



Nonpartisan Voter Guide

**2026 Maryland Primary Election
Tuesday, June 23, 2026**

www.Vote411.org



About this Voters' Guide

This guide is brought to you by the League of Women Voters, an inclusive group of volunteers dedicated to educating people about elections since 1920. Created to help voters get to know the candidates running in the Maryland Primary Election on June 23, 2026, this guide aims to provide unbiased information without endorsing any candidates or political parties.

The League asks every candidate a set of questions based on the office they seek and we publish their answers word-for-word to help you make informed decisions. What the candidates wrote is exactly what you see here; nothing was changed or corrected, not even spelling mistakes. The League has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information provided but does not assume responsibility for any errors or omissions. To support printing local voter guides, visit www.lwwwashco.org to make a donation.

Print your ballot selections for election day at

Register to Vote

You can use [Maryland's Online Voter Registration System \(OLVR\)](#) or submit a voter registration application to your local board of elections or the State Board of Elections by 5 PM on June 2, 2026. Maryland also offers **Same Day Registration** at an Early Voting Center or on Election Day at your polling place. Bring a document that proves where you live, such as your MVA-issued license, ID card, or change of address card, or your paycheck, bank statement, utility bill, or other government document with your name and new address.

Voting

Primary Election Ballots

Maryland's **closed primary** means that voters will receive a ballot offering their party's candidates and the nonpartisan Board of Education election. **Unaffiliated voters** will only vote in the nonpartisan Board of Education election. Voters wishing to change their Party Affiliation for the Primary Election may do so before 5 PM on **Tuesday, June 02, 2026**. View your complete ballot at www.Vote411.org.

Early Voting

Early Voting for the Primary Election will be from **Thursday, June 11th through Thursday, June 18th**, from 7 AM to 8 PM. The locations will be:

Washington County Board of Elections

17718 Virginia Avenue
Hagerstown, MD 21740

Boonsboro American Legion

710 North Main Street
Boonsboro, MD 21713

Washington County Free Library

100 South Potomac Street
Hagerstown, MD 21740

Clear Spring American Legion

12335 Big Spring Road
Clear Spring, MD 21722

Vote by Mail

If you received your mail-in ballot, make sure to mark and return it by Tuesday, June 23, 2026. If your ballot is postmarked by June 23, 2026, it will be considered received timely and will be counted. To verify the status of your mail-in ballot, visit <https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/Votersearch>. There are eight secure **ballot drop boxes** located throughout the county to receive your ballot. The drop boxes will be closed down precisely at 8 PM on Election Day, and will be unable to receive any ballots after that. The eight ballot drop box locations are:

- **Washington County Election Center**, 17718 Virginia Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740
- **Williamsport Town Hall**, 2 N. Conococheague Street, Williamsport, MD 21795
- **Washington County Free Library**, 100 S. Potomac Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740
- **Clear Spring Town Hall**, 146 Cumberland Street, Clear Spring, MD 21722
- **Hancock Town Hall** (parking lot entrance), 126 West High Street, Hancock, MD 21750
- **Boonsboro Town Hall** (parking lot entrance), 21 North Main Street, Boonsboro, MD 21713
- **Smithsburg Town Hall**, 21 West Water Street, Smithsburg, MD 21783
- **Keedysville Town Hall**, 19 S. Main Street, Keedysville, MD 21756

Election Day

Primary Election Day is **Tuesday, June 23, 2026, from 7 AM to 8 PM**. If you vote on Election Day, you must go to your assigned polling place to vote a regular ballot. If you go to any other polling place on Election Day, you will be required to vote a provisional ballot. Find your polling place at www.Vote411.org.

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Washington County Commissioner

Duties: The Board's primary duty is to serve as the executive branch of County government. Each member of the Board has one vote, and a simple majority of the Board is sufficient to take actions subject to the authority vested in the Board under State law. Emergency actions also require a simple majority vote. The Board elects its own officers. The Commissioners meet weekly on Tuesdays and throughout the year with municipalities and unincorporated towns as requested. **Salary:** Commissioners are paid \$38,000, and the Board's president makes \$41,000. **Term:** 4 years **How Elected:** Commissioners are elected on a countywide basis.

Qualifications: How does your experience prepare you for the duties of this office?

Budget: What areas of the county budget would you prioritize for increased or decreased funding, and why?

Education & Workforce: The Board plays a key role in education funding. How would you support strong schools and workforce development that meet local needs?

Economic Development: What steps should the county government take to encourage economic development and job growth?

Infrastructure: What infrastructure investments, such as roads, broadband, public safety, or water systems, do you believe are most urgent, and how would you fund them?

Transparency & Public Engagement: What steps would you take to ensure transparency and meaningful public engagement in county decision-making?

CANDIDATES

John F. Barr (Republican) Campaign Email: jbarr@ellsworthelectric.net

1. Qualifications: I am running for my 5th term as County Commissioner. I feel I am knowledgeable and qualified to give another 4 years in Public Service to the citizens of Washington County. There are two distinct areas of the current budget with a tremendous need in our community: 1) Fire & Rescue are struggling to keep their doors open, particularly due to inflation and cost factors. We need to supplant professional paid operations and encourage volunteers working in the local fire and emergency services in our nine municipalities. 2) The School Board continues to struggle with push backs from the state; support staff is needed particularly in the elementary schools.

