

2022 Montgomery County Board of Education Candidate Questionnaire

Our Revolution Maryland recognizes the importance of the Montgomery County Board of Education in shaping educational policy in the state's largest county. We are seeking to endorse Progressive Champions who will help improve the public education available to all Montgomery County students.

Please provide as much information as possible. If you have any questions, please email hal@ourrevolutionmd.com. Thank you!

Email *

Scott@Joftus4BoE.com

Name of person completing this form. *

Scott Joftus

Title of office sought including district *

Board of Education, District 3

Candidate status in race

Incumbent

Website

www.joftus4boe.com

Email

scott@joftus4BoE.com

Phone

301-524-2603

Candidate Facebook

www.facebook.com/ScottJoftus, <https://www.facebook.com/joftusforboe/>

Candidate Twitter

<https://twitter.com/scottjoftus>

Candidate Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/joftus4boe/>

Candidate's Progressive Values

Campaign issues and pledges

Why are you running for the Board of Education? If elected, what will be your priorities?

I am running because I believe that I have the experience, skills, and commitment to equity necessary to lead transformational change in MCPS (see experience response below). My top priorities are (1) improve communication with and engagement of all stakeholders; (2) address the mental health crisis among students; and (3) improve teaching and learning to increase student achievement, which has fallen steeply during the pandemic.

Is there a particular issue that motivates you to serve on the board of education? (Please identify and explain)

My focus is on overall system improvement. As I work with school systems and teach at the Graduate School of Education (see response to next question), systemic improvement starts with a concept called coherence. Coherence means that a district's systems, resources, structures, and culture are aligned with a clear theory of action (or set of beliefs) about how schools will improve. MCPS has not had this for a long time and, without it, no action or reform will lead to the equitable or sustainable change we want.

What particular experiences or skills have prepared you to serve as a board member?

I currently have three jobs, each of which helps me to be the most effective board member possible: 1) I was appointed to the Montgomery County Board of Education in December 2021 to complete the final term of Pat O'Neill, who passed away in September 2021. I was selected unanimously by the board from among 18 candidates, including my current opponent, because I have a unique set of skills and experiences not currently present on the Board and rarely seen on any school board. 2) In 2004, I co-founded Cross & Joftus, a small business dedicated to helping school boards and superintendents across the country improve outcomes for students, especially those who have been traditionally marginalized. In 2017, we changed the name of Cross & Joftus to FourPoint Education Partners, but our mission has remained the same. I have served as the president since the beginning. 3) For the last 12 years, I have served as adjunct professor at George Washington University's Graduate School of Education and Human Development, teaching two required courses for the Master's of Education Policy—Education Leadership in the Fall and Education Program Evaluation in the Spring. I am proud to have been selected to be the first American professor to teach in Baku, Azerbaijan (Summer 2022) for a new partnership between GW and the Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University, which are offering a joint Master's of Education Policy degree to 25-40 Azerbaijani students per year.

Please describe your background in education? Have you taught in schools?

I have spent the last 30+ years working to improve public education. I was a member of the first-ever corps of Teach for America and taught fifth grade in Brooklyn, NY and then Los Angeles, CA. After that I received a Master's in Public Policy; worked in several different jobs as a researcher, advocate, and consultant, all focused on improving public education; and founded and run a small business that advises superintendents and school boards across the country. For the last dozen years, I have also served as an adjunct professor at George Washington's Graduate School of Education.

Do you have children who are or were between the ages of 5 and 18? If yes, did they attend MoCo Public schools? If not, please explain why not.

I have a 19 year old who graduated MCPS two years ago and now attends Wesleyan University and a 17 year old who is a senior at Whtiman High School in MCPS.

Please set forth your position on Charter Schools. (We recognize it may be nuanced. Include in your answer whether you are receiving any support from any such school or individual or group associated with the Charter School Movement in any way.)

