

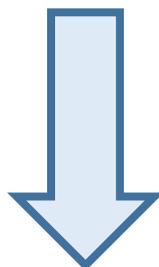
Board of Education At Large Candidates (13) Voter Guide  
Information collated from the  
Montgomery County League of Women Voters/Vote411.org

Mitra Ahadpour, Physician/Principal Director at the Office of Translational Science FDA  
Stephen Austin, Financial Analyst  
Anil Chaudry, Public Servant/Combat Veteran  
Sunil Dasgupta, Professor  
Paul Geller, Community Advocate  
Jay Guan, Aerospace Engineer  
Lynne Harris, MCPS Teacher - Medical Science with Clinical Applications  
Collins Odongo  
Dalbin Osorio, Program Manager – MC Collab Council’s Children w/ Intensive Needs  
Cameron Rhode, Tutor  
Darwin Romero, Loan Officer  
Pavel Sukhobak, Owner of Local Tutoring Company  
Lumpoange Thomas, Regulatory Council

Candidates were posed 8 questions and responses are grouped together here.  
Vote411.org lists the responses by candidate if that format is preferable.  
Choose “Find What’s On Your Ballot” to see candidates in all races. Candidate platforms and a comparison tool (for two at a time) are available to assist in decision making.

Candidates have various websites and social media platforms for further information than the 8 questions posed here. Links are posted on your personalized Vote411.org ballot as well.

Answers here



---

## 1. QUALIFICATIONS: How does your background prepare you for the duties of this office?

---

**Mitra Ahadpour** I am an MCPS parent, a results-oriented executive addressing complex health policy issues, and an accomplished primary care physician who listens deeply. I will bring to the board fresh ideas, evidence-based decision making, and collaborative partnerships with a wide variety of community stakeholders. I chair several committees and task forces at my daughter's school and meet students regularly.

**Stephen Austin** Given that this election is heavily focused on the future of MCPS boundaries and the possibility of moving children for socioeconomic diversity, my childhood experience is powerful. I was both a FARMs-eligible kid, and changed schools 3 times against my will. Additionally, my career in financial analysis has prepared me to manage the growing budget needs of MCPS.

**Anil Chaudhry** Child of educators. Both parents retired from the NYC BOE. 1st generation immigrant. Educated in public schools and colleges. Military veteran with combat duty. In Iraq, my civil-military team established a provincial police force and school system. Public servant. Run a national program supporting audits of \$75B in annual trade revenue. Family man. Married with three children in MCPS schools.

**Sunil Dasgupta** I am a first-generation immigrant and a parent of 3 MCPS students. I have 20 years of classroom teaching and policy research experience, 11 of them teaching MCPS graduates. I have worked with budgets, financial reports, and data. I have been an MCCPTA committee chair and PTA president and am the founder of an annual countywide Mental Health and Wellness Forum for students/families.

**Paul Geller** MCCPTA President and VP (2013-17), school volunteer (2008-present), full-time volunteer advocate for MCPS (2012-present). Led charge for historic 2016 Education First Budget by forming coalition with BOE, County Council, community nonprofits, MCEA, SEIU Local 500, and MCAAP to secure required unanimous Council approval. Visited schools countywide, successfully led multiple key advocacy efforts.

**Jay Guan** As a kid who grew up in a poor immigrant family, I experienced the opportunity gap first hand. It lent me powerful insights on the effects of the opportunity gap and a unique perspective on how best to address it. Through my roles as an education and transportation advocate, I gained valuable insights into communication, community engagement, state legislative process, and MCPS operations.

**Lynne Harris** Years of experience in nursing, law, public health & teaching prepare me to address the array of issues confronting our school system. My deep knowledge of MCPS gained from ten years of substantive MCPS advocacy means I will be ready to serve on day one. Having prioritized student & family engagement, I know the wisdom of students, teachers, parents & staff is essential to all MCPS decision-making

**Collins Odongo** Candidate has not yet responded.

**Dalbin Osorio** Every step of my professional career has begun with families asking me to teach, help, mentor, and protect their children. My unique professional experience both in and out of the classroom, as well as in spaces where policy is developed and implemented, has prepared me for this role at this specific time. The main thing, though, is that I did all of that work before running for office.