2. Budget: There are two distinct areas of the current budget with a tremendous need in our community: 1) Fire & Rescue are struggling to keep their doors open, particularly due to inflation and cost factors. We need to supplant professional paid operations and encourage volunteers working in the local fire and emergency services in our nine municipalities. 2) The

School Board continues to struggle with push backs from the state; support staff is needed particularly in the elementary schools.

3. Education & Workforce: Continue to encourage cooperation between our school system and Hagerstown Community College-both as an encourager and financial support, seeing that students have the best college and career opportunities.

4. Economic Development: We need to keep a viable and active Economic Development Department staffed with appropriate and knowledgeable professional individuals and to work with local, state and private sector to encourage job and growth development and employment.

5. Infrastructure: Water & Sewer have been and continue to be a major concern for our county. We need better work arrangements for both entities. We need state cooperation and develop both a local water and wastewater authority to cover all municipalities in our county that is in the best interest of public utility service to all the citizens of Washington County.

6. Transparency & Public Engagement: All public servants are accessible by phone, e-mail, text messages, personal interaction and social media. We feel these means are adequate if civility and decorum are demonstrated and followed.

Robert Matthew Breeding (Republican) Campaign Phone: 240-347-1776

1. Qualifications: My experience has prepared me well for the duties of County Commissioner. I currently serve as the County's elected Treasurer, where I have gained a deep understanding of county government operations, the budget process, and human resource policies. Before serving as Treasurer, I completed a career as a senior officer in the U.S. Army and later worked for the State of Maryland. This experience has allowed me to serve in government at the federal, state, and county levels. My view of holding elec

2. Budget: Public safety is my highest priority when it comes to the county budget. Public safety includes not only police, fire, and emergency services, but also critical infrastructure such as safe and reliable water and sewer systems. The first responsibility of government is to ensure the safety and well-being of its citizens. Rather than focusing only on increasing or decreasing funding in specific areas, I believe we must strive for greater efficiency and better use of existing resources. For example

3. Education & Workforce: Washington County is fortunate to have an excellent public school system. Our vocational-technical programs prepare many students for successful careers in the skilled trades, which are essential to our local economy. The partnership between our public schools and the community college also helps fast-track students toward earning a college degree, giving them a head start in their careers. Additionally, Washington County sits on the edge of a growing technology corridor. We should leverage this

4. Economic Development: Washington County is one of the few counties in Maryland that still has a business personal property tax. Frederick County phased out this tax over a ten-year period. A simple principle applies: if you tax something more, you tend to get less of it. By reducing or eliminating the business personal property tax, we can encourage businesses to invest and grow in Washington County. Creating a more competitive tax environment will attract new businesses, strengthen our economy, and create more jobs

5. Infrastructure: Public safety remains my top priority when considering infrastructure investments. A safe, reliable, and sustainable water system is essential not only for public health but also for responsible economic growth. I strongly believe Washington County is long overdue for establishing its own water authority. A well-designed water delivery system that supports growth and sustainability is vital to the county's long-term success. Strategic investments in infrastructure will help ensure that Washingto

6. Transparency & Public Engagement: I strongly believe that government at every level should truly be of, by, and for the people. During my career in the U.S. Army, including service overseas in combat zones and in parts of the world where government transparency is virtually nonexistent, I saw firsthand how important open and accountable government is to a free society. Washington County deserves a government that listens to its citizens. We need far greater transparency and meaningful opportunities for public participation in co

Samuel Briskin (Democratic)

This candidate indicated his intention to withdraw from the race after the filing deadline. His name will appear on the ballot. However, he does not intend to take office should voters select him.

Charles Burkett (Republican) Website: charlesburkettforwashingtoncounty.com

1. Qualifications: As an entrepreneur I built 3 successful business in Washington County. I operated each for 25, 16, and 10 years. Each business had its unique qualities and challenges. Over the years I employed hundreds. I took care of all areas of business administration, including, day to day operations, payroll, marketing, budgeting, etc. I also served as County Commissioner for 2 years fulfilling a term of a commissioner who resigned. I currently serve on the W Washington County Board of Education.

2. Budget: I believe governments first and most important priority is public safe. Public safety was a high priority for me when I last served and will continue to be my top priority. As a current School Board member I would like to see if we can find creative ways to increase what we give to the school board.. I would also like to see us address the increasing property tax we've been seeing in Washington County.

3. Education & Workforce: Marylands Blueprint has placed financial burdens on the schools and local government with unfunded mandates. I would like to see us work with the state to fix this. I do think we could increase what we are providing to our local school board. As a current school board member, we are developing programs to address the ever changing needs of employers and have developed some great new programs. I'm really excited about the ROTC programs, one of which starts in Hancock in the 2026/2027 year.

4. Economic Development: I am a firm believer that a good economy is a diverse economy. We need to do a better job at diversifying our economy and work to attract higher paying manufacturing and white color jobs. For a long time we have seen many warehouses being built in our area. Although these can be good paying jobs, they are not what I would consider middle class wages. I was apart of bringing Hitachi Rail to our area, which as I have said, is this generations Mack Track for our area.

