

Election of the 33rd Student Member of the Board of Education

MCR Special Elections Committee 2010 Voters Guide



Election Day
April 28, 2010



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The past three decades have marked 32 SMOBs and drastic change in Montgomery County. In the midst of this, one aspect remains constant: the students. In the coming year, they number approximately 142,000. Each individual student is a living testament to our faith in the future. They

are the reason why we spend billions of dollars every year on education, and why MCPS is one of the most distinguished and successful school systems in the country.

The ongoing economic crisis will test our ability to make wise fiscal decisions that will ultimately affect our students' achievement. Throughout this ordeal, we cannot lose sight of what is truly important. Although student advocacy has greatly increased, modern politics has been transformed. With an unnecessary emphasis upon individuals rather than issues, we have begun to lose our focus.

I believe in change. Through a coalition of parents, students, teachers, administrators, and other members of the community, we will transcend the boundaries of modern politics. I am confident that we can overcome these economic challenges together.

Students lie at the core of our school system. We will reach out to every student and work together to lay the foundation of our future. I value our students' concerns, ideas, and dreams.

With these goals set firmly in our sights, I hope to represent our diverse interests as the next SMOB.

I support:

- full funding of the FY 2011 operating budget
- complete removal of the Loss of Credit (LC) policy instead of an unfair pilot program conducted in select schools
- reinstatement of Driver's Education as an elective
- expansion of open lunch to more schools
- cell phone rights
- expansion of cell phone rights to all middle school students
- reduction of class sizes
- closing the achievement gap
- environmentally friendlier policies that will reduce carbon emissions and provide long-term economic benefits
- student advocacy
- continued funding of school-sponsored programs
- transportation funding for special programs

I oppose:

- LC policy
- HSA testing as a graduation requirement
- inconsistent grading policies
- high parking permit fees
- disciplinary measures based solely upon attendance

- random "hall sweeps"
- random drug testing
- fiscally unwise spending
- cutting funding for school-sponsored activities
- cutting transportation funding for special programs

What qualities and performance goals would you consider for hiring or contract renewal of our superintendent?

Having reliably served MCPS for more than a decade, Dr. Jerry Weast is an important asset. Though his knowledge and experience are very valuable, there is an evident lack of communication between the superintendent and students whom he serves. As student advocacy increases, our superintendent should maintain direct contact with students in order to accurately represent their best interests and clarify any misunderstandings regarding policies. Throughout this economic crisis, it is even more vital that the superintendent can reflect our concerns, especially during the budget process.

During the current budget crisis, for what initiative or program would you advocate to keep fully funded? If you had to, what initiative would you consider cutting?

I believe that transportation for special programs—magnet, immersion, consortia, and IB—should be fully funded, and possibly maintained through the use of alternative fuel and the continued employment of older buses. We also need to continue funding youth programs and retain all teaching staff in order to narrow the achievement gap and preserve our high quality of education. As a county, we should adopt environmentally friendly practices that will provide us with long-term fiscal benefits, reducing the burden upon MCPS employees so that they will not have to make additional sacrifices. In order to weather this economic crisis, I support stopping and delaying new initiatives.

Education

- 2008—Present: Richard Montgomery HS
International Baccalaureate Program
- 2005—2008: Eastern MS
Humanities & Communication Magnet
- 2003—2005: Cold Spring ES
Gifted & Talented Program
- 2000—2003: Fallsmead Elementary School
- 1999—2000: Farmland Elementary School
Leadership and Experience
- 2009—Present: *Maryland Youth Advisory Council*
- Legislative Committee
 - Councilmember
- Maryland Association of Student Councils*
- Montgomery County Delegate
- Montgomery County Region (MCR-SGA)*
- Executive Board: Special Programs Coordinator
 - Delegate
- 2008—2009: *Montgomery County Region (MCR-SGA)*
- Delegate

The candidates' profiles have been prepared by the candidates and do not necessarily represent the views of the Special Elections Committee (SEC). The Montgomery County Region of the Maryland Association of Student Councils (MCR), or Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). The SEC cannot assure the accuracy of the statements contained in this document. Published by the SEC of MCR in cooperation with MCPS.