



2026
Carroll County
Board of Education
Candidate Questionnaire



NAME of CANDIDATE: Julie Walsh

OFFICE SOUGHT: Carroll County Public Schools- Board of Education

CAMPAIGN ADDRESS: P.O. Box 1023, Mt. Airy, MD 21771

PHONE NUMBER(S): 240-394-5795

EMAIL: walsh4carroll@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.walsh4carroll.com

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.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie Walsh".

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE:

DATE SUBMITTED: 3/3/26

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

Please return your completed and signed questionnaire no later than February 24, 2026 to Nathan Curtis at ncurtis@mseane.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 kids in Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS), and other ways in which you are involved in our community.

I am a mother of five children (aged 8 to 15) attending four Carroll County Public Schools. I live with my husband and children in Mount Airy. This year our family will have lived in Carroll County for 14 years.

I began volunteering in my children's schools when my eldest began Kindergarten in 2015. Since then I have spent much time in the schools as an involved parent, a school volunteer, and a PTO leader. I have also spent many hours volunteering at my church (where I teach, sing, and serve on a welcoming committee) and at other nonprofits (including as a board member for a preschool and a historic home). I currently serve as president of the PTO at two of my children's schools, and in 2025 I co-founded (and spent much time working on) the Carroll Education Coalition.

Before becoming a stay-at-home mother in 2010, I served as a full-time registered lobbyist in Annapolis. I was an associate director of the Maryland Catholic Conference, where I worked on matters related to poverty, healthcare, and immigration. I represented the Conference on a number of statewide coalitions and served as the chair of one of them (the Maryland Alliance for the Poor) for three years. Before working in Annapolis, I spent three years with the Office of Inspector General of the U.S. General Services Administration.

Student Supports

2. What strategies would you propose to meet the growing mental health needs of students and staff?

As a parent who hears the concerns of other parents, and as a friend and family member of educators (who hears their stories), I think it's obvious that both students and educators are experiencing considerable stress, and that a growing number struggle with their mental health. I will not pretend to have an answer to this problem. For students, I think it stems from deeper societal issues. For educators, I think it comes from us having tasked them with so much – not just the tasks and the responsibilities, but also the emotional weight of students' needs, student behavior, and the question of whether they can keep our children safe. I cannot think of any simple strategies to address such a problem. But I would like to better understand it, and to work with others in CCPS to devise ways to help.

3. How will you support and promote justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion for ALL students throughout the county? What specific policies or initiatives do you support that provide equitable access, opportunities, resources, and support for every student? Understand that "equity" is ensuring that every student gets what they need to be successful, such as reteaching or

remediation. “Equality” would be saying to a student, “Since the rest of the class understood the lesson, we are moving on to the next lesson. You will have to figure it out.”

I do not know enough about such policies and initiatives to provide you with a helpful answer. But I will say that I value justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and that I am committed to living out those values in my work (should I be elected) on the Board of Education. I grew up in a racially and economically diverse community and I honestly view the experience as a beautiful gift in my life. I love people, and I love getting to know and understand people from different kinds of backgrounds. I think that justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are not merely a matter of fairness (though that is important); I think our schools and communities are stronger when they welcome people with a diverse range of experiences.

Staff Supports

Educators nationwide face increasing pressure to address a wide range of societal challenges while also navigating concerns about overstepping parental rights. For example, some elementary educators are being asked to take on responsibilities like assisting with basic life skills (children not potty trained), many educators experience higher levels of physical, verbal, or emotional challenges from students (who have difficulty interacting with peers and adults, as well as self-regulation), and some educators feel constrained in addressing sensitive or controversial topics due to potential disciplinary consequences.

4. What steps (short term and long term) would you take to help support educators as their jobs become increasingly difficult to navigate?