5. Infrastructure: One of our biggest infrastructure problems in our county is our water system or lack thereof. This is going to take hard work and thinking outside the box to address. Right now the county is at the mercy of the City of Hagerstown when we need water. I would like to see us expand our support to the public safety training facility and get that project completed and encourage more fire and rescue volunteers. Our schools are getting really old and are in need of serious upgrades/replacement.

6. Transparency & Public Engagement: Recently, public comment was removed as an avenue for the public to address their elected officials. I believe it's important for all citizens, whether I agree with them or not to have a physical voice at the table. There were a few times while serving the last time, that listening to people during public comment helped me in my decision making. The public needs to be able to trust its government.



Jeffrey A. Cline (Republican) Address: PO BOX 164, Funkstown, MD 21734

This candidate declined to submit responses.

April M. Compton (Republican) Address: 17401 Wolford Ave, Hagerstown, MD 21740

This candidate declined to submit responses.

Jonathan Fish (Democratic) <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61587808132157>

1. Qualifications: I am new to this sphere of activity but I am very passionate about helping our community. I have my B.A. in political science from University of Florida, I was once a high school chemistry teacher and for the past ~7 years I have been a computer programmer. I am a father of three and would throw myself into the responsibilities and requirements for this role.

2. Budget: My priorities are the people of this county. I intend to focus on the current cost of living crisis by focusing on: 1. Affordable housing for all 2. Food security 3. Livable wages and increasing job variety 4. Childcare and Education 5. Infrastructure improvements geared towards the first points. I don't think our money is being used efficiently and I think we are leaving opportunities for further funding on the table.

3. Education & Workforce: 100% behind this. I have three children and am not satisfied with our current school system. I want to make our schools something that draws people to the area and I want our teachers taken care of so we have long term retention of talent. I also agree that we have local resources that could be integrated for better career training i.e. Agricultural, medicine, EMS, teaching, and a variety of others.

4. Economic Development: I think you address this by meeting the needs of the community. We could open several more Amazon-like factories and it wouldn't help this be a place that people are thriving. Addressing housing and food, livable wages, education and then making use of mixed infrastructure to make it easy to transition from house, to career, to fun/relaxing 3rd spaces. These are ways to take care of people and when people thrive that is when you have a sustainable economy.

5. Infrastructure: This is something I actually want to hear more about from several local sources to make my first call. I think all of these are vital and interconnected and as such I do not think we could cut corners for funding. Clean air and water,

reliable internet/electricity and safety are human necessities. I am confident we could maintain and expand in these areas.

6. Transparency & Public Engagement: I do not think the current commission listens at all based on several recent events so the bar is pretty low. However, I want to find ways to here from as many groups as possible and receive recommendations, long term projections and plans from the wide range of groups who are so invested in our county. I am a public servant whose jobs is to listen, synthesize and implement the information I am receiving from the public, I do not intend to force my own agenda into this space.

Chris Keane (Democratic)

This candidate indicated his intention to withdraw from the race after the filing deadline. His name will appear on the ballot. However, he does not intend to take office should voters select him.

Patrick Kirby (Democratic)

This candidate indicated his intention to withdraw from the race after the filing deadline. His name will appear on the ballot. However, he does not intend to take office should voters select him.

Randy Leatherman (Republican) Campaign Website: www.voterandyleatherman.com

1. Qualifications: My appointment to county commissioner in April of 2025 has allowed me to use all of my experience as a life long resident of the county. I have drawn extensively on my 20 years of service with the USAF and 36 years of experience with Fire, EMS and international rescue work. My involvement as a pilot at Hagerstown Regional Airport and benevolent work have also helped to prepare me for my role as commissioner. For the last 39 years my wife and I have lived on a small farm in Fairplay.

2. Budget: Washington County's recent history includes performance that has resulted in superior bond ratings and excellent audits. My intention is to continue this tradition. As our responsibility to deliver quality EMS and Fire service demands that we hire and train personnel, I look forward to assisting in the strategic placement of those employees. Additionally, I intend on showing our senior citizens the consideration that they deserve as we navigate our budgets.

3. Education & Workforce: Maryland's Blueprint for Education has determined the proper course and funding model to achieve the highest academic success possible in our schools. My personal focus is to pursue the goal of having every third grader reading at grade level. It is imperative that children learn to read so that they can then read to learn. This is a challenge that I do not direct at our educators but rather to the family of each student.

4. Economic Development: Economic development is a long term commitment. Small business owners and corporations need to be sought after and respected for their ultimate commitment to locate in our county. Because of our strategic location in the tri-state area, we compete with surrounding jurisdictions where it is less expensive to live and operate a business. It will be challenging, but safe communities that are welcoming and close to workplaces is paramount.

5. Infrastructure: Water distribution and sewer accessibility are the life blood of any growing economy. Their maintenance is often ignored until problems arise with their operation. Replacement and upgrades should be performed continuously. Thoughtful development and plans for future growth demand spending that can be financed with the issuance of bonds if necessary. I will make the installation of water and sewer systems a priority in areas that demand the service now and in the future.

