



2022 Carroll County Commissioner Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATE : Ray Fava

OFFICE SOUGHT : County Commissioner District 1

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I confirm that the responses provided here are my official positions in seeking local office and I understand that CCEA intends to share my responses with members and interested parties.

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE SUBMITTED:** _____

Candidates: To be considered for a recommendation, you must indicate your response to each of the questions. Clarifications, explanations, and other information may be attached, but please be certain to clearly indicate the question(s) to which you refer.

Please return your completed and signed questionnaire at your earliest convenience to Nathan Curtis at ncurtis@mseane.org or to our office at 60 Aileron Court, Suite 6, Westminster, MD 21157.

Education Funding

Background Points

- With a critical need in closing education gaps, expanding programs and services, community schools, and improving student achievement, in 2016, lawmakers formed the Kirwan Commission to meet the challenges of a changing global economy and prepare Maryland students to be successful citizens in the 21st century.
- The Kirwan Commission's recommendations evolved into The Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which originally passed in 2020, was vetoed by Governor Hogan, and had its veto overridden in 2021. The Blueprint revises the state's school funding formula for the first time in nearly two decades. Over the next 13 years, the Blueprint calls for billions of dollars of new investment in Maryland schools that would expand career and technical education programs, community schools, and pre-k; provide more resources for students from backgrounds of poverty and students with special needs; increase educator pay; hire more educators and expand and diversify the educator pipeline; and create a new, more rigorous accountability system. These programs are designed to raise achievement and address Maryland's economic inequality with programs to target concentrated poverty.
- The Board of County Commissioners will have a significant impact on the implementation of the Blueprint, and the future funding and success of Carroll County schools. The Blueprint is landmark legislation, but there is a continued need for investment in Carroll County schools to see that the Blueprint is successfully implemented, and in ensuring that educator voices are heard and respected throughout implementation.

1. Please provide your general and specific thoughts on how the county can address the unmet needs facing our schools. Detail how you would prioritize aid for education in your budget deliberations.

In general, what teachers are telling me is that there are severe labor shortages for substitutes, bus drivers, teacher assistants, and special education. We need to make sure that kids can get to school and there are teachers in the classroom. Simply put, special education does not pay competitively based on the challenge and training.

With respects to the Carroll County budget and working with the Board of Education, we need to ensure that the infrastructure that I mentioned is funded. Obviously, cost of living adjustments are essential or else the real wage a teacher earns actually decreases.

2. There is considerable room for improvement in addressing educator recruitment and retention. Class sizes have increased because of cost-cutting measures and/or due to hiring freezes and retirements. Many support personnel positions have been eliminated. And Maryland is always challenged with filling educator jobs because we import nearly half of all certificated teachers from prep programs in other states. The coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated these shortages. At the same time, the Blueprint calls for the hiring of 15,000 additional educators to provide more individualized attention to students. How will you address critical concerns with educator recruitment and retention?

I believe that giving teacher's autonomy to go above and beyond the curriculum can help retain talent. People who are dissatisfied with their jobs are the ones filling out applications for others.

My wife had a brief stint as a substitute teacher for special education. She was referred to by a family member teacher, as a college student needing extra money. Additionally, a requirement of 30 credit hours of college makes a place like Carroll Community College a recruiting opportunity.

Additionally, cost of living adjustments are essential in these poor economic conditions.

3. Do you support or oppose Maryland's updated maintenance of effort law that requires local jurisdictions to fund the local share of all wealth-equalized formulas, instead of only the foundation formula?

Support

Oppose

Additional Comments:

I support local control over local funds. While I am not in favor of the top-down approach, I can see the benefits of this policy being implemented at a local level.

Public Funding for Private Schools

Background Points

- CCEA believes any education dollars spent outside of improving public schools makes it harder to make the progress necessary to provide a world-class education for every student.
- The Maryland State Department of Education requires a certificate of approval or registration for private schools; it does not accredit or license them. Private schools do not have to report or administer teacher qualifications, class sizes, adherence to College and Career State Standards, student retention rates, graduation rates, demographics, or discipline or suspension policies. Without these measures, it is impossible to ascertain the standards to evaluate any of the funded programs funneling public tax dollars to private schools.
- Carroll County Commissioners created a \$400,000 "Educational Opportunities Fund" to enhance and enrich the educational opportunities for home- and private-schooled students. CCEA is opposed to this type of diversion of public funding with no accountability.

