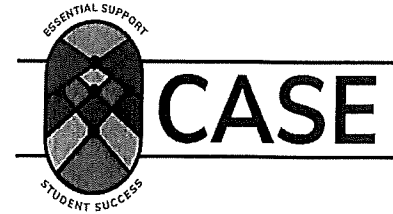


2026
Carroll County Commissioner
Candidate Questionnaire



NAME of CANDIDATE : Aaron M Goldsmith

OFFICE SOUGHT : Carroll County Commissioner

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I confirm that the responses provided here are my official positions in seeking local office and I understand that CCEA and CASE intend to share my responses with members and interested parties through our public website.

SIGNATURE: aaronmgoldsmithmd@gmail.com DATE SUBMITTED: 3/20/26

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 clearly indicate the question(s) to which you refer.

Please return your completed and signed questionnaire no later than February 24, 2026 to Nathan Curtis at ncurtis@mseanea.org or to our office at 60 Aileron Court, Suite 6, Westminster, MD 21157.

Getting to Know You

1. Please share a brief bio for us to know you better. Be sure to include how long you've lived in Carroll County, whether you have/had children or other family members in Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS), and other ways in which you are involved in our community.

My name is Aaron M. Goldsmith, and I've been a resident of Carroll County since 2018. I'm a small business owner and the director of an educational company, Goldsmith Education LLC, that works across Maryland, partnering with community colleges and programs to provide hands-on STEM education through summer camps and homeschool enrichment. Education is both a professional and personal priority for me. I've had a daughter attend Carroll County Public Schools for a semester during high school, and I have many friends and neighbors with children currently in the school system. Those connections have given me a real, on-the-ground perspective of both the strengths of our schools and the challenges they face. Beyond that, my involvement in the community comes through my work, helping students build skills, confidence, and pathways forward, and through staying engaged with local issues that impact families here in Carroll County. I'm running because I believe in thoughtful, steady leadership that supports our schools, strengthens our community, and creates opportunity for the future.

2. 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?

If elected, my top three priorities would be responsible budgeting, strengthening our schools and libraries, and investing in infrastructure; while protecting our agricultural industry.

First, fiscal responsibility. We need to ensure our budget is sustainable, transparent, and aligned with long-term planning, so we're meeting our obligations without creating instability for taxpayers.

Second, education and libraries. Our public schools and libraries are core to our community. I want to make sure they are consistently funded, supported, and positioned to serve students, families, and lifelong learners effectively.

Third, infrastructure. That includes roads, water systems, and broadband. These are critical to both quality of life and economic growth, and we need to invest in them strategically, so they keep pace with the county's needs.

And throughout all of this, we must protect and preserve our agricultural industry. It's a defining part of Carroll County's identity and economy, and smart planning means making sure growth and preservation can coexist.

If we focus on those areas, we can build a stronger, more sustainable future for the county.

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

I think Carroll County's current tax structure reflects a common challenge, we rely heavily on residential property taxes, which can put a real strain on families, especially as costs continue to rise.

In my view, the long-term solution isn't simply raising taxes, it's creating a more balanced and sustainable revenue base. That means being intentional about economic development, attracting and growing businesses that expand our commercial tax base, so we're not placing the majority of the burden on homeowners.

I also think predictability matters. Residents and businesses should be able to plan without worrying about sudden changes in tax policy.

At the same time, we have real obligations; schools, public safety, infrastructure; and those need to be funded responsibly.

So my approach would be to focus on growing the tax base, improving efficiency, and making thoughtful, transparent decisions, so we can meet our needs without overburdening taxpayers.

It's about balance: fiscal responsibility, economic growth, and long-term sustainability.

Education Funding

4. Please provide your thoughts on how the county should address the consistent budget shortfall of the Carroll County Public School system. Detail how you would prioritize funding for public education in your budget deliberations.

Public education has to be one of our top priorities in Carroll County.

When we talk about consistent budget shortfalls, that's a signal that we need better alignment between what our schools require and how we're planning and allocating resources as a county. For me, that starts with partnership. The Board of Commissioners and the school system need to be working together earlier in the process, with more transparency around needs, costs, and long-term planning, not just reacting during budget season.

In terms of prioritization, I believe funding education is an investment, not just an expense. Strong schools support property values, workforce development, and the long-term health of our community. That said, we also have a responsibility to taxpayers. So I would focus on sustainable solutions—looking at multi-year budgeting, identifying efficiencies where possible, and making sure dollars are going directly into classrooms, teacher support, and student outcomes.

If we want to remain a county where families choose to live and stay, we have to make sure our schools are consistently funded and set up for success.

This is also personal for me, I've been a member of both TABCO and the Teamsters, so I've seen firsthand how collective bargaining works and how it can create a more structured, professional relationship between employees and leadership.

At the same time, as a County Commissioner, I understand the responsibility to balance fair agreements with fiscal sustainability for taxpayers.

So my approach would be to support good-faith negotiations, respect the process, and work toward agreements that are fair, transparent, and sustainable, because when we support our educators, we're supporting student success.

9. 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 bargaining units?

Support

Oppose

Comments/Explanation:

I support honoring collective bargaining agreements that are negotiated in good faith and properly ratified.

At the same time, as a County Commissioner, I have a responsibility to ensure that any agreement is financially sustainable for the county.

So my commitment would be this: I will work collaboratively with the Board of Education and bargaining units early in the process to make sure agreements are aligned with realistic budget projections, so we're not creating a situation where commitments can't be met.