6. Transparency & Public Engagement: Public engagement in county government has always been important. Public forums, access through emails as well as personal meetings are to be encouraged. Over the past several years, county meetings have been interrupted by individuals who seemingly have no message to deliver. Their attacks on county personnel and commissioners has resulted in a temporary pause in the opportunity for public comment. Hopefully these disruptions will disappear and public comments will resume in the near future.



Les McIntosh, Sr. (Democratic) www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61587469057592

1. Qualifications: As a pastor, small business owner, and community advocate, I have spent my life bringing people together to solve problems. I lead Impact Ministries, served as Vice President of the Washington County NAACP and the Hagerstown Area Religious Council, and have run Les Energy, LLC for over 12 years. I understand family needs, small business challenges, and fiscal responsibility. My experience in service, leadership, and collaboration prepares me to put people first and deliver practical results.

2. Budget: I would prioritize funding for education, workforce development, infrastructure, and public safety while protecting taxpayers. Investments should align schools with job opportunities, expand transportation, and support responsible housing growth. I would look for efficiencies before any tax increase, reduce waste, and ensure transparency. Every dollar should strengthen families, grow the economy, and deliver measurable value to residents.

3. Education & Workforce: The Board plays a key role in education funding. How would you support strong schools and

workforce development that meet local needs?

Strong schools should prepare students for careers, not just tests. I support aligning education funding with local workforce needs, expanding career and technical education, and building partnerships between schools, employers, and community organizations. I will advocate for safe schools, strong teachers, and wraparound supports like mentoring and mental health services while ensuring accountability for outcomes and responsible spending.

4. Economic Development: We need purposeful growth that benefits working families. I support expanding small business opportunities, modernizing zoning to increase housing near jobs, and using targeted tax incentives tied to job creation. The county should invest in infrastructure, streamline responsible development, and partner with local employers to grow industries that offer living wages. Economic development must be inclusive, sustainable, and community focused.

5. Infrastructure: Transportation, broadband access, and water and utility upgrades are urgent, especially for rural areas. We must expand transit routes, improve roads, and ensure infrastructure supports housing and job growth. I would pursue state and federal funding, leverage public private partnerships, and prioritize projects with clear economic and community benefits while maintaining fiscal accountability and transparency.

6. Transparency & Public Engagement: Residents deserve a voice in decisions that affect their lives. I will support open budgeting, clear reporting, and accessible public meetings. I will hold community listening sessions, engage faith and neighborhood groups, and require transparency in development proposals. Meaningful engagement builds trust and ensures policies reflect the needs of families, seniors, workers, and small businesses across Washington County.

Teri Pailen (Democratic) www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61586704202059

1. Qualifications: As a former Federal employee with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for 37 years, my experience has equipped me with a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in preparing budgets, justifying them, ensuring compliance, conducting reporting, overseeing fiscal matters, and analyzing. Additionally, I possess exceptional written communication skills and am adept at engaging with the community. **2. Budget:** I would advocate for allocating resources to Washington County Public schools to ensure they have the necessary tools and support to provide quality education to our children. I recommend allocating funds to maintain the operations of crisis hotlines and substance abuse centers on a 24/7 basis. There has been concern expressed regarding the allocation of hotel rental tax funds. I recommend conducting a thorough review of this matter and making necessary adjustments to the allocation of funds.



3. Education & Workforce: I would advocate for increased funding for schools by raising the current budget. Additionally, an increase in the Board's budget would enable our schools to provide better resources through enhanced technology, textbooks, and facilities. Furthermore, there may be a need to consider hiring dedicated staff to monitor truant students who miss 10 or more days from school (code 50) and those who are missing and involuntarily withdrawn and subsequently fall under code 50.

4. Economic Development: Enhance and revitalize the county's infrastructure to render it more appealing to prospective businesses seeking to establish operations within our community. Concurrently, implementing job training programs would foster job creation, particularly when we attract new businesses that necessitate a workforce.

5. Infrastructure: Public safety and our water systems are the most pressing concerns. Public safety and crime are genuine concerns, and it is crucial to allocate resources to both law enforcement and the community. Water system upgrades are essential, and meeting the demands of the county has been an ongoing issue. These concerns encompass the maintenance of the main plant and water pressure.

Infrastructure investments can be funded through various means, including tax bonds, loans, grants, and federal funds.

6. Transparency & Public Engagement: Consistently disseminate comprehensive information regarding government activities, decisions, policies, and updates through readily accessible channels. Reestablish public comment sessions at County Commissioner Board Meetings. Establish a dedicated email address where the community can communicate concerns to commissioners and promptly respond to these emails, ensuring timely communication. Foster community engagement in decision-making processes and soliciting feedback.

Curtis W. Reigh (Republican) Address: 17918 College Rd, Hagerstown, MD 21740

This candidate declined to submit responses.

Lara A. Shepherd (Democratic) www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61584121105048

1. Qualifications: I was born in Wash. Co, Hospital and been a resident most of my life. I attended Lincolnshire Elementary, NMS and NHHS. I'm a college graduate from Shippensburg University. I'm a mom whose kids graduated from public schools in our county. I'm employed as the Director of People, Culture and Resources for Conservit, Inc. a scrap metal processor. I've also worked for other employers in our community including DM Bowman and Hospice of WC. I also serve in volunteer roles in our community.