4. Do you support or oppose allocating public funding to home and privately schooled students?

_____ Support

___X___ Oppose

Additional Comments:

Making money more available for private schools will ensure that the tuition for those private schools go up. We see how the easy availability of student loans has fueled the rising costs of college. This same impact would be felt on parents who use this money for private schools. The schools will cost more, and the taxpayers will be on the hook for it.

Collective Bargaining

Background Points

- CCEA supports efforts to protect and enhance the collective bargaining rights.
- Collective bargaining is the negotiation of a contract – including wages, salary scale, benefits, and working conditions – between employers and employees. The items agreed to in a ratified collective bargaining agreement apply to all employees in a bargaining unit, providing a benefit to employees and employers in not having to negotiate thousands of individual contracts.

5. Do you support or oppose public education employees' rights to bargain collectively?

Support

Oppose

Additional Comments:

I am not running to rid Carroll County teachers of their right to collectively bargain. That is simply not a goal of my campaign, nor a power I believe the commissioners have.

6. Would you commit, as a Commissioner, to funding collective bargaining agreements that were negotiated and ratified by the Carroll County Board of Education and its employees?

Support

Oppose

Additional Comments:

Within the capabilities of the county budget and under assumption that both parties will negotiate in good faith for a feasible CBA for our children's education.

Continuing Impact of the Pandemic

Background Points

- The pandemic has exacerbated a pre-existing, multifaceted housing crisis. Housing costs continue to rise, keeping some families out of the market entirely, while those whose incomes were slashed during the pandemic have fallen so far behind that the Census Bureau estimates 7 million households as of late June 2021 face eviction when the temporary moratorium on eviction enacted during the pandemic is lifted.
- The pandemic has also increased stresses, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), food insecurity, and digital divide issues for our students.
- The pandemic has exacerbated a pre-existing, multifaceted housing crisis. Housing costs continue to rise, keeping some families out of the market entirely, while those whose incomes were slashed during the pandemic have fallen so far behind that the National Equity Atlas estimates approximately 129,000 Maryland households, as of August 2021, are behind on rent and face possible eviction when the temporary moratorium on eviction enacted during the pandemic is lifted.

7. How will your budget address increased needs for mental health supports for students and educators in the wake of the pandemic?

I believe the best thing we can do is free. We can start telling the truth and apologizing to our children for taking two years of their childhood away from them. I believe that adults showing accountability for their mistakes can go a long way.

It's tragic to hear stories of kids feeling anxiety over going to school without a mask on. This theater was unacceptable at the time, and we have a lot of work to do to correct the situation. I am running largely because of government mishandling and am committed to helping our children and most vulnerable recover. The county budget should make room for this problem to be solved.

8. Safe and affordable housing is necessary for all students to be able to succeed in school. What is your position on affordable housing and how it relates to education?

I don't agree with the premise of the question. Otherwise, I plan on supporting the police to ensure safe communities. Making housing affordable is not a function of a county commissioner.

9. The pandemic further illuminated the immediate need for reliable, affordable access to technology for all students and educators in our state. How would you propose to eliminate the digital divide?

I don't think it can be eliminated. But we need student in classrooms not at home. The zoom school experiment was devastating to the education of our students and exasperated the digital divide. Not every student is suitable for online learning.

Additionally, supporting the ongoing efforts to bring fiber optics to Carroll County can help reduce the disparity in internet quality different areas of the county experience.

