

Individual Information

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| Social Media Accounts | www.facebook.com/ListenLarry www.twitter.com/LPret2 |
| Education History | B.S. Legal Studies, University of Maryland Global Campus - In progress High School Diploma (Potomac High School) |
| Languages Spoken/Other Skills/Relevant Experience | English |

1. Why are you running?

I am running because my community has traditionally been ignored. On the Oakland Mills Village board I created the community together outreach committee to engage more oakland mills residents with their communities. I want to take my nonpartisan leadership to bring opportunities for all District 2 residents to be heard. On the recent budget and redistricting, the current BOE as a whole did not listen to District 2 residents. They did not even bother contacting spanish speaking residents. I was organizing events and listening to the community. I also conducted ridealongs with current BOE members. Where were the other candidates at this time? We cannot let this happen to District 2 again. District 2 needs a voice for them this time around.

2. Explain why you are qualified to hold this position.

I am qualified to hold this position as I have management experience in a variety of positions. My duties included effectively managing employee relations, evaluating employee performance, ensuring productivity, and adhering to an established operating budget. As part of these positions I had to make data driven decisions which could be explained to stakeholders. I have also worked to bring input from the community in my position as a member of the Oakland Mills Village Board. I have organized events to ensure that the community members voices were heard. The BOE sorely needs people who are able to directly engage the community and other stakeholders and that is what I have been doing for many years throughout my career.

3. Have you ever testified before County or State Boards or done public volunteer work?

Yes. I have testified in front of the state legislature in support of Graces Law. I have also collaborated with groups to raise awareness to Oakland Mills community residents about the prospect of redistricting. I have also worked as part of the Oakland Mills Village board to raise awareness to residents as the chair of the Community Together Outreach committee so more residents get involved in their community.

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?

The priorities of redistricting in order should be to:

1. Alleviate overcrowding

2. Keep Communities together in close by schools.
3. Keep school feedsizes large.

Redistricting sometimes needs to be done in order to ensure children receive a safe education in schools which are not dangerously overcrowded. However ensuring relatively even capacity utilization and the opening of a new school should be the only impetus for redistricting. While redistricting we should keep students in nearby schools. We should not bus them 5 miles away to the 8th closest school if there is one a mile away. Communities should also stay together. Moving 1 half of the neighborhood to one school but another half to another does not make sense. The other consideration is to make sure there is a feeder system to avoid small feeds. HCPSS policy 6010 states there should be a 15% feedsizes minimum. Ideally we would have a 25-35% minimum but we should at least stick with 15%. Microfeeds such as 6% which was created in district 2 is not acceptable.

5. Do you believe that residents should be able to rely on students attending their neighborhood schools? Why or why not?

Yes, residents should be able to rely on students attending close by schools. That may not always be the closest one but students should be able to be sent to the 2nd, 3rd or maybe 4th closest one. They should not be bussed 5 miles across a highway when there is a school right next to their home. Maintaining neighborhood schools results in a sense of community as well as allowing the school system to invest resources in the classroom rather than on transportation. Having close by schools also promotes parental involvement. This helps low income families in particular as they may not have reliable transportation options. If they attend a neighborhood school they will be more able to

participate in school activities. After school care options are also easier. Students should not be bussed across town in order to achieve diversity. For starters bus transportation tends to take much longer than driving since multiple stops need to be accounted for. A 5 mile trip by car might be 7 minutes but it might be 30 minute by bus. This would be an hour of a student's day gone which is concerning considering that we know students need lots of sleep and this would reduce their amount of sleep. This is also because we don't know the situation of the family and every family is different. One low income family may not have a car and a single parent with multiple jobs where involvement in school would be limited by redistricting to a far away school like Polygon 96 which is located right next to Talbott Springs E.S but bussed to Thunder Hill E.S across 175. However another low income family may have a stay at home mom who is ok with sending her kids to a farther away school in order to access a certain curriculum. Diversity can be achieved through choice based magnet programs where certain curriculums are offered in some schools and some in others to encourage a diverse group of students to attend these schools rather than swapping students around without asking the communities if they really want it or not. Magnet schools have been highly successful with examples such as Montgomery Blair H.S in Montgomery county. We can reserve seats when building or renovating schools as done for example when Long Reach H.S was built. We can aim to do that for High School 13,14 Hammond H.S and the Talbott Springs renovation. Wilde Lake H.S, Oakland Mills H.S and Glenelg H.S also has some capacity. Other centrally located schools to explore are Waterloo E.S.

6. How do you feel the HCPSS should deal with overcapacity school issues?

HCPSS should deal with overcrowding issues by building additions to school buildings, building new schools and redistricting boundaries by FOLLOWING policy. I will work collaboratively with state and local government to secure funds. When building schools we should build larger schools as they are cheaper in the long run. We can build high schools for 2-2.5 thousand kids rather than 1-1.5 thousand like neighboring jurisdictions. This allows for more capacity as well as increasing magnet programs. We need to work with government officials to ensure that school construction is a priority in the capital budget compared to other capital projects such as cultural centers or courthouses.