2. Budget: Education- top priority. Universal student aides in every classroom in the county. Educators can create better learning environments for our young people if they have the resources they need. Community is another priority, investing more in our non-profits, youth services, recreation, culture is a way to bring focus to the people of our county. Public Safety: transportation is another area we need to emphasize. A minimal cost/ free & expanded bus service can be invaluable to workers & students.

3. Education & Workforce: The Board plays a key role in education funding. How would you support strong schools and workforce development that meet local needs?

Listening to students, parents, educators and employers shows interest and support of our system. As an HR professional, I've always believed in the power of collaborating with our school system. Tomorrow's future starts with the youth of today.

4. Economic Development: Showcasing our strong financial profile and convenient location will assist in encouraging businesses to look at Washington County. Focus on a labor first agenda to entice skilled workers, including investment in recruiting members of the professional class, combined with a good tax incentive to lure new technological businesses, including biotechnologies.

5. Infrastructure: Water. Full stop. Water Resource Systems in partnership with the city should be a top priority as well as emergency services/operations. Funding should continue to be paid for by the current tax system, or the implementation of a new structure.

6. Transparency & Public Engagement: We need to strengthen transparency, public trust and civic engagement. I vow to be an open book and will encourage your feedback on any subject affecting the county. I will urge citizens to share openly their comments on agenda topics for the BOCC. No question or problem will go unabated on my watch. I may not have the answer, but I will fight tirelessly to research and find a solution. You may not always like what I have to say about a topic, but you can trust that I will always be honest.



Kaden Snyder (Republican) Address: 10513 Greenwich Dr, Williamsport, MD 21795

1. Qualifications: My experience has prepared me to serve through public service, leadership, and community involvement. I have served in state government and am a lifelong citizen of Washington County, which has given me a strong understanding of the needs of our community. I have held leadership roles that taught me responsibility, teamwork, and accountability. Through my involvement in the community, I understand the importance of using taxpayer money wisely and making decisions that benefit residents.

2. Budget: My budget priorities are guided by my three pillars: emergency services, education, and infrastructure. I will prioritize funding for emergency services to ensure our police, fire, and EMS have the resources they need to keep the community safe. I also support strong investment in education, while respecting the independence of the school system, to ensure students have quality learning environments and necessary resources. In addition, I will prioritize infrastructure.

3. Education & Workforce: I would like to work closely with the new superintendent and to go over the school budget and identify the needs of WCPS I am committed to funding WCPS for what I believe the need.

4. Economic Development: I believe that Washington County has a lot of potential for economic growth especially given its close proximity to Pennsylvania and West Virginia. I would like to see more agriculture tourism instead of building more warehouses. I would also like to work with our local energy company to lower the cost of electricity in our county as I believe the power cost is way too high.

5. Infrastructure: Washington County has a fast eroding water infrastructure I believe this needs to be addressed immediately with collaboration between the County and the City of Hagerstown. I would also be a strong advocate for the widening of I-81 a much needed upgrade.

6. Transparency & Public Engagement: On day one I will reinstate public comment. I have also proposed what I am calling the "Open Book Dashboard" an easy to use website that tracks every single dollar spent down to the last cent so citizens can view and hold County Government accountable.



Dave Williams (Democratic) Website: www.DaveWilliamsforCommissioner.com

1. Qualifications: Forty years as a WCPS public-school librarian prepares me with strong organizational, leadership, problem-solving abilities, respect for research and preparation, the ability to facilitate meetings and work collaboratively, and the background to effectively monitor the education budget allocation. As a former candidate, I continue to closely follow the BOCC and how it functions. Over the past year I've met and spoken with citizens from across the county about their local and national concerns.

2. Budget: Public safety, education, infrastructure, and critical services are among the priorities for funding increases. The county must always strive to identify across-the-board savings that don't sacrifice services. Some budget areas will be held to current levels but, as far as I know now, there are none to prioritize for cuts. One possible exception is the commissioners' discretionary fund. The budget/tax challenge is to support responsible growth and show a good return on the taxpayers' investment.

3. Education & Workforce: The BOCC historically funds the BOE at or near the lowest amount allowable by law. I'll advocate for the funding required to support the true needs of the school system and not just enough to maintain the status quo. I'll encourage collaboration and meaningful joint meetings between the Board of County Commissioners and the Board of Education. The commissioners need to recognize the correlation between excellent schools, economic development, and quality of life.

4. Economic Development: Offering appropriate economic incentives and help navigating bureaucracy will spur economic development. Further, to attract and retain good paying jobs the county must have an educated workforce. Proper education funding is essential to build that workforce, to demonstrate that the county values education, and to ensure the quality of life we want for our citizens and prospective employers. When businesses look to relocate or expand, community support for education is an important factor.

5. Infrastructure: Infrastructure projects are detailed in the 10-year Capital Improvement Plan. A portion of any budget surplus should be dedicated to these projects. State and Federal funds should continue to be pursued. All elected representatives must continue to work for I-70 and I-81 upgrades. The county must plan NOW for the replacement of schools and the sewer, water, and landfill needs of the next 50 years.