Racial and Social Justice

Background Points

- CCEA unequivocally believes that our diversity makes us stronger. We fundamentally believe that schools should be safe, welcoming, and nurturing learning environments for students of all backgrounds and beliefs, and places where all our students see themselves in the lessons they learn and experiences they enjoy. While students of color made up approximately 64% of the student population across the state in school year 2019-2020, our state had only 29% teachers of color, 38% principals of color, and 45% assistant principals of color. MSEA was represented on the Kirwan Commission and a vocal advocate of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future in part because of our support for training and developing high-quality teachers and education leaders, particularly those from diverse and historically underrepresented backgrounds.
- Every child, regardless of their background or zip code, deserves education justice and equitable access to opportunities, resources, and supports. We believe that the lives of our Black and Brown students matter and that all our students have a fundamental right to be educated in safe, healthy, and supportive learning communities and all our educators deserve safe, healthy, and supportive working environments.
- Maryland and U.S. history are far more diverse than is generally reflected in the content and courses currently taught in our public schools. Far too many Marylanders can progress through their formal primary and secondary education and rarely, if ever, see themselves reflected in the content they are learning or hear about themselves in the stories they read and are told. This lack of inclusivity negatively impacts not only our students' ownership of and agency in their learning, but it also adversely impacts their overall engagement in their learning and portrays a one-sided view of our history for all students. This disconnect is further exacerbated by the dearth of a more diverse field of educators in our schools and by the disproportionate (and sometime inaccurate) representations seen in society and in our culture that ultimately reinforces a sense of "otherness" for the people, communities, and cultures who have been rendered less relevant and less valuable. CCEA recognizes the vital importance of ensuring that all students learn about historical figures who not only had a tremendous impact on the forming of our state and our nation but whose actions and sacrifices laid the foundation upon which this nation's pledge of "liberty and justice for all" must be built.
- CCEA is committed to developing critical thinking skills in our students because we know that they enable them to better understand the problems our society faces and to develop collective solutions. To that end, we are abundantly clear that truth and honesty are fundamental components of teaching and learning, as are academic integrity and professional responsibility. Our essential mission is to prepare our students for college, career, and life and to play an active role in our democracy.

10. Do you support honesty in education? Do you believe educators have professional autonomy and should be afforded the deference to teach the truth in their classrooms, schools & districts?

For example, if a Carroll County high school history teacher, keeping with the approved CCPS curriculum, taught the true local story of Townsend Cook, who was lynched in Westminster in 1885, and as a result some parents became upset because they saw the lesson's material as divisive and controversial, would you as a County Commissioner, defend/support that teacher's right to teach students this true story as part of the curriculum?

Support

Oppose

Additional Comments:

The example misrepresents the parents concerns on this issue. It's not the local homicide that's the issue, it's using that homicide to advance a political agenda that parents are concerned about. This, I do not support. The 1619 project was widely debunked.

Moreover, I am passionate about history. My experience in CCPS was that there were major gaps in periods of history taught. For instance. I was not taught Roman history. I took AP US. The class barely made it to the 20th century. So, I must posit this question in return, if we can get through all the curriculum, why is so much emphasis being placed on relatively miniscule events? If we want to talk about local history, why not focus on the Maryland delegations to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitutional Convention in 1787 which are major events with local emphasis.

Additionally, I also support more student autonomy, most specifically when it comes to selecting reading material for classes. When I was in AP Literature, I benefitted from a teacher exercising autonomy to compile a list of college level reading, and we as students got to choose a book from each category to read. This allows students to take greater ownership in reading and develop a greater interest in learning.

11. How will you support diversity, equity, and inclusion for all students throughout the county? What specific policies do you support whose goals are focused on providing equitable access, opportunities, resources, and supports?

I do not support fighting racism with racism. If there are solutions that do not fight racism with more racism, I am open to hearing them. I am opposed to policies that show partiality between groups (as distinct from policies that result in disparate outcomes for

groups) or in order to take “corrective” against historic wrongs that are perceived to still exist today. Equal opportunity under the law means just that and not equal outcomes.

Community Schools

Background Points

- Poverty dramatically and negatively affects the wellbeing of children, particularly in the areas of physical health, mental health, safe housing, access to technology, parental support, family planning services, nutrition, youth employment, and education. Each of these areas play a large role in whether students can learn and do well in school—making it imperative that these opportunity gaps be closed if we want to provide an equitable education in our communities. According to data collected by MSDE, 48% of Maryland public school students were enrolled for free and reduced-price meals this school year (meaning their family income level is at or below 185% of federal income poverty guidelines).
- CCEA supports the establishment of community schools, where applicable, which are designed to close these opportunity gaps by making the school a hub for essential services that students in disadvantaged communities lack.
- Community schools generally have the following four components: (1) they serve a high concentration of students in poverty; (2) they employ a full-time coordinator to lead community school-related services; (3) they conduct a needs assessment to identify key obstacles to learning and the services needed to close the opportunity gaps; and (4) they work with community partners to bring those needed services into the school building or nearby locations to make them accessible to students and community members.
- The Blueprint phases in community schools beginning in FY20, starting with 219 schools with 80% or more of their students enrolled for free and reduced-price meals. Community schools will be added, phased in according to highest levels of poverty first, until FY27, when a predicted 557—nearly one-third of all schools in the state—are projected to become community schools. That makes this one of the largest scale expansions of community schools in the nation.
- The American Rescue Plan provided additional funding to assist with the expansion of small group instruction delineated in the Blueprint. Of these funds, at least 20% must be used to address pandemic-associated learning gaps through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs.
- CCEA supports equitable and adequate resources to provide every student with an opportunity to learn in a safe and non-disruptive environment. Establishing and funding community schools is a research-based strategy for closing opportunity gaps and building strong communities.

