

2020 Board of Education (BOE) Primary Election Candidate Questionnaire

Please return the completed questionnaire to contact@bettermontgomery.us by 5:00pm on Friday, January 31, 2020.

Name: Shebra L Evans

Town or City of Residency: Silver Spring

Education: Bachelor of Science in Economics and Finance from Tennessee State University

Professional Background: Financial Analyst in the cable and energy industry.

Political Background: Elected to the Montgomery County Board of Education in November 2016. Currently serving my second consecutive term as the Board President. I was re-elected to another one-year term in a unanimous vote and served as Board President previously in 2018 and elected as Vice President in 2017. I serve on the Board's Strategic Planning Committee. My leadership extends to the state level serving as a member of the Board of Directors for the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), Chair of the MABE Equity Ad Hoc Committee and on the Policies and Procedures Committee.

I confirm that the responses provided here are my official positions in seeking BOE office and I understand that Coalition for Better Montgomery PAC reserves the right to share my responses with the public.

Candidate Signature: Shebra L Evans

Date: January 30, 2020

Part 1

1. Why do you want to serve on BOE?

As a current board member, I am proud of the work we are doing to address disparities in student outcomes by closing gaps in opportunity and achievement. We continue to make progress, but there is still work to do. I believe my experience coupled with my leadership will be an asset as we advocate for resources to ensure the success for all students.

2. Why do you consider yourself the best candidate for the BOE seat you filed for?

- 1) What are your top three priorities if you are elected?

Continue addressing the disparities in student outcomes by closing the gap in opportunity and achievement (e.g. Increasing the achievement in reading and math). 2) Continue expanding public and private partnerships. We have been able to expand access to early learning and education of preschoolers. Additional supports have been made available to their families too. 3) Continue efforts to diversify our workforce with emphasis on recruitment and retention. Also, increase our own pipeline of talent.

Part 2

4. BOE Policy-Making and Policy-Interpreting

What issues do you see the BOE has in its policy-making and policy-interpreting process? How would you improve the current process?

For any policy-making process every decision, program, practice or action should be considered looking through an equity lens. If not, we could worsen existing disparities and/or producing other unintended consequences. This could be accomplished by asking a set of guiding questions.

5. Operating Budget

What issues do you see in the FY2021 MCPS operating budget? What would you do differently?

The budget is always a student-focused budget. The board's biggest issue is being fully funded and having the required resources to meet the needs of our more than 166,000 students.

6. Curriculum

Do you believe MCPS curriculum is rigorous enough? What specific improvements would you suggest?

MCPS is currently rolling out a new curriculum for elementary and middle schools in English Language Arts and Math to maintain the rigor and challenge needed for college and career readiness. The English Language Arts findings were the following: stronger alignment to Common Core, regular use of grade-level complex text, explicit foundational skills instruction, supports for English Learners, quality professional development, read-aloud texts that are two to three years above grade-level and a system of writing instruction embedded in lessons and task. In the area of Math the findings were the following: stronger alignment to Common Core, sufficient developmental or conceptual understanding, supports for a variety of learners, focus on major work of the grade and increased use of modeling and application and much more. Both offer resources for parents and we will have books and online tools for students.

7. School Boundary

Do you agree with the recent revisions of policy FAA in which one factor, demographic characteristics of student population, was elevated above the other three factors (geography, stability of school assignments over time and facility utilization)? Do you think it is necessary to conduct a countywide school boundary analysis based on this change? If so, what action would you like the BOE to take in the future as a result of the information provided by the boundary analysis?

Every factor is being considered as we consider school and cluster boundaries. It is a fiscally responsible approach to have the board review the entire district when considering new schools and additions. Our student enrollment has grown by more than 25K students since 2010 and we expect 11K more students over the next six years. We receive funding from the local government and get increases in state aid and our overall need for facility projects exceed available funding. This boundary analysis will give us a better overview and inform our decisions in future boundary studies. Adjacency will be key in this analysis. Students will not be bused across the county. We will take every measure to maintain our walkers.

8. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Many of MCPS buildings are aging and in need of repair, updating, and in some cases, replacement. How would you set priorities for school construction and renovation?

The board realized that we have aging facilities and supported having an independent engineering firm access our school facilities and collect data. We have a tool called the Key Facility Indicators that helps us assess the infrastructure of our school facilities. The use of the tool coupled with our policy allows us to identify and provide a basis for prioritizing options responsive to changing facility needs.

9. Gifted and Talented (GT) Program

BOE has changed how GT programs are administered in recent years. Do you consider these changes having a positive or negative impact? What initiatives will you undertake to ensure that the needs of GT students are met?

The Board of Education has expanded access and opportunities to reach more students and help realize their potential. I am proud of the work we are doing to create more seats in GT programs and find cohorts of GT students in individual schools.

10. Opportunity Gap

What metrics would you use to measure the opportunity gap among students? Do you think BOE/MCPS has initiated and implemented policies and programs successfully to reduce the opportunity gap? What specific ideas or proposals do you have to close the opportunity gap?

Since I have served on the board we have implemented successful programs and initiatives to close the opportunity gap. Listed below are a few: Dual/Two-Way Immersion, Investment in smaller classes, universal screening and expanded access to enrichment, innovative school calendar year schools, expanded access to prekindergarten, expanded access to summer programs (ELO SAIL, ELO STEP, BELL, etc.), Equal Opportunity Schools, Expanded Access to IB, Free SAT/ACT or Licensure tests, dual-enrollment w/ Montgomery College, Minority Scholars Program, expanded career readiness options, Evidence of Learning, Equity Accountability Model, continued recruitment of diverse workforce and so on. We need investments to remain focused on students, classrooms and schools. We need to always examine how well the system and schools are allocating resources.

11. Kirwan Commission

Do you support the recommendations by the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission) and why?

In my role as president on the school board, I have had the opportunity to testify before Chair Kirwan and members of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education. My testimony, on behalf of my colleagues was regarding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Funding Formula Workgroup recommendations. The board supported the recommendations and the significant funding support it would provide for Montgomery County and public schools across the state of Maryland. The board felt it was important to express our appreciation for recommendations that would improve access, opportunity and learning for all students in Maryland and wanted to encourage the rest of the Commission to support the recommendations. I discussed the landscape of Montgomery County and how we spent the money received as part of the Senate Bill 1030. In addition, I asked the commission to consider adding funds for non-teacher educational personnel because we deemed all staff to be a vital part of our successful schools.