6. Transparency & Public Engagement: Steps: Restore public comment to business meetings, schedule evening business meetings so more citizens can attend, institute work sessions where issues are discussed publicly, establish communication norms requiring meaningful responses to citizen questions, and codify meeting rules and procedures after citizen input and public discussion. I pledge to be accessible, reply to calls, emails, and letters with meaningful responses, and adhere to the letter and spirit of the Open Meetings Act.



Dan Young (Republican) Address: PO BOX 13, Smithsburg, MD 21783

This candidate declined to submit responses.

Print your ballot selections for election day at www.Vote411.org.

Other Races on the Ballot

This printed guide features County Commissioner candidate responses. Other races are listed below for voter awareness. To read full candidate responses and view your personalized ballot, visit www.VOTE411.org. Please consider making a donation to help the local League print and share nonpartisan voter guides at www.lvwashco.org.

Governor / Lt. Governor

Eric S. Felber & LaTrece Hawkins Lytes (Democratic)
Wes Moore & Aruna Miller (Democratic)

Carl A. Brunner Jr. & Kevin L. Rhodes Sr. (Republican)
L.D. Burkindine & Jeremy M. Shifflett (Republican)
Dan Cox & Rob Krop (Republican)
Ed Hale & Tyrone Keys, Jr. (Republican)
Douglas Larcomb & Martina D. Duncan (Republican)
John A. Myrick & Brenda J. Thiam (Republican)
Michael Oakes & Ronald W. Abend (Republican)
Nancy Jane Taylor & Rachel Hannah "Mohawk Swift" (R)
Shannon Wright & Reba A. Hawkins (Republican)

Comptroller

Brooke Elizabeth Lierman (Democratic)

Sonya Dunn (Republican)

Attorney General

Anthony G. Brown (Democratic)

James B. Rutledge, III (Republican)

Representative in Congress, District 6

George Gluck (Democratic)
Alexis Goldstein (Democratic)
Daniel M. Krakower (Democratic)
April McClain Delaney (Democratic)
David J. Trone (Democratic)
Ethan P. Wechtaluk (Democratic)
Kiambo "Bo" White (Democratic)
A. Mark Wilks (Democratic)

Chris Burnett (Republican)
Robin Ficker (Republican)
Mareila Roca (Republican)

Maryland State Senate, District 2

Eric Martin Van Buren (Democratic)

Paul D. Corderman (Republican)

Maryland House of Delegates, District 1C

Seth Funk (Democratic)

Terry Baker (Republican)

Maryland House of Delegates, District 2A

John D. Leonard (Democratic)
Brandon Thompson (Democratic)

Dianna Palmer (Republican)
William Valentine (Republican)
William J. Wivell (Republican)

Maryland House of Delegates, District 2B

Matthew J. Schindler (Democratic)

Sean Flaherty (Republican)

Washington County Treasurer

John McElroy (Republican)
Seth Wilson (Republican)

Washington County State's Attorney

Gina M. Cirincion (Republican)
Adam Daniel Greivell (Republican)

Washington County Clerk of the Circuit Court

Kevin R. Tucker (Republican)

Washington County Register of Wills

Lacy M. Flook (Republican)

Washington County Judge of the Orphans' Court

Mark P. Brugh (Democratic)
Melinda S. Malott (Democratic)
Shawn Perry (Democratic)

Paul D. Banister (Republican)
Debra Breeding (Republican)
Jim Nipps (Republican)

Washington County Sheriff

Junior P. McLeod (Democratic)

Brian K. Albert (Republican)
Chuckie Johnson (Republican)

Washington County Central Committees

Democratic Central Committee

Patrick C. Dattilio
William F. Durham
Viola Y. Ellison-Allen
Thomas A. Freeman
Katie Hart Hershey
Laurie Parks-Murphy
Nicole Rappaport
David R. Richardson
Susan Hale Thomas
Indea Webb
Paul Wolfe
Sam P. Wright

Republic Central Committee

Nancy S. Allen
Michael E. Barnes
Lisa Breeden
Matthew R. Claggett
James E. Coyle
Beth Zentmyer Harvey
Mark Mignogna
Joshua Miller
Michael Lynn Sprecher, III
Debra Steenburg
Mam Malick Thiam

Washington County Board of Education (Nonpartisan Race)

The Washington County Board of Education maintains a reasonably uniform system of public schools. Working with the Superintendent, the Board determines educational policies of the school system and establishes rules for the education system. The Board is composed of seven members elected at large for four-year staggered terms. Board members earn a salary of \$13,500 and the Board Chair earns a salary of \$14,000. Regular 7 p.m. meetings of the Board are held twice each month. Work sessions are held afternoons at the central office as needed. Several times during the school year, meetings are held in the afternoon at schools throughout the county. All meetings, except executive sessions, are announced in advance and open to the public. Three seats will be open in 2022. Website:

<http://www.wcboe.k12.md.us>

Questions:

1. **Qualifications:** How does your experience prepare you for the duties of this office?
2. **Budget Priorities:** How would you advocate for and allocate school funding to achieve strong outcomes for students while being responsible to taxpayers?
3. **Student Preparation:** How would you support students in Washington County Public Schools to ensure they are prepared for college, careers, or other post-secondary pathways?
4. **College Alternatives:** What programs will you support to prepare students for employment, particularly for those not planning to attend college?
5. **Partnerships:** How would you engage parents, students, educators, and community stakeholders in decisions about education policy and funding?
6. **Priorities:** In addition to the issues discussed above, what are your top priorities for this office?

