

1. What experiences do you have that qualify you to serve on the Board of Education?

I have been working in education advocacy for more than 20 years. Most recently, I served for two years as the chairperson of the Community Advisory Council and vice chairperson for two years before that. This allowed me to see a big picture view, to analyze, and to participate in Howard County education at a system level. During this time I participated on five policy review committees and one system-wide initiative. I also routinely worked with administrative personnel to bring speakers to the CAC that would broaden our knowledge of the inner workings of the school system.

On a more local level, I have served as a PTA President, Secretary, Cultural Arts Chairperson, Science Fair Coordinator, Reading Room Coordinator, and perennial volunteer. I have been in the schools and in the classrooms. I have made long lasting relationships with teachers and staff, built collaborative work environments, and worked to achieve consensus. I have predominately focused on literacy and equity.

Additionally, as a trained analyst with an economics degree, I can provide a level of analysis and accountability needed on the Board of Education. I understand how to sift through the noise to see the bigger picture.

Finally, as a parent of older children, I bring patience, flexibility, and a sense of humor when dealing with new problems, situations, and unexpected events.

2. What role does a member of the Howard County Board of Education fill?

First and foremost, the Board of Education directs and guides the Superintendent in order to fulfill the educational goals of the community. A Board member must represent the voice of the community. They provide priorities and direction for the Superintendent and his administration to execute. They are the ultimate decision makers for budget, redistricting, policy, and executive hiring. They serve as a check and balance on the administrative staff's execution. They are the first and last line of defense in fiduciary responsibility, fidelity, and maintaining the mission of educating all our children well.

3. Have you ever attended a meeting of the Howard County Board of Education?

Yes, I have attended countless BOE meetings. I have delivered both written and spoken testimony to the HCPSS BOE on 30+ public hearings and 20+ Community Advisory Council testimonies.

4. Numerous officials have indicated that the Howard County government will be facing a few difficult years ahead in budgeting and finance. How do you propose the Board of Education address these challenges?

When you are in a hole, the first thing you need to do to get out is: **stop digging.**

In the case of the school system budget, we need to stop digging by balancing the budget and not growing the debt.

We need to stop the process of treating each year as a stand-alone crisis.

As part of strategic planning, I advocate that we develop a long-range operational budget plan like we do with the capital budget. With a longer term view and projections, we can more easily accommodate unexpected events and disruptions in budgeting. We need to know where we are going long term in order to take the correct steps today.

For example, if the Board had been given the two, three, and four year cost projections for World Language in the Elementary School Model, we may have approached the issue differently. We could have identified problems with sustainability and long term affordability of expansion. We could have made better decisions as to how to supplement the Title-I schools with supports that didn't end up being terminated in a very painful process.

Additionally, months ahead of the Superintendent's budget presentation, I hope to have the Board provide him with a rank-order list of our priorities and direction to submit a balanced budget. This will better enable him to craft a balanced budget that has the potential to be approved by the board.

I would also expect to work closely with the county administration regarding revenue stream projections and planning. By building relationships and conducting longer-term planning, we can develop long range plans that align with reality and our priorities. I believe this process will better demonstrate the need for additional funding for education.

One of the little understood pieces of the budget is that the longer we continue to defer maintenance, the greater the cost to operations in the long run. We will need to commit to funding operations, not just programmatic, in order to rein in future emergency and crisis funding which disrupts existing plans and creates further financial setbacks.

5. Based on the information available to you, briefly assess Dr. Martirano's first year in office.

First and foremost, Dr. Martirano has taken steps towards repairing the relationships, low morale, and broken trust that existed when he first took office. He has worked to achieve critical and necessary progress to increase transparency and invite collaborative work. He has begun to take the initial progress necessary to eliminating the debt, which is absolutely essential. I think he has been forthright, genuine, and is committed to improvement. These are all critical components to solving our existing problems. All in all, Dr. Martirano has had a good start and made some important personnel, structural, and organizational changes. There is a great deal of hard work ahead.

6. What does "equity" in education mean to you, and how should HCPSS achieve it?

Equity means that all students have opportunity and access to a high quality education that addresses their individual needs.

Equity means that schools with higher populations of at-risk and low income students should have additional support resources in order to achieve the same goals as students in high-income schools.

Equity means that certain races and classes of students should not be punished or disciplined at a rate higher than any other race or class of students. We should take active measures to build cultural competency and develop teachers/administrators skill set to find alternative solutions rather than automatically resort to punitive measures. Our staffing needs to be deliberate in a way that students see teachers and role models in the schools that look like them and advocate for them.

Equity means that special education and special needs students be given opportunities and supports to grow and learn. Special education students receiving an equitable education

should not just be given the minimum legally required services because of a bias of low expectations.

Equity means that staffing should be strategic with every school having a balance of seasoned teachers working alongside new, enthusiastic and innovative recent graduates.

Equity means that the hiring process must be revamped to be responsive and quick in order to hire qualified teachers of color as soon as they become available.

Equity means that we should be listening to student voice and using their feedback to help drive our solutions.

Equity means that we should be looking for discrepancies and gaps in our data collection to make sure that all students are given access to challenging coursework and not judged insufficient due to their appearance.

Equity means that accelerated students should be challenged and given access to rigorous courses regardless of which school they attend.

Equity means that LGBTQ+ students and staff be treated with dignity and respect and education commensurate with their abilities. Policies and supports should be built into our infrastructure to assist our students, not diminish them.

Equity means that immigrant students should be given the same course offerings and challenges as their native born peers in an environment in which they feel safe and protected.

Equity means that our diverse community should be embraced for its differences.

7. In specifics, how should the Board of Education address school overcrowding?

With the selection of the Mission Road site for high school #13, we need to begin the plan of comprehensive multi-stage redistricting with immediate relief from overcrowding. We also need to immediately begin site selection for high school #14 as current projections indicate we will not have efficient long-term capacity utilization equity for all schools without it.

I would like to see the school system move to a phased or multi-year redistricting solution in all cases where a new school is projected to come online. In other words, as soon as site selection begins, the redistricting process should begin. This would give families at least a year,

preferably years, to prepare for the move. This could also alleviate the pressures of the current timeline where the school board was faced with responding to this as crises without adequate time for deliberation and discussion.

By developing longer-term comprehensive redistricting plans, families will know that portable units are temporary in nature and what the timeline will be for a permanent solution. It will also give the newly established Office of Safety and Security longer-range expectations and needs for securing and solving safety issues with portables if they have a multiyear usage plan for portables.

We also need to develop a long term plan to populate our under-capacity schools in the Western part of the county. This will require a westward shift of neighborhood-based groupings. This can have the added benefit of improving socioeconomic diversity balanced across all schools.

8. Briefly, what are your top three priorities if elected?

Fiscal Responsibility: We need to craft a strategic multi-year plan to get the school system out of debt and into a financially sound state with accountability and transparency.

Teacher Empowerment: We need to reduce the bureaucratic and non-teaching demands on our excellent teachers and allow them to do what they do best: TEACH.

Equity: We need to evaluate our practices and our data to look for places of inequity and then take measurable, tangible steps to remedy the situation.