

Antonia Watts District 2

1. What has been your personal journey to expand your knowledge/understanding of race issues and unconscious bias in the education system and what do you think is the responsibility of the board to formalize development in this area?

As a black woman and educator, my life experiences have been my greatest information source about race issues. While my experiences are not unique to minority communities, I recognize that they do not encompass every path. Because of this, I continually seek out voices different from my own and learn from others. The board has the responsibility to create policies that mandate training for our educators to help them recognize and combat unconscious bias in the classroom and workplace. Board members should take this training as well.

2. Recently one of your fellow Board of Education candidates dropped out after certain social media posts surfaced that many in the community felt were discriminatory against immigrants, Islam, women, and people of color. What steps will you take as a board to publicly denounce these actions and combat the presence of this negativity, bias, and discrimination within our school system and in our community?

I have publicly denounced the content that this person posted. It was vile and I am saddened that it impacts so many people in our community. As a board, it is important to immediately call out this behavior and reaffirm our commitment to an inclusive environment for our children.

3. What will your strategy be to work as a unified board with the County Executive's Office and other elected officials to ensure the priorities of the school district are advanced to serve every student?

A positive working relationship between the County Council and Board of Education is important to the future of HCPSS. Moving to a district representation model allows school board members to establish stronger communication channels with the district County Council representative. The school board operates as a single board. Therefore, it should advocate for financial support in areas of need and should make it clear how pending legislation impacts the school system.

4. Would you vote for the Black School Lives Matter at School Resolution?

Yes

5. Would you support fully funding Restorative Justice Implementation and Anti-racist Training for all central staff and teachers?

Yes

6. What's your vision for supporting greater mental health services for students and families now and beyond COVID-19?

The first step to supporting greater mental health services is to increase the number of mental health professionals in each school. Before COVID-19, there was a shortage of school counselors and psychologists. Now and in the future, we must not let those gaps expand at a time when our children need them the most. Also, it is important to expand training for everyone surrounding our young people to recognize warning signs and get them timely help. Early intervention is the best prevention. We also need to fund programs that focus on creating positive and safe school climates. Finally, I support wraparound services. These services are critical for meeting the needs of our most vulnerable students. As mentioned above, we must meet students where they are which means going to their communities and homes to provide services.

Jolene Mosley District 3

1. What has been your personal journey to expand your knowledge/understanding of race issues and unconscious bias in the education system and what do you think is the responsibility of the board to formalize development in this area?

I grew up and attended schools that had more diversity in their teaching staff before moving to Maryland. It was once in Maryland that I noticed, as a high school student, that there was not much diversity in my school in regards to the educators and students. I then worked to attend a more diverse college and when able made intentional choices to build and raise my children in a more diverse community and schools. While growing and learning from resources of books, podcasts and articles; I have also attended meetings/workshops specifically about race and bias issues in the education system and our lives. I continue to look for additional resources to learn more. I do think it is the BoE's responsibility to formalize whole school community inclusion, diversity and tolerance workshops and training at regular intervals of time for the whole school community. It is also the BoE's responsibility to approve a more diverse curriculum material set and to provide budget allocations to support including the new material into the classroom. Everyone should feel welcome and safe at school.

2. Recently one of your fellow Board of Education candidates dropped out after certain social media posts surfaced that many in the community felt were discriminatory against immigrants, Islam, women, and people of color. What steps will you take as a board to publicly denounce these actions and combat the presence of this negativity, bias, and discrimination within our school system and in our community?

Hate and intolerance have no place in our school system or community. When incidents of hate happen, they need to be denounced and repair of harm needs to occur. There needs to be clear consequences for these acts. As a Board member, I would work to make sure policies are not negatively impacting/targeting groups of individuals and actively listen to feedback from students, educators and staff to learn what needs changed to remove hate and intolerance in our schools and community.

3. What will your strategy be to work as a unified board with the County Executive's Office and other elected officials to ensure the priorities of the school district are advanced to serve every student?

Improving collaboration and longer term planning would be a great step to advance priorities and get everyone on the same page in determining school districts needs and costs associated with those goals. We need to also intentionally look at policies and review them to make sure that their intentions are honest and their function and implications are not biased or hindering. Every student should have the opportunities to reach their best self and get the support they need to achieve their best work.

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6. What's your vision for supporting greater mental health services for students and families now and beyond COVID-19?

I was impressed with learning more about the advancements of the mental health services provided at the schools. I especially liked the consideration of getting some of the funding for these services through grants and medical billing. These supports are important for our students and educators at all times but especially after a time of trauma; including COVID-19. I look forward to the school system advertising resources available in the community, through supports that have been built and also destigmatize asking for help.

Jen Mallo District 4

1. What has been your personal journey to expand your knowledge/understanding of race issues and unconscious bias in the education system and what do you think is the responsibility of the board to formalize development in this area?

Expanding my knowledge and understanding of race issues and unconscious bias is an active choice that I have been making for years and will continue to make. It comes from educating myself about the institutional racism through books and scholarly research, it comes from being active and engaged in my diverse community at Swansfield, Harper's Choice and Wilde Lake, and it comes from challenging my own assumptions and confronting my own bias. The Board of Education must make conscious choices to be anti-racist in its policy and budgeting priorities. The Board needs to fund anti-bias training, restorative justice training, cultural competency training, and a robust Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion staff.

2. Recently one of your fellow Board of Education candidates dropped out after certain social media posts surfaced that many in the community felt were discriminatory against immigrants, Islam, women, and people of color. What steps will you take as a board to publicly denounce these actions and combat the presence of this negativity, bias, and discrimination within our school system and in our community?

Within the day of the social media posts surfacing, I unequivocally condemned the candidate's aforementioned racist, misogynistic, Islamophobic, homophobic posts. I will continue to not only condemn this kind of behavior publicly, but also to use the bully pulpit to be an anti-racist. Condemnation is necessary but not sufficient to change the community we live in.

3. What will your strategy be to work as a unified board with the County Executive's Office and other elected officials to ensure the priorities of the school district are advanced to serve every student?

I will continue to foster positive relationships with the CE Office, with the County Council, and with all new Board members. It is critical to build strong working relationship with all invested parties--that is done both in person and over the phone, by listening and having dialog, and by reaching across ideological divides with respect. If one leads with attacks, collaboration will not be possible. I will continue to exercise respect and dialogue as my guiding principles.

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6. What's your vision for supporting greater mental health services for students and families now and beyond COVID-19?

We need to work with community partners and local government to ensure access to wrap-around services that include mental health support. The curriculum must be designed to build mental health resiliency through social emotional learning. The practices and policies of the school system must look to uncover the underlying conditions that are leading to deteriorated mental health wellness. As we uncover these items (whether it be bullying, cyberbullying, personal trauma, or something else), we must develop sound practices to address and remediate them. With regards to Covid-19, we must continue to provide access to guidance counselors, psychologists, and

other support personnel that can aide our students experiencing crisis. Additionally, we must continue to meet the basic needs of our students through continued provision of food. Food security is necessary and critical for students as a precursor to mental health wellness.