In general, I am ambivalent about charter schools. In my "day job" I do some advising for charter schools that serve under-represented student populations. I do not, however, feel that they are needed or desired in MCPS as they tend to divert funding away from traditional public schools and often push the neediest students out (as they have unquestionably done in DC). Recently, I voted against a charter application in MCPS.

How do you propose to attract and retain qualified teachers and to ensure that all students are receiving a high quality education?

The Maryland Blueprint, which I strongly support, requires school districts to increase the salaries of teachers. This year, we have already provided significant raises in line with the Blueprint and more will be forthcoming. In addition, the Blueprint enables MCPS to provide incentives for highly qualified teachers to serve in schools serving our the highest concentration of low-income students.

Pay, however, is not enough. We also need to make sure that MCPS is providing high-quality support to principals to help them create school cultures that are welcoming, supportive, and academically engaging. These are the cultures in which teachers need to work.

For recruiting, we need to continue to “grow your own,” through career pathway initiatives at high schools and incentives for paraprofessionals and other professionals to become teachers.

Does the candidate endorse the Our Revolution Platform?

<https://ourrev.us/Platform2022>

Yes



If the candidate has questions or concerns about any items in the OR Platform, please note here:

I fully support the platform. The only I might suggest changing is the addition of laws to restrict the availability of automatic weapons, increase background checks, and allow federal funding for research on the harm of firearms.

Is candidate a recurring Our Revolution donor at \$5/month or more?

- Yes
- No (You can contribute at <https://ourrev.us/2022member>)
- Pledged at <https://ourrev.us/2022member>
- Other: I'm not but willing to be. But I don't like the sense that I need to pay for an endorsement.

Candidate's narrative

Candidate's political history

What offices have they run for or held before? How did they fare in those elections? What have they accomplished in office?

I have never run for office before. In November-December of 2021, I applied for the open seat on the Board of Education resulting from the tragic death of Pat O'Neill. I was chosen unanimously by the Board in December 2021 and have been serving since.

Candidate's personal story

Aside from political offices they've held, what is noteworthy about the candidate's life story? ie. personal experiences, jobs, education, etc

I have dedicated my entire 30+ years to improving public education, especially for our most vulnerable and disenfranchised populations.

Possible negatives

Use this space to tell us anything you think might be used against the candidate during this campaign

There have been insinuations--mostly from the Parents' Coalition (a conservative organization) that my (married) relationship to Cara Lesser, founder and executive director of KID Museum has resulted in MCPS improperly contracting with the organization. This, of course, is simply not true.

Other endorsements

What noteworthy endorsements has this candidate has received (if they are not already listed on candidate website)

They are all listed on the website.

Candidate's campaign infrastructure

Candidate Campaign Manager name, phone, email

Samantha Kaplan, Samantha@Joftus4BoE.com, (630) 881-3632

Candidate Finance Manager name, phone, email

Dr. Hunter Hogewood, (301) 928-3514, hunterhogewood@gmail.com

Fundraising analysis

How much has the candidate raised? How many donors and what is the average donation? How does this candidate's fundraising compare to their opponents?

My goal is to raise \$32,000. As of August 11:

Contributions to Date=\$16,469

Expenditures to Date=\$14,145.03

*Current Bank Balance=\$4,460.45

Campaign team/volunteer assessment

How many people are working for the candidate? Does the campaign have enough volunteers?

We have two people (campaign manager and social media coordinator) paid by the campaign. We have a lot of volunteers, but we could always use more!

Online organizing

How many emails/contacts has the campaign collected?

We have collected approximately 10,000 emails.

Theory to win

How many votes does the candidate need to win? What's the plan to get there?

My win number is 155,838 votes. My plan is multi-faceted and includes have influentials send out emails and social media on my behalf, advertising on social media, attending events of many other candidates (e.g., Wes Moore, Brooker Lierman), hosting meeting and greets, and sending out regular emails and social media to increase name recognition.

This form was created inside of ourrevolution.com.

