

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 *

karlasilvestre2018@gmail.com

Name of person completing this form. *

Karla Silvestre

Title of office sought including district *

Board of Education At-large

Candidate status in race

Incumbent



Website

www.karlasilvestre.com

Email

karlasilvestre2018@gmail.com

Phone

240-464-5525

Candidate Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/KarlaSilvestre4BOE/>

Candidate Twitter

N/A

Candidate Instagram

N/A

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 for re-election because my first term was consumed by the pandemic. I would like the opportunity to serve another term to work on my priorities. These include the following. Improving graduation rates for ALL, The overall graduation rate is 89% but only 86% for students in poverty, 77% for Hispanic students, 73% for special education, and 56% for Limited English Proficient students. How do we do it? We start by working with County government and private providers to expand access to early care and education for our students from age 0-5 because the achievement gap begins in kindergarten. We ensure that all students are getting access to the most rigorous classes ensuring reading on level or above by 3rd grade, taking algebra by 8th grade, and passing AP, IB, or dual enrollment classes in high school. We must also expand college prep programs like ACES and CollegeTracks, so that every student that needs it has a college-prep coach to help them graduate and get admitted to the college or vocational program of their choice. Rigor and High Expectations: we must have rigor and high expectations for all of our students, from the English language-learner, to the special education student, to those needing enriched instruction. I support expanding robust programs of enriched instruction at the neighborhood schools so that students don't have to leave their home school to have their needs met. We must also ensure that we are encouraging all students to take the most rigorous classes. It is unacceptable that so many of our students are not considered "college and career ready". We must provide the most rigorous curriculum for all our students so that they are truly ready for college and careers. Career and Technical Education is also important because the skills needed for the jobs of tomorrow have changed and because 33% of MCPS students do not go on to any post-secondary education. Therefore, it is critical that we graduate students with credentials and skills that they can use in the workforce, whether they go to college or not. Recruiting and Retaining the Best Talent. We had a national teacher crisis before the pandemic which has now been exacerbated. We have to recruit and retain the best talent to work with our students. Great teachers and principals change lives and transform schools. Because of the teacher shortage in this country, we have to be proactive to recruit the best talent because our students deserve the best. We also must strive to have a workforce that reflects our community. We can do that by growing our teacher workforce from the current MCPS student population, which is diverse and multilingual. I have advocated the MCPS' "grow your own" program which launched in the spring of 2022. We must also work to ensure that our students with the greatest needs have experienced and effective teachers and school leaders.

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

Improving graduation rates for ALL and ensuring that every student has a post graduation plan. The overall graduation rate is 89% but only 86% for students in poverty, 77% for Hispanic students, 73% for special education, and 56% for Limited English Proficient students. How do we do it? We start by working with County government and private providers to expand access to early care and education for our students from age 0-5 because the achievement gap begins in kindergarten. We ensure that all students are getting access to the most rigorous classes ensuring reading on level or above by 3rd grade, taking algebra by 8th grade, and passing AP, IB, or dual enrollment classes in high school. We must also expand college prep programs like ACES and CollegeTracks, so that every student that needs it has a college-prep coach to help them graduate and get admitted to the college of their choice.

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

I am the current Vice President of the Board of Education and am serving my second year as an officer. I serve as the chair of the Strategic Planning committee. I have two decades of experience in community engagement, workforce development, education, and youth development. I hold a Master's degree in education from the University of Pennsylvania, with a focus on teaching English to speakers of other languages (ESOL).

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

My education policy experience began at the University of Pennsylvania, where I worked at the Penn-Merck Collaborative for Science Education doing teacher training in hands-on science education in West Philadelphia Schools. After working at Penn, I spent time in my home country of Guatemala putting my ESOL experience to work in bilingual education before returning to Philadelphia to work as the education manager at a day treatment center for truant and court-involved boys from the Philadelphia Public School system. I also served as Vice President for Children and Youth programs at Congreso de Latinos Unidos in North Philadelphia managing preventative school-year and summer youth programs. Since my move to Maryland in 2007, I have continued my focus on education as a member of the MCPS Latino Student Achievement Action Group from 2013-2018 (until I was elected to the Board of Education). I was co-chair of the group for the last three years of my service, advocating for the needs of low-income Latino students with the Board of Education and the Superintendent. I also served on the board of Woodlin Elementary School PTA and in the MCCPTA curriculum committee. I am currently the Director of Community Engagement at Montgomery College and lead the College's efforts to be the community's college through partnerships, engagement centers, outreach, and collaborative problem solving. My efforts help prospective students to re-enroll or continue their studies or workforce training at the College.