**Cameron Rhode** As a recent (2012) graduate of Montgomery County Public Schools, I know our successes and challenges firsthand. Including my bachelor's and master's degrees, I spent 19 years as a public school student. My lifetime of benefiting from public education makes my candidacy for Board of Education a natural fit. I'm proud to be endorsed by Delegate Kumar Barve and former delegate Andrew Platt.

**Darwin Romero** I believe in order to be successful as a school board member one must have the desire to help people. And that is what I have been doing all my life. From the neighbor who I helped get more business when I was barely a teenager to the countless families I have had the privilege of helping make their dreams of home ownership a reality, I will do the same for our students - help them succeed.

**Pavel Sukhobok** As the founder of a local tutoring company, I am keenly aware of the challenges that our students face. I see too many students in high school who struggle with basic math and lack proper reading and writing skills. It is not the students' fault. It is not even the teachers' fault. The board is currently too busy playing politics with our education system while our students are falling behind.

**Lumpoange Thomas** I have had the great honor and privilege to support MCPS in a variety of volunteer positions during the past eleven years, beginning the very first day my son entered the school system. I've volunteered and served alongside educators, administrators, parents, and students.

---

## **2. OPPORTUNITY GAP: What approaches do you support to provide equitable countywide student access to experienced teachers and administrators and a diverse set of programs?**

**Mitra Ahadpour** We need to understand and reduce inequalities so that all students have the opportunity to flourish. We should have metrics for the system to best understand the learning conditions necessary for all students to thrive, and the outcomes those conditions can bring about. There are plenty of best practices to draw from to improve equitable education outcomes, using a whole student approach.

**Stephen Austin** I am a firm believer in educating children in their neighborhood schools because the social networks and accessibility are critical to families. MCPS has some amazing examples of innovative programs that were very effective at closing the achievement gap (like Broad Acres, and others), and I think we need to look at how to incorporate those lessons.

**Anil Chaudhry** 1. Make closing achievement gaps a county-wide responsibility 2. Provide safe, orderly learning environments for students and educators 3. Use test data and other research on students' performance to inform instruction 4. Leverage community diversity 5. Use meaningful data driven input from all local families, communities, and educators 6. Provide school choice for children in failing schools

**Sunil Dasgupta** We need to reduce class size/staff ratios by hiring more teachers, staff, and counselors. We should consult with teachers and staff to bring more training, diverse content, and an inclusive school culture for all. We need to keep staff and programs in schools currently facing pressures of under-enrollment, expand hiring to encourage diversity, and consider the possibility of higher pay.

**Paul Geller** Reward outstanding teachers, staff, and principals with incentives to thrive long-term at Title I and Focus Schools. Evaluate and correct inequitable access through policy changes and union agreements. Provide more professional development opportunities. To support students, add counselors, school psychologists; provide fun extracurricular programs such as STEM, field trips, and language classes.

**Jay Guan** I support approaches that consider geographic diversity, automatic access to advanced courses based on grades. To ensure access to experienced teachers, we must first retain teachers, to that end, I would support preference to the promotion of teachers who taught in high need schools, competitive pay, and tuition assistance.

**Lynne Harris** Place experienced, highly effective teachers & administrators in the most challenged schools. Ensure all academic & other opportunities are truly accessible to all students – looking at geographic placement across the county, transit as a resource, & as a last resort online access. Implement the community schools model at schools where poverty level (FARMS as proxy) exceeds 37% (countywide FARMS)

**Collins Odongo** Candidate has not yet responded.

**Dalbin Osorio** I support enhancing cultural competence, providing comprehensive support for students, consistent outreach to families, extended learning opportunities, community schools, providing resources to classrooms that support learning, and recruitment and retention of qualified staff.

**Cameron Rhode** I agree with Superintendent Jack Smith that simply considering race has not worked to narrow the opportunity gap. If students are lumped into broad categories, their needs cannot be adequately met. Like all people, children are multi-faceted. Efforts to ensure opportunity for all students should be informed by more detailed data collection of students' performance.

**Darwin Romero** To increase equity, diversity and access to all our students I would provide incentives to teachers who are bilingual and want to teach at schools with high needs. I would also provide additional support and resources to those schools so that our students are succeeding both in academia and in life.

**Pavel Sukhobok** Right now, there is a vicious turnover of teachers going on at lower-performing schools. The least experienced teachers often end up in the most challenging classrooms, and we wonder why many teachers leave within a few years. The incentives to have the most experienced teachers teach at lower-income schools simply aren't working. Let's strengthen those incentives and add more programs.