Pieter Bickford

1. **Qualifications:** In my two terms, we tackled achieved several state firsts: universal pre-K, Maryland's highest starting teacher salaries, fully secured buildings, and leading the state in apprenticeships. With two superintendent selections and eight budgets behind me, I'm ready to keep moving us forward.
2. **Budget Priorities:** Great schools start with great educators. Most of the WCPS budget goes directly to teachers and staff, which reflects how important they are to student success. I will continue advocating for funding that keeps compensation competitive so we can retain the talented educators our students deserve.
3. **Student Preparation:** Students deserve clear opportunities for what comes next. I support strong academics, more chances to take college-level courses while still in high school, and expanded apprenticeships that connect students with real careers. Career counseling should help students explore their options early, and we must keep prioritizing early literacy and personalized learning. Whether a student plans for college, the trades, or military service, they should graduate truly ready for that next step.
4. **College Alternatives:** Students succeed when schools recognize that there isn't just one path after graduation. Washington County leads Maryland in apprenticeships, helping students gain hands-on skills and connect with employers early. We also now have a program for students considering military careers—an initiative I pushed to see implemented. I will continue supporting our "Grow Your Own" teacher program and growing career-technical opportunities in trades.
5. **Partnerships:** Public education is built on a simple but powerful promise: every child who walks through our doors belongs here. That promise is inspiring, but it also means schools must meet an incredible range of needs. No school can do that alone. As a board member, I will protect the public's voice through open comment, ensure parent representation on committees, and strengthen the community partnerships that help every student succeed.
6. **Priorities:** We have built something to be proud of in Washington County—now let's make it even better. My top priorities: strengthening early literacy, growing career-technical programs, keeping salaries competitive, expanding mental health supports, and challenging state overinterpretation of discipline laws that prevent teachers from maintaining basic order in their classrooms.



Alina Chester

1. **Qualifications:** I am a mom of three with an MBA, a school finance professional and Professor of School Finance for a Masters in Ed. Leadership. As the Director of Budgets for an Education Service Provider I work with principals, manage grants and report to school boards in multiple states. My goal in running is to use my expertise to make our schools better for my own young kids and for the benefit of every child in the district.
2. **Budget Priorities:** When educational outcomes are the priority everything else falls into place. I would meet individually with each principal to understand their needs because managing the budget as a whole requires understanding each part. There are always areas to cut that don't impact instruction and those savings can be used to invest in what's needed most. I would advocate for competitive pay and look for untapped funding sources at the state and local level.
3. **Student Preparation:** Every high school student should receive college and career readiness counseling and at least one financial literacy course to identify the best pathway forward. Pathways can include post secondary, workforce and military ready. For those who identify as post secondary ready the district should prioritize advance placement, dual enrollment, passing Algebra II or higher, International Baccalaureate courses, and fine arts courses.
4. **College Alternatives:** Workforce Ready preparation should include completing CTE courses, dual credit courses, workplace learning experiences, work-based learning experiences, completing world language courses, and/or teacher-related coursework. Military Ready preparation may include completing JROTC or Civic Air Patrol, completing credits in military pathway program classes such as Intro to Military Careers or ASVAB Essentials, and supporting students in passing ASVAB with scores high enough to enter the armed forces.
5. **Partnerships:** Effective ways to engage stakeholders in education policy and funding include creating dedicated advisory committees, conducting transparent surveys, hosting community town halls, and using "Family and Educators Together" models to build trust. Key strategies involve valuing parent/student expertise, offering flexible, accessible meeting times (including in-community locations), and, where possible, providing compensation for time.
6. **Priorities:** The school board needs to be working in tandem with the Board of County Commissioners, City Council of Hagerstown, and local business leaders to create mutual goals for our community. This way we can create a cohesive vision for the students of our county starting in Prek-3 and going all the way through to the jobs we are creating here so that our students want to stay in our community and are prepared to contribute to its success.



Darrell E. Evans

This candidate did not respond to any questions.

Mike Guessford

This candidate did not respond to any questions.

Ethan Loewen

1. **Qualifications:** I am the only candidate that is still in the classroom, teaching adults in my case. I experience the social changes from year to year. The vastly different learning rates between classes where teachers are the authority, versus classes where teachers are kept from maintaining structure & discipline. I understand how bureaucratic mandates steal the connection between teacher & student, until crowd control comes to be called teaching. I also know the

unequaled experience when student's "get it"!