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?

Yes developers should be subject to contributing more to fund schools. Other jurisdiction only allows developers to build once schools are built. Before Maple Lawn was built it was required that a school was built in that area too. Developers should have to wait longer to build in areas where schools are overcrowded as that would mean there is not adequate infrastructure. The county council and BOE should work together so that we can create a strategic long term school construction plan that is aligned with the interests of the population and to focus building schools close to where there is the most overcrowding.

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

Equity is defined in google as “the quality of being fair and impartial.”. I believe that HCPSS should provide a fair and impartial educational opportunity to all children so that they can learn to their greatest potential. This should not be implemented by moving kids around to far away schools. Rather we should include supports such as tutoring programs particularly in high FARMS schools so that they can learn to the best of their ability. We should not cut educational programs to spend on transportation. That is not equitable as it is harder for low income families to afford private music lessons compared to higher income families. That is why we need to ensure that a robust education is offered to all students. Diversity can be achieved through choice based magnet programs where certain curriculums are offered in some schools and some in others to encourage a diverse group of students to attend these schools rather than swapping students around without asking the communities if they really want it or not. Magnet schools have been highly successful with examples such as Montgomery Blair H.S in Montgomery county. We can reserve seats when building or renovating schools as done for example when Long Reach H.S was built. By offering options such as this overtime we ensure every family makes their own choices on what programs interest them without forcing long transportation times onto anyone. The county council can also work to ensure that there is more housing diversity. For instance, we should not be building more low and moderate income housing in schools with high FARMS rates. We should be building large single family houses so that there is more economic diversity without moving kids around. We can build some low and moderate income housing such as the

Robinson Overlook project in Clarksville to increase socioeconomic diversity to an extent that does not overcrowd schools.

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.

Board of Education members have an obligation to make data driven decisions to ensure that all students achieve a high level of achievement. In order to do that they must research ideas which they believe would work and gather community and educator input. I believe that the achievement gap can be closed through methods such as investing in tutoring programs and making sure that teachers do not push certain race groups more towards advanced courses than others. Hammond H.S has been very successful in improving academic achievement by working with minority students to tutor them and to push them towards taking advanced courses. Other schools should be collaborating with the staff at Hammond H.S to implement similar programs at all high schools. One idea I have is that successful teachers as well as administrators at Hammond H.S can do a shadow day at other schools as well to reduce the achievement gap . I am a strong supporter of G/T programs as I believe that they have great results in fostering critical thinking and strong academic achievement. I believe that homework is a teacher based decision. I am not a big fan of too much homework but I still believe that in general a reasonable amount of homework allows for extra practice and increased academic achievement. I would like to leave the decisions up to the teacher and ITL

(instructional team leader) and allow for administrators to make some changes if needed to increase academic achievement if a particular teacher is underperforming.

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?

Yes recently the BOE has started being more political as they approach decision making but I am committed to listening to all sides and making a decision based off of evidence without being influenced by politicians. Decision making for the education of our children should not be guided by politics. My campaign is remaining nonpartisan by supporting policies based off of evidence rather than instructions by politicians. I will support all of my votes with an explanation to the community and provide evidence supporting it. My supporters and campaign team range the entire spectrum from Democrat to Republican to Independent and support me because they are concerned that district 2 has been left behind and that it needs a BOE member that involves the community in decisions so that they are no longer forgotten.

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

1. I would like to involve the community in asking for what they want as well as to understand the decisions that the board makes and why we would make it. If I am elected we will only make decisions based off of data. I will hold town halls to solicit community input. I would like to go over how each and every dollar is being used to make sure it is being used wisely as well as involve creative methods such as public private partnerships to meet some of our needs in career training

as well as other desires in the community. District 2 has consistently been ignored in the past. If I am elected I will promote innovative programs through creative means to spur real action and get good results on issues such as the achievement gap. Such actions would be to follow the lead of Hammond HS in promoting G/T and AP classes to minority students. I would promote combining this with investing in tutoring through public private partnerships. Creative methods such as this would work to reduce the achievement gap.

2. I would like to focus on building and renovating schools to reduce overcrowding and promote health equity. We are in a dire situation which we cannot redistrict out of due to a large shortage of seats. To do this we need to work collaboratively with the county and state government as well as ensure there is community input so that these projects are prioritized rather than “want to have” projects such as a cultural center.
 3. I would like to focus on investing the needed amount of resources into special education which is currently drastically underfunded. We would do this by working collaboratively with stakeholders on revenue sources as well as potential cuts made in administration.
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?