**Lumpoange Thomas** I believe that the foundation from which to address the opportunity gap for under-represented minority students begin in elementary school. All students in elementary school should be provided with the same opportunities to access curriculum that will prepare them for a range of rigorous courses by the time they reach high school.

---

### **3. BOUNDARY CHANGES: What factors do you think are most important in considering changes to school boundaries?**

**Mitra Ahadpour** Fostering inclusion, diversity, equity and civility benefits all students. Multi-faceted policies are needed in transparent collaboration with students, parents, educators and community members to address this complex issue. Simply collecting and using raw numbers to examine boundary lines does not begin to give us a complete picture of the realities of our community and neighborhood schools.

**Anil Chaudhry** proximity - zone students for the schools closest to their homes quality of life - optimize use of logistical assets and reduce transit times quality of community - limit split articulation and provide compact feeder patterns diversity - build flexibility to reduce community opportunity gaps sustainability - optimize the usage of existing facilities stability - ensure school assignment stability

**Stephen Austin** Number one consideration is to have kids in the schools that are closest to their homes, where possible. Where it is not possible due to capacity issues, we need to look at ways to either grow capacity or build more facilities to achieve that goal. Some modest boundary adjustments are understandable if it is in the spirit of neighborhood schools.

**Sunil Dasgupta** I have studied and written articles investigating this complex issue. After decades of massive demographic and population change—and 100 overcrowded and 99 under-enrolled schools--boundary changes are inevitable. We can guarantee predictability and adjacency of school assignments by developing a regular, transparent, and fair process of systemwide review and adjustments.

**Paul Geller** Important factors are: how over/under enrolled an existing school is; benefits of neighborhood schools and how some provide wraparound services; proximity; changes desired by stakeholders; diversity; and addressing facility utilization by allowing school choice for students in schools at or above 105% of capacity to attend a nearby school at or below 95% of capacity without a boundary change.

**Jay Guan** Boundary study, in essence, is a trade study between various factors. Which factors are more important depends on the objectives of the study and context. I typically consider facility utilization and geography to be the most important. As over-utilization and geography have an overwhelmingly negative impact on a school's operation, safety, security, and most importantly, on students well-being.

**Lynne Harris** System-wide, at all levels, MCPS enrollment about equals MCPS capacity yet we have massively under- and over-enrolled schools. We need a commonsense reboot to end that imbalance and use our capital dollars more effectively. We also need more equitable schools- no more pockets of poverty where FARMs rates greatly exceed the countywide rate of 37%.

**Collins Odongo** Candidate has not yet responded.

**Dalbin Osorio** We have to factor in how specific, measurable, accessible, time-oriented, and realistic the changes that we are proposing are. Are we burdening students and families with extended travel times? Are we prepared from a staffing standpoint? Have we considered all options before making boundary changes? And can our desired outcomes be reached? All of those are things I'd consider important.

**Cameron Rhode** The boundary analysis is long overdue. I appreciate that the consultant's analysis -- per Board of Education policy - is considering linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity in addition to proximity and capacity. The benefits of diverse schools are not superficial; they are tangible and long-lasting. If elected, I will consider the consultant's report heavily in my decision-making.

**Darwin Romero** When considering school boundary changes we need to look at several factors - school utilization being the most important in my opinion. Many teachers are currently teaching classes that are overcrowded and receive little to no help. This leads to students becoming disengaged and bored at school and teacher burn out. Let's use our buildings in the most optimal way to help our students learn.

**Pavel Sukhobok** Redistricting is not the answer. 1) Forcing students to leave their friends and teachers behind will take a heavy emotional toll on them. 2) Many families, including minority families, used their life savings to buy homes so their children can

attend a different school. Forcing them back into schools they moved away from is wrong. 3) Let's change the way the schools are run, not the students.

**Lumpoange Thomas** I believe the following factors are equally important when considering boundary modifications – proximity, school capacity, and building utilization, and diversity.

---

#### **4. FUNDING: Which recommendations by the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education should be given the highest priority?**

**Mitra Ahadpour** I am supportive of all the Kirwan Commission recommendations; this is an amazing opportunity to close the opportunity gap. There is need for a whole student approach that includes high quality early learning, school climate that is conducive to learning and well-being, and improved family engagement by removing any linguistic or cultural barriers.

