education students to ensure positive outcomes.

12. What research, contract accountability and financial data would you require before supporting a procurement contract? Include in your answer what changes you would recommend to avoid service failures like we experienced recently with the bus system.

HCPSS staff in charge of contract negotiation should provide an accurate summary of the contract, the analysis of the pros and cons, and present to board members. Board members should carefully read the relevant documents and have questions fully answered before supporting such contract.