12. Do you support or oppose local efforts to create and support community schools in areas of concentrated poverty?

Support

Oppose

Additional Comments:

I am unconvinced there is a need for this in Carroll County. We have some of the best schools in the state.

Parental Involvement and Public Support

Background Points

- It is calculated that school age children spend 70% of their waking hours (including weekends and holidays) outside of school.
- Research shows that the most consistent predictors of children's academic achievement and social adjustment are parental involvement in schools and parental expectations of the child's academic attainment and satisfaction with their child's education at school.
- Additionally, research indicates there are three major factors that influence parental involvement in schools:
 - Parents' belief that they can impact what is important and necessary on behalf of their children's school.
 - The extent to which parents believe that they can have a positive influence on their children's education; and
 - Parents' perceptions that their children and school want them to be involved.

13. What would you do to increase parental involvement and public support for our public schools and educators?

I would seek to improve the transparency of the curriculum across the board for every subject matter. Parents should have the curriculum readily available them to look up online.

Additionally, opportunities we can take to increase student ownership in their work should also be taken, as this will in turn raise parent support.

14. How do you plan to work with Carroll County educators if elected to the Board of Commissioners?

I will have an open-door approach. On this campaign, I listen and take notes. In office, I will implement the notes based on what readers have told me, Commissioner's should be accessible.

Privatization

Background Points

- CCEA opposes any effort to outsource or privatize education jobs that are part of a bargaining unit. We maintain that any attempt to outsource or privatize jobs of public educators violates collective bargaining agreements because such an effort is in essence terminating or firing bargaining unit positions.
- Outsourcing and privatization efforts have threatened teacher and education support professional (ESP) jobs for years. In the last few years, Anne Arundel County has attempted to outsource teaching services for deaf and blind students, Talbot County has discussed privatizing transportation services, and Kent County has attempted to privatize custodial services. There have been multi-county efforts on the Eastern Shore to outsource the hiring of occupational therapists and physical therapists to work in the schools.
- When jobs are outsourced, quality control is diminished, and safety is compromised. Public employees are subject to background checks that private employers often do not require. After privatizing, local school boards lose control over the individuals working in schools and have little ability to provide input on job performance.
- Privatizers often use an argument of cost-savings as a means of winning contracts. The amount is often misleading because they intentionally underestimate first year operating costs. Ultimately, they reduce hours, health care coverage, or just cut jobs. All these steps lead to increase in local unemployment and less money in the community overall.

15. Are you in favor of contracting out custodial, cafeteria, and maintenance services rather than have those services provided by Board of Education employees?

Support

Oppose

Additional Comments:

I believe that all public employees should undergo a federal background check.

Essay Questions

A. What are the top three things you would like to accomplish in the next four years if you are elected to the Carroll County Board of Commissioners?

1. I want to curtail government emergency powers to prevent the overreach that occurred the last 2 years.
2. I want to end Carroll County's current quasi-charter government. The commissioners outsourced their duties to a county administrator position. Per the county org chart, the departments report to an unelected position instead of the elected commissioners. This is a glaring weakness in the current structure that needs to be removed. The elected commissioners should run the government.
3. I want to protect rural communities from over-development. We've seen how overdevelopment has torn apart other counties. It has also contributed to disasters like the floods in Ellicott City.

B. What is your view of the current local tax structure? What, if any, changes would you advocate for?

Unfortunately, Carroll County sends a lot of money to Annapolis and we get very little of that money back to spend on our own concerns. If we can get that to change, we can have an easier time reducing the tax burden on the citizens. But in the meantime, I am all about citizens paying less in taxes.

Thank you for taking the time to address the questions above.