**Stephen Austin** I am a firm believer in the advantages of early childhood education, and hope Kirwan will make that a priority.

**Anil Chaudhry** 1. Expand publicly funded full-day pre-K. 2. Expand number of Family Support Centers that provide access to wraparound services to low-income families in areas of concentrated poverty. 3. Redesign career and technical education (CTE) pathways that lead to industry-recognized workforce credentials at high school graduation. 4. Establish independent oversight boards.

**Sunil Dasgupta** We have to prioritize pre-k expansion, then academic support and wraparound services including counselors, high quality and diverse teachers, and career pathways for students. Achieving these goals really means hiring more teachers and staff. This election itself is about governance and accountability, the last Kirwan recommendation. I want a BOE that is able to govern MCPS more effectively.

**Paul Geller** Kirwan Commission recommendations must be wholly enacted for true success. I would place extra emphasis on: expanding pre-K availability; elevating the teaching profession and high quality we desire with pay on par with other degreed professions; allocating greater resources for struggling and differently abled students; and college or career readiness for students by the end of 10th grade.

**Jay Guan** All Kirwan Commission recommendations shared the same level of urgency. If I had to pick one as the “highest priority”, I would go with the expansion of Pre-K. It is one of the best equalizers of student performance. Furthermore, Montgomery County has already begun this work, so it is important to support it.

**Lynne Harris** All 5 policy areas are mission critical. I would prioritize High Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders, and More Resources for Students to be Successful. Those address the need for instructional excellence in every classroom, ensuring teachers have the tools they need to support diverse learning needs, and the importance of all students seeing themselves reflected in their school's staff.

**Collins Odongo** Candidate has not yet responded.

**Dalbin Osorio** The Kirwan Commission had a lot of recommendations that would fundamentally put a dent in the Opportunity Gap, but I'd give highest priority to expanding prekindergarten for low-income families, increasing teacher salaries, revamping high schools to offer students training for well-paying jobs right after graduation, establishing more community schools and expanding special education services.

**Cameron Rhode** The Blueprint for Maryland's Future took effect on my birthday last year -- a welcome birthday gift! It makes important investments in pre-kindergarten, teacher salaries, and special services for schools with high poverty rates. The Kirwan recommendations can be fully funded: several bills have been introduced in the 2020 Maryland General Assembly session to generate significant revenue.

**Darwin Romero** I would give high-quality early education the highest priority because I believe it is the one recommendation that will close the opportunity gap and increase diversity in the long-run.

**Pavel Sukhobok** Free pre-K education for lower income families. Studies consistently show that students who start earlier, end up going farther in education. Children start learning at a very young age, so let's foster that curiosity so that students are more prepared for school when they enter kindergarten. Not to mention, providing free pre-K will also reduce the financial burden on lower-income families.

**Lumpoange Thomas** I believe access to early childhood education should be given the highest priority. Studies have shown early intervention and access to Pre-School and Pre-Kindergarten for children in underserved communities have positive outcomes and establishes a solid foundation for success later in school.

---

## **5. SCHOOL SAFETY: How would you address school safety issues such as gun violence, gang problems and bullying?**

---

**Mitra Ahadpour** The ability of students to learn is impacted by their surroundings. There are several safety issues such as mental health, substance use, bullying, and gun violence which can be addressed through the implementation of evidence-based programs. A safe and supportive school environment is critical to the success of our children. We must have consistent administrative support for these programs.

**Stephen Austin** I would start with facilities that all have a high standard in security features. The temporary classrooms at many schools are not secure, and some of the older facilities do not have many of the modern safety features. For gangs and bullying, I think that has to be dealt with in a meaningful way. Our schools have to be safe environments for children to learn.

**Anil Chaudhry** Improve staffing ratios to allow for the delivery of a full range of mental services and effective school–community partnerships; Develop evidence-based standards for district-level policies to promote effective school discipline and positive behavior; Fund continuous and sustainable crisis and emergency preparedness, response, and recovery planning and training that uses evidence-based models.

**Sunil Dasgupta** Address physical security by reducing portable use, adding entrance vestibules, and cameras that work. Long-term, use educational approaches, not more police officers inside schools. More counselors, trauma-informed, restorative practices, teacher diversity, and ultimately teacher/staff ratios so students actually have a trusted adult in the building. Rebuild the home and school partnership.