2. **Budget Priorities:** Advocating for funding requires teamwork with the County Commissioners. Most importantly, we need a return to funding programs that result in academically successful, mentally healthy students. Since 2012 we have prioritized programs based upon their goals, rather than results. Believing that adding staff & funding would eventually achieve those goals. After 14 years of slipping in national rankings & increased mental health issues, it's clear that time & money cannot force a program to work.
3. **Student Preparation:** We have a fantastic Technical School that teaches the trades, such as mechanics, construction, healthcare & other professions. There is the Barbara Ingram School for those who are passionate about the arts. There is also our partnership with the Community College, the AP & International Baccalaureate programs for college focused students. These programs are exceptional at improving the lives of students. My concern is the average & struggling students. Their outcomes have dropped alarmingly.
4. **College Alternatives:** We have experienced a dramatic drop in the academic achievement & mental health of students. This fall from our historic rates of success is a crisis. Employers & teachers are telling us that a critical # of students are not ready to assume the responsibilities & opportunities of the next stage of their lives. As mentioned previously, our college prep & technical career training is excellent. We need to return to the policies that prepared all graduates for the next stage of their lives.
5. **Partnerships:** - No response
6. **Priorities:** Landon's Puzzle Pieces is a program for autistic children with amazing results. It has potential to be a model program. As goals-based programs have become so expensive that benefits to the disabled, the elderly, teacher's pensions, have been cut or put at risk. The Board should include an analysis as to whether they have a benefit greater than the projected cut in benefits our students will face in other areas? If not, returning to the previous, results-based program should be considered.

Robin A. Merchant-Spickler

1. **Qualifications:** After 44 years in WCPS classrooms — from Title I schools to suburban campuses — I know what teachers need, what families worry about, and where students fall through the cracks. That firsthand knowledge, combined with years of service on WCPS advisory committees, means I'm ready to serve from day one.
2. **Budget Priorities:** Every dollar should reach the classroom. I will prioritize teacher salaries to recruit and retain the best educators in Washington County, fund school safety and mental health support, and invest in early childhood and CTE programs. Maryland's Blueprint sets the framework; my job is to ensure WCPS uses it wisely — working with the superintendent and county leaders to protect taxpayers while putting students first.
3. **Student Preparation:** Strong literacy lays the foundation, but preparation doesn't stop there. I will support WCPS's CTE pathways, career exploration beginning in middle school, and robust student support services for those who need extra help. When students leave Washington County schools, I want them ready — whether that means a four-year university, a trade certificate, or a career with a local employer.
4. **College Alternatives:** Not every path runs through a four-year college, and that's a strength, not a shortcoming. I will champion trade and vocational programs, industry-recognized certifications, and apprenticeships that connect WCPS students directly with Washington County employers. These pathways keep talented young people in our community and meet real local workforce needs.
5. **Partnerships:** Decisions about our schools should never be made behind closed doors. I will



hold regular listening sessions with parents and students, ensure educators have a meaningful voice in policy decisions, and invite community partners — businesses, nonprofits, and civic organizations — to the table. I'll encourage families to serve on BOE advisory committees and keep everyone informed on progress and outcomes. When our community is engaged, our schools are stronger.

6. **Priorities:** My priorities are straightforward: safe schools, strong teaching, and honest stewardship of taxpayer dollars. I will advocate for every student and staff member to feel welcome and supported. I will hold the line on high academic expectations while pushing for the resources teachers need to meet them. And I will work directly with County Commissioners to secure the funding WCPS deserves — because investing in Washington County's schools is investing in Washington County's future.

Linda Murray

1. **Qualifications:** I have been involved with our schools since 1985, as a PTA President, tutor, Paraprofessional in Special Education at Salem Avenue Elementary School for 26 years and as a member of the Board of Education since 2017.
2. **Budget Priorities:** A school system has many needs, and it is the duty of a school board member to advocate for adequate funding, while being a good steward with taxpayers' money. Unfunded mandates from the state are costly, and I would like to see the county work more collaboratively with the Board of Education to help with that funding.
3. **Student Preparation:** WCPS offers a variety of college preparatory courses as well as many career and technology pathways. We also have the #1 apprenticeship program in Maryland. Students can take dual-credit classes to earn college credit without ever leaving their high school or they can attend HCC and graduate from high school with an associate degree. As the job market changes, we will tailor our programs to meet the needs of the job market.
4. **College Alternatives:** I support the current programs as stated above and others that fit the needs of our students, including the many trade programs that we offer through WCPS and the Job Development Program for students earning a Certificate of Program Completion.
5. **Partnerships:** I frequently communicate with stakeholders by attending community events and visiting schools to attend special programs and read to students. I encourage the community to email, call or speak at meetings and let their thoughts be known.
6. **Priorities:** We need to continue to look for adequate funding to recruit and retain staff, as well as to show appreciation for the current staff. I want to collaborate with the new BOCC and explore all avenues to provide funding for additional schools to relieve overcrowding in our schools.



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Get to Know the League of Women Voters of Washington County: www.lwvwashco.org

The League works hard to help voters and protect democracy. Here's how you can join in:

Join: Your support helps us keep providing important tools like the Voters' Guide. Everyone is welcome!

Sponsor the Voters' Guide: Make a donation to help us provide this valuable resource to more voters.

Volunteer: Help out at voter registration events or by sharing voting information.

Tell Others: Talk about the guide and why every race on the ballot is important with people you know.