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.

Yes, I have a recent graduate from MCPS and a current 10th grader

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.)

I am not receiving any support from an individual or group associated with the Charter School Movement in any way. Maryland law allows for charter schools which Boards of Education approve barring any issue that cannot be overcome through collaboration. It is public record that I did not vote in favor of the charter school before the Board in 2022.

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

We had a national teacher crisis before the pandemic which has now been exacerbated. We have to recruit and retain the best talent to work with our students. Great teachers and principals change lives and transform schools. Because of the teacher shortage in this country, we have to be proactive to recruit the best talent because our students deserve the best. We also must strive to have a workforce that reflects our community. We can do that by growing our teacher workforce from the current MCPS student population, which is diverse and multilingual. I have advocated the MCPS' "grow your own" program which launched in the spring of 2022. MCPS graduates commit to coming back to work in MCPS after completing the teaching degrees.

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:

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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:

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?

Ran for the Board of Education in 2018 and won by a 5% margin. In my first term, I have led the development of a new strategic plan, advocated for a "grow your own" staff recruitment strategy, began work to ensure that every student has a post-graduation plan, advocated for ESL students, and emphasized getting a return on investment.

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 came to the United States in third grade. I did not speak English, my visa soon expired and I became undocumented, and my family was starting over in this country. With a lot of hard work and support from many people, I was able to get ahead. I am not exceptional. I am an example of what every student can achieve if given support and access to a high quality education.

My education policy experience began at the University of Pennsylvania, where I worked at the Penn-Merck Collaborative for Science Education doing teacher training in hands-on science education in West Philadelphia Schools.

After working at Penn, I spent time in my home country of Guatemala putting my ESOL experience to work in bilingual education before returning to Philadelphia to work as the education manager at a day treatment center for truant and court-involved boys from the Philadelphia Public School system. I also served as Vice President for Children and Youth programs at Congreso de Latinos Unidos in North Philadelphia managing preventative school-year and summer youth programs.

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I am currently the Director of Community Engagement at Montgomery College and I lead the College's efforts to be the community's college through partnerships, engagement centers, outreach, and collaborative problem solving. My efforts help prospective students to re-enroll or continue their studies or workforce training at Montgomery College.

Other posts where I have served Montgomery County include a position as the Latino liaison for the County Executive in Montgomery County's Office of Community Partnerships; a post as manager of the county's Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center; ongoing participation in Montgomery Moving Forward's leadership group; positions as a board member of Montgomery History and Horizons of Greater Washington; and co-chair of Montgomery County Public Schools' Latino Student Achievement Action Group.

Possible negatives

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

The 18 months of online learning during the pandemic.

Other endorsements

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

SEIU Local 500, Progressive Neighbors, Moms Demand Action Candidate of Distinction, Latino Democratic Club, Black Democrats, Chinese American Parent Association

Candidate's campaign infrastructure

Candidate Campaign Manager name, phone, email

N/A

Candidate Finance Manager name, phone, email

Greg Borgstede, Treasurer. 240-464-5525

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?

I am well ahead in fundraising from my opponent. I have raised approximately \$8,000

Campaign team/volunteer assessment

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

There are no paid staff on my campaign. I have volunteers that help to work the polls.

Online organizing

How many emails/contacts has the campaign collected?

I have thousands of email contacts that I collected in my first race.

Theory to win

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

I won the primary by a 3:1 margin. If I continue to campaign, I expect to increase that margin. Since so many more people vote in the General Election, my goal is to reach even more voters through mailings vote by mail voters, online Facebook ads, additional endorsements, and personal endorsements.

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