**Paul Geller** We should expand the availability of high quality, free or low cost, extracurricular activities and school media center accessibility districtwide before and after school so students have a place to be and a positive experience. I would create programs in partnership with MCPS-TV showing/addressing the effects these issues have on society, featuring students and teachers sharing their experiences.

**Jay Guan** Community building, engagement, and trust-building with families are key. Clear, unfeathered, reporting procedures for students and families, coupled with legal and/or disciplinary consequences for responsible adults are also critical. On issues such as student mental wellness and vaping, awareness, education, and active intervention are key. I would also advocate for relevant legislative actions.

**Lynne Harris** School climate and student safety & well-being go hand-in-hand. All teachers & staff need substantive training in trauma-informed practices to ensure our schools are warm, welcoming spaces in which all students & staff feel safe & valued, and no one falls through the cracks. Mental wellness services need to be readily available, & self-care needs to be intentionally included in every school day.

**Collins Odongo** Candidate has not yet responded.

**Dalbin Osorio** Investing in mental health professionals and dedicated support staff, while providing professional development to staff members on how to recognize and respond to behaviors that are a natural part of a child's development, is a first step towards addressing school safety issues. Every child has a right to learn and be safe by doing so, but we cannot criminalize our youth with more law enforcement.

**Cameron Rhode** Bullying and other social issues among students shouldn't be dismissed as inevitable. Students have understandably expressed frustration at being assigned different counselors in different years of high school. Developing a relationship with one counselor is valuable in establishing trust and in securing a quality recommendation letter for college. I will work to increase continuity in counseling.

**Darwin Romero** Each school needs to foster a culture of respect and civility and this starts from pre-kindergarten. I would encourage our educators to start working with our students at an early age in creating safe and welcoming environments in the classrooms and

the school. I would also promote public service announcements that highlight the character traits that we want to see in our community.

**Pavel Sukhobok** Bullying happens every day in every school around the county. While bullying may be hard to detect, bullying often leads to serious, long-lasting effects. Incorporating activities to educate students on the harms of bullying while continuing to train the teachers on how to spot and prevent bullying can help address that issue. We can also provide a heavier security presence to tackle gun violence.

**Lumpoange Thomas** I strongly believe that the first initiative needs to expand our focus on mental health. We need to remove the stigma associated with mental health and ensure students have access to mental health counseling. I think it's also important to train our educators to recognize when bullying behavior is occurring and how to appropriately manage the classroom safety.

---

## **6. VOCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES: What programs do you propose to address vocational preparation and opportunities for non-college bound students?**

**Mitra Ahadpour** With students at the center of all our decisions, together, we can implement innovative initiatives to prepare them for life. It is important to expose students to a wide range of post-secondary opportunities; improve Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics programs; provide mentors; encourage internships; and build deep partnerships within our talented community of partners.

**Stephen Austin** My father was a metal trades teacher at a high school for a number of years when I was a kid. My brother is an electrician, so I have deep respect for the trades. I believe every school should have a program that employs professionals with real-life experience to prepare kids interested in this path.

**Anil Chaudhry** We need to ensure our educators and school counselors are trained to provide non-judgmental information on military service, national service year programs, hands-on employment, apprenticeship programs, technical schools, trade schools, and gap year programs to allow students to make choices other than college without feeling like a failure.

**Sunil Dasgupta** Reducing class size allows more specialist courses to run with fewer students right in assigned home schools. Start early in middle school with robust courses such as in coding—a career choice that doesn't need a college degree. More student media and early childhood career pathways. We need effective internship coordinators to develop relationships with local organizations to place students.

**Paul Geller** We must do a better job of publicizing non-college track programs, and expand the offering of cyber security, plumbing, electrical, automotive, medical, construction, and other courses to additional high schools. We also need more partnerships with businesses that hire employees in these fields, as well as trade unions, to establish/expand apprenticeships and job opportunities for our graduates.

**Jay Guan** I would propose future-ready programs that prepare our kids for careers of tomorrow. We need to expand programs such as the Aviation and Aerospace program at Magruder High School. Our kids receive an FAA Part 107 Drone Operator certificate after this program. In addition to traditional trade programs, we should establish data science, AI, and entrepreneurial programs.

**Lynne Harris** MCPS has great CTE programs concentrated at Edison and next Fall Seneca Valley, as well as scattered at many other high schools. Students are earning valuable industry certifications & getting professional experience. We need to ensure all students are aware of & can access any program of interest regardless of their home high school. Not just non-college bound - all students can benefit from CTE.