I believe that the Superintendent’s requested budget asked too much in certain areas such as administration and transportation while still not completely meeting the needs in others such as special education. What we should be doing is advocating for a budget

process which is not broken and where the county executive can do more than cut from the budget. By having the county executive only be able to cut from the budget the school system is pressured to ask for more than needed. We need to prioritize money in the classroom and ensure that money is being used effectively to improve student performance. We should audit every line item and ensure that it is needed before asking for it. We should also look into the procurement process to try to encourage competition to reduce costs. We should be collaborating with the County executive and County council throughout the year to ensure that we focus on funding the programs that are needed while making sure we are using our money wisely. We should also be inviting the community to advocate for the school system as well as other areas in the county budget where they think there is too much and too little spending. After all we should be involving citizens in their communities to ensure that elected officials represent the views of the constituents that elected them.

13. What is your position on each of the current local Howard County State bills?

I am not a fan of the state legislative delegation taking away local control from the BOE. Just yesterday some members of the Spending Affordability and Advisory committee called the BOE "non experts who write 60% of the budget". The BOE is the most locally elected office and is designed to handle school board related issues. The BOE cannot be disparaged by bureaucrats and the state delegation. We must work collaboratively. I support the ideas of an increased transfer tax and impact fees. This should be done as part of the budget process through collaboration with local and state elected officials. The reporting bills are generally already done so it is redundant. I am not a fan of the

state delegation trying to legislate school boundary adjustments through their real estate bills. People are aware schools can be changed if overcrowded but don't expect it to be changed otherwise and don't expect to be sent many schools away. I think the bills proposed just show how the state delegation and BOE don't currently collaborate.

14. Do you feel class sizes are too high or too low? Why?

Class sizes are too high. As class size increases a teacher will have less time to spend on educating each student. This makes it hard to educate students who need resources in particular. In addition, teachers are required to do more and more for their job including even working through lunch as class sizes increase. This is not acceptable. I would propose that we ensure that class sizes for title 1 schools in particular are kept low so that resources can be given to each and every student and progress can be made in reducing the achievement gap.

15. How should performance be measured, of students, of teachers?

Student performance should be measured by teachers in a variety of ways including formative assessments, summative assessments and metrics to monitor student improvement in Biweekly, Monthly and Quarterly intervals. We should measure more than just test scores and focus on improvement over time. We should reduce the number of standardized tests that our students are subjected to. We should also reconsider whether to use common core and focus on developing a local curriculum which allows for unique teaching methods to reduce the achievement gap. Teacher performance should be measured by ITL's (Instructional team leaders) and Principals through

frequent classroom visits and evaluations of metrics in teaching. Principals should evaluate teacher tests to ensure that they are fair and reliable methods of gauging student performance.

16. What do you believe should be done to attempt to improve physical safety in schools?

I believe that we should make sure to invest in mental health programs so we can identify individuals who need mental health support early on before people's lives are in danger. We need to ensure there is an adequate amount of counselors so that we can treat individuals who are depressed. We also need to make sure visitors are not a danger and background check them before they get access to buildings.

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?

I would oversee the superintendent by working with my fellow board members to set clear expectations and ensure he meets these expectations. I would also make sure he works collaboratively with the board in what he wants to promote. I would ensure he focuses his efforts on the real problems in the school system which are gaining back trust from the community, Building more schools and renovating current ones and developing a responsible operating budget focused on investing resources where needed in areas such as G/T, Special Education, Music, Technology and reducing the achievement gap through tutoring programs and encouraging minority enrollment in

advanced courses. I am not pleased with the current superintendent as he has not advocated enough for the classroom. He knew last year that the budget was going to get cut and he knows the same now so he either needs to recommend revenue sources and areas in the counties budget where money can be found and / or find bloated administration positions to cut. Instead we ended up with cuts in paraeducators who assist our most vulnerable students while increasing overpaid central office positions. The superintendent also led and took charge of a highly controversial and divisive redistricting process which did not follow the BOE's own policies. He should have shown leadership and ensured feed sizes were at or above 15% (5.2% for instance is not acceptable), Students were only moved to address overcrowding so no moving between non overcrowded schools (68% of 1 district 2 school was moved and the school and the ones moved into were not overcrowded), Students attended close by schools and not 8 further schools away and provided adequate notice to district 2 communities such as the hispanic community who were only notified after the plan passed. The superintendent still has a chance to lead for 2 years if he so chooses till his contract expires but if I am on the board then I will hold him to higher standards which I will use to assess whether or not his contract is fit to be renewed if he so wishes to renew it.

18. Do you believe the HCPSS is serving the needs of the Special Education community?

If not, what needs to be changed?

No, special education families and specifically low income special education families are highly underserved by HCPSS. In order to receive services such as IEP required by special education students families often have to spend thousands of dollars on tests

and parents have to spend many hours advocating on behalf of their children. This hurts low income families the most as they may be working multiple jobs and also don't have the money and time to handle this situation. Situations such as this are part of why the achievement gap is so high particularly for low income students. We need to work on investing more in special education so that learning disabilities can be diagnosed and ALL special education students are able to receive the services they need without having to spend thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours of time in order to get what they need.