If an agreement is responsibly structured and does not create a budget shortfall, then I believe it should be funded.

Ultimately, the goal should be to avoid that disconnect entirely, through better planning, transparency, and communication, so that when agreements are reached, everyone has confidence they can be honored.

Community Supports

10. Safe and affordable housing is necessary for all students to be able to succeed in school. In addition, many of our public service employees are currently unable to afford housing in Carroll County. What is your position on affordable housing and how it relates to education?

I agree. Safe and affordable housing is directly tied to student success.

When students don't have stable housing, it impacts attendance, focus, and overall academic performance. And when our teachers, first responders, and public service employees can't afford

to live in the communities they serve, it creates real challenges for recruitment, retention, and community stability.

So to me, this isn't just a housing issue, it's an education and workforce issue as well. I believe Carroll County needs to take a thoughtful, balanced approach to housing, one that increases supply, especially for workforce and middle-income families, while still respecting community character.

That includes working with the development community to create more attainable housing options, improving predictability in the approval process, and making sure infrastructure keeps pace with growth.

At the same time, we need to be intentional, prioritizing housing that supports the people who keep our schools and public services running.

If we want strong schools, we need stable communities, and housing is a big part of that foundation.

Racial and Social Justice

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

Yes, I absolutely support honesty in education.

I believe students should be taught the full scope of history, both the achievements we're proud of and the moments that are more difficult to confront. Education should give students an honest understanding of how decisions, actions, and consequences shape outcomes over time. Because without that full picture, we risk losing important lessons. And as a society, if we don't understand the past, what worked, what failed, and why, we increase the chances of repeating the same mistakes.

I also believe educators should be trusted as professionals. They are trained, experienced, and committed to helping students learn and grow.

That doesn't mean there aren't standards or accountability, but it does mean giving teachers the respect and appropriate autonomy to teach accurate, evidence-based material in a thoughtful and age-appropriate way.

At the end of the day, education should prepare students not just to pass tests, but to think critically, understand the world around them, and make informed decisions.

An example of approved Carroll County curriculum is the true story of Townsend Cook, who was lynched in Westminster in 1885. Some parents have expressed concern over the lesson, viewing the material as divisive and controversial.

And finally, it's about creating school environments where every student feels safe, respected, and able to focus on learning.

This isn't about labels, it's about outcomes. If we're serious about strong schools, we need to make sure every student has the tools and support to succeed.

Parental Involvement and Public Support

14. What would you do to strengthen public support for our public schools and educators?

I think strengthening public support for our schools starts with trust and that comes from transparency, communication, and results.

First, we need to do a better job communicating what's happening in our schools, what's working, where challenges exist, and how decisions are being made. When people understand where their tax dollars are going and see the impact, support grows.

Second, we need to elevate and respect our educators. Teachers and school staff are on the front lines every day, and recognizing their work, both publicly and through fair compensation and support goes a long way in building community confidence.

Third, I believe in stronger partnerships, between schools, families, local businesses, and community organizations. When people feel connected to their schools, they're more invested in their success.

And finally, results matter. When we focus on student outcomes, workforce readiness, and preparing students for the future, that builds long-term support.

At the end of the day, strong schools and strong communities go hand in hand, and building that connection is a key responsibility of leadership.

In the spring of 2025, CCEA collaborated with CCPS, the County Commissioners, and the Carroll County Delegation to advocate for a waiver from the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB). This is a concrete example of bipartisan efforts to do what is best for Carroll County students.

15. If elected to the Board of Commissioners, how would you collaborate with the Carroll County Educators Association (CCEA), the Carroll Association of School Employees (CASE), and the Association of Public School Administrators and Supervisors of Carroll County (APSASCCO) if elected to the Board of Commissioners?

I think that example you mentioned, working together across organizations and levels of government, is exactly the model we need to continue building on.

If elected, my approach would be grounded in consistent, proactive collaboration, not just during budget season or when there's a problem.

That means regular communication with groups like CCEA, CASE, and APSASCCO to better understand what educators and staff are seeing on the ground, what's working, what challenges they're facing, and where support is most needed.

I also believe in bringing those voices into the process earlier. Too often, decisions are made and then communicated. I'd rather see a more collaborative approach where input helps shape decisions from the beginning.

At the same time, I understand the responsibility of the Commissioners to balance multiple priorities, so those conversations need to be transparent and focused on sustainable solutions.

At the end of the day, we all share the same goal, strong schools and successful students, and the best way to get there is by working together.

The best decisions happen when the people doing the work have a seat at the table before decisions are made, not after.

Privatization

16. Are you in favor of contracting out custodial, cafeteria, Speech and Language Pathologists, and maintenance services rather than having those services provided by Board of Education employees?

_____ Support
Oppose

___X___

Comments/Explanation:

In general, I believe there is real value in keeping these roles in-house rather than contracting them out.

Positions like custodial staff, food services, maintenance, and specialized roles like speech and language pathologists are essential to the daily success of our schools. When those roles are filled by Board of Education employees, you're investing directly in people who are part of the community. People who build relationships with students and staff and have a long-term stake in the system.

I also believe that in-house positions provide more stability, better oversight, and stronger accountability, along with fair wages and benefits that help attract and retain quality professionals. That said, I understand there may be limited situations where contracting is necessary, but that should be the exception, not the default.

My priority would be to strengthen our workforce locally, because when we invest in our employees, we're also investing in the quality of our schools and the strength of our community.