**Collins Odongo** Candidate has not yet responded.

**Dalbin Osorio** Expanding computer vocational programs, similar to what the High School of Computers and Technology does, is a program that could provide more vocational preparation for students. Incorporation construction, barbering, cosmetology, and automotive programs worked really well at the high school I worked at last year, and allowed the students to work in industries they deemed enjoyable.

**Cameron Rhode** MCPS can reduce the stigma around career/technical programs by more visibly presenting them as viable options early in each child's education. Familiarity with options well in advance may help families avoid the notion that anything besides college is a last resort. As the three-year action plan on career readiness finishes, MCPS should strive to meet specific program demands of county residents.

**Darwin Romero** MCPS has done a great job in providing vocational and technical programs for students who may not be considering college right after high school. I would like to expand these programs to include careers in marketing, technology, and entrepreneurship.

**Pavel Sukhobok** How do you tell a student that they are not college bound? When do you know? All students want to go to college, even if some can't. As a result, I advocate for school sponsored vocational internships by partnering up with trusted local business. This way, students can focus on getting college ready at school, while exploring different career paths outside of it.

**Lumpoange Thomas** I believe the Career and Technical Education currently taught in MCPS, is an outstanding program that offers an alternative pathway for students who may not want to pursue post-secondary education. Being able to obtain industry certification in a career increases a student's chance to success beyond high school.

---

## **7. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: How will you obtain and use community and parent/student views in making Board decisions?**

**Mitra Ahadpour** We need an increase in transparency and communication to determine the will of our community stakeholders, with critical and ongoing input from students, parents, educators and members of the broader community. There are many creative approaches to use to get input from these stakeholders. We also need to ensure that student governments are consistently included, and have an ongoing voice.

**Stephen Austin** I have been quite successful at this on social media, and plan to continue to connect with the community in this way when I am on the Board. Additionally, I enjoy engaging with communities in public forums. Community involvement is one of the areas the current Board has not handled particularly well, in my opinion.

**Anil Chaudhry** 1. Leverage common social media platforms to provide consistent, coherent, and concise communications with parents, community members and educators. 2. Use common technology platforms to provide greater weight to feedback linked to real identities of local stakeholders such as mcps ID's or local addresses 3. Provide more resources to school based newspapers, blogs, and student led communications

**Sunil Dasgupta** I will have a direct and open relationship with families, students, teachers and staff, and reach out to under-represented groups. The onus is on BOE members to get out more, not to wait for public hearings alone. BOE should develop a regular process of addressing constituent requests. Personally, I plan to visit each cluster annually and regularly hold informal "office hours" with stakeholders.

**Paul Geller** Will seek the input of students, teachers, administrators, staff, families, and communities by visiting schools and meeting with stakeholders countywide, as I have done since 2013, as well as via email, text, social media, snail mail, and telephone. Will aggregate this invaluable feedback and utilize it to inform decisions (policy, program, curriculum, construction,...) made with my BOE colleagues.

**Jay Guan** In addition to the regular cluster, constituent, and stakeholder meetings, I would obtain community input by hosting regular focus group students and teachers, as well as low-key coffee at regular location and time as a relationship. Regular social media "Ask-Me-Anything" (AMAs) with appropriate ground rules is another method that I would consider as well.

**Lynne Harris** BOE decisions must be infused with substantive stakeholder input – teachers, staff, students, parents. Each has unique wisdom about MCPS that must be understood in order to make the best decisions. A regular process of meeting, engaging, information-sharing, & civil discussion is key. The BOE must proactively ensure that all voices are heard, not just the loudest, most organized, or most angry.

**Collins Odongo** Candidate has not yet responded.

**Dalbin Osorio** I will pledge to host bi-weekly community meetings all over the County during times that are convenient for all parents, and I will do this before making any Board decision. It is important that you, as an elected official, are available and accountable to the people that are trusting you with their vote. I will, also, utilize social media and surveys to make sure we have the input we need.

**Cameron Rhode** Listening is a natural part of having volunteered politically for 12 years. Since January 2008, I've enjoyed countless conversations with students, teachers, and parents across Montgomery County about education issues that affect them personally. I bring a thoughtful, open-minded approach of fully taking in and acting on stakeholders' concerns. I look forward to hearing from you!

**Darwin Romero** I believe that it is crucial to include the voices of students/parents and the community in the decision making process. Ultimately the students/parents will be most affected by the policies we implement and we need to be sensitive to their needs and concerns. In order to get input from students/parents and the community I plan on holding regular meetings throughout the year.

**Pavel Sukhobok** Parents should be involved in decisions like redistricting. However, I'll also say what may not be as popular. Parental and student pressure on teachers has led to a runaway grade inflation. The board eliminated final exams and created an absurd grading system that literally discourages hard work to pander to parents and students. When it comes to education, we should listen to teachers more.

**Lumpoange Thomas** A parent's participation is crucial in their child's educational success. Therefore, I believe community engagement and involvement is vital. I would hold townhall forums, conduct surveys, and other outreach methods to ensure the greatest reach and participation possible.

---

## 8. PRIORITIES: What are your top three priorities?

**Mitra Ahadpour** My top 3 priorities are: Transforming our educational norms for all students to be successful through evidence-based best practices; end the drug use in MCPS that is impacting students' physical, mental, social, and intellectual well-being; and support for local schools with innovative strategies to foster inclusion, diversity, equity and civility that benefits all students.

**Stephen Austin** 1) Return Board accountability to parents and the community 2) Work tirelessly to find innovative ways to close the achievement gap - in neighborhood schools 3) Bring my financial expertise to the Board to come up with creative ways to help weather any revenue environment

**Anil Chaudhry** 1. Make closing achievement gaps a county-wide responsibility through transparent community driven decision making 2. Provide community based safe and orderly learning environments for students and educators including libraries and community centers 3. Use test data and other research on students' performance to inform instruction and defund programs with limited impact on educational outcomes

**Sunil Dasgupta** Expand hiring to address class size/staff ratios. Rebuild the home and school partnership. Invest in the health and safety of our students and staff, including mental health and wellness. But we have to find the money and have strong leadership on the BOE. The county and the state will provide new funding and we should rebalance capital and operating budgets to free more resources.

**Paul Geller** Academics: ensure all students are academically challenged, encouraged, and supported to achieve their best regardless of background or financial status; college and career ready by end of 10th grade. Construction: save money by renovating schools and adding solar power wherever possible; opening bidding to all qualified/capable contractors. Testing: reduce testing; increase teacher planning time.

**Jay Guan** Address the opportunity gap and ensure that the same upward mobile path available to me as a child is available for future generations. We can do so by ensuring: 1. access to future-ready, inter-disciplinary STEAM curriculums and programs for ALL kids. 2. seek ways to increase teacher autonomy and support. 3. evaluate and implement innovative education and operational practices

**Lynne Harris** 1. Student Voice - operationalize real processes to bring the wisdom and experience of students to the table for every MCPS decision. 2. Open Data- MCPS must transparently share data so that all stakeholders see and know the same things at the same time, & can bring collective expertise to the problem-solving process. 3. Consistency – of programs, opportunities, and quality across all schools

**Collins Odongo** Candidate has not yet responded.

**Dalbin Osorio** My top three priorities are to close the achievement gap, recruit and retain quality teachers and administrators, and to assist in developing culturally-competent curriculum and instruction that allows us to really make sure every student receives the quality education their parents have invested in from MCPS. Every child, regardless of zip code, deserves exactly that.

**Cameron Rhode** three connected issues: I will constantly be looking out for students' physical and mental well-being. Health affects so many aspects of their lives, including ability to focus in class. / I will work to make sure in-school administration is accommodating of LGBT students' and teachers' needs. / As a card-carrying NAACP member, I am dedicated to fighting white supremacy in all its forms.

**Darwin Romero** My top three priorities as a school board member are to increase diversity at all levels of the school system, build alliances and strategic partnerships with the community at large, and create more growth and entrepreneurship opportunities for all our students.

**Pavel Sukhobok** 1. Bring back academic rigor by strengthening the curriculum and fixing the broken grading system. 2. Test all students for learning difference at an early age. 3. Get politics out of education and bring common sense back in.

**Lumpoange Thomas** My top priority is to rebuild trust among our community and the BoE by supporting and implementing transparent processes and practices in BoE deliberations and policy making decisions. My second priority is to invest in all our MCPS staff and educators. My third priority is to ensure that the BoE provides the best possible education to all of its students.