

## 2020 Board of Education (BOE) Primary Election Candidate Questionnaire

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

**Name:** Dalbin Osorio

**Town or City of Residency:** Gaithersburg

**Education:** Masters in Social Work '15, Masters in Education Policy & Leadership '21, Bachelors in Business Administration '09

**Professional Background:** Program Manager @ Montgomery County Collaboration Council (currently), School Social Worker @ the Village Academy of Maryland for two years, Foster Care Social Worker @ the Latin American Youth Center for three years, Quality Assurance Coordinator @ SKIP of NY for two years, Teacher's Assistant/Enrichment Teacher/Program Manager @ The BELL Foundation for five years, Lead Teacher @ the New York Junior Tennis League for three years

**Political Background:** Organizing for Action Fellow '17, Precinct Captain for Obama '08 & HFA '16

*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: *Dalbin Osorio*

Date: 1/31/2020

### Part 1

1. Why do you want to serve on BOE?

My professional experience has led me to continuously trying to help children and families to the best of my ability. Being a member of the Board of Education feels like the next step, especially as we work towards ensuring that every child in Montgomery County receives a fair and equitable education. From the classroom to working in-home with families, I have always found myself wanting to continue to serve, and the BOE grants me the ability to do that.

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

I've been in the classroom before, for four years, and I have also been an Administrator (as a Program Manager) who has had to make budget-conscious decisions. I have, also, been in the home with families of all compositions, and I have also created programs from scratch that have filled needs in the communities I have served. Nobody else running has the level of direct service experience that I have, and that experience has molded both my outlook on what can really be done to help children and families and has fostered a spirit of collaboration that enables me to work well with folks who come from different backgrounds.

3. What are your top three priorities if you are elected?

My top three priorities are to close the opportunity gap, better use of school resources, and reduce school overcrowding.

### 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?

I want to streamline the BOE's policy-making and policy-interpreting process so it can include more parent-centered and youth-centered voices. I do not believe that one meeting a month is really

conducive to getting the kind of feedback we should be striving for from parents, and I would opt to use social media more to engage with the folks whose lives our decisions would impact.

**5. Operating Budget**

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

I think the MCPS operating budget is a sound one, actually, though it seems the County Executive has come in under prognostications. I appreciate the funding for Montgomery College, as MC has been a partner in ensuring that post-secondary education is affordable, and would try to find avenues to increase their funding so we can expand access to affordable post-secondary education. I would work to increase teacher salaries with MCEA, to ensure that we can retain and recruit quality teachers. Our students suffer when we have teacher shortages and when we assign inexperienced teachers to schools in low socioeconomic communities.

**6. Curriculum**

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

I do, but I would like to see an expansion of alternative programs (online learning platforms, certificate or trade tracks) for our high school students who may choose to not pursue college. Our students are learning in different ways, especially with different familial responsibilities, and it is important that we meet our students and families where they are and do the most we can to ensure they are successful.

**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?

I do support an analysis being conducted based on this change. Our County has evolved over time and, as this evolution has taken place, it has become more diverse. This has led to a demographic change county-wide, and our policies need to evolve with the county. An analysis is a good first step towards making sure that we are conducting any and all business equitably: if the analysis reveals that our schools are equitable, then no action need to be taken by the BOE, but if inequities are discovered then we owe it to our students and families, both present and future, to invest in their education and solve the inequities.

**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?

I would prioritize repairs first, so we can ensure that our students can learn and develop in safe environments, and then focus on replacements to reduce overcrowding of our schools.

**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?

I believe they have been positive changes, but I would want to diversify and expand these programs. Creating STEM academies as part of our Gifted and Talented Program in each of our schools, for students who are performing well academically and show immense academic potential, would be something I would undertake. I would, also, look to ensure that we are automatically enrolling our black and brown students in these programs to diversify the Gifted and Talented population. Lastly, I would push to recruit teachers and administrators who will innovate these programs annually, to ensure that we are on the cutting edge of what we are offering our students.

#### **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?

I would use Casey's Race for Results Index, which measures preschool enrollment rates, K-12 math and reading test scores, and teen pregnancy rates. It utilizes the Life-Cycle Approach, has geographic sensitivity, and can be updated as we go to ensure it is, generally, future proof. I believe that the BOE and MCPS have initiated and implemented policies, but it becomes difficult to ensure those policies are effective when resources are not managed properly or when you're provided less resources than you were initially promised. MCPS Teachers are trying their hardest, but it is a challenge to make steak when you are provided cat food. I would push initiatives that ensure that we are screening children early for medical and social services while working with medical, social services, and community agencies to identify students who need additional instructional support and support students through the use of mentors, tutors, peer support networks, and role models. I will push to institute full day kindergarten and pre-kindergarten and extend learning to before and after-school programs as well as summer programs. I would, also, engage teachers in strengthening curriculum and student assessments, work with MCEA and MCPS to decrease class sizes, and involve teachers in the design of ongoing professional development.

#### **11. Kirwan Commission**

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

I do support the recommendations of Kirwan Commission, and believe that they tackle the opportunity gap in a very real way: by putting real dollars behind the initiatives I mentioned above, we ensure that every child in Maryland receives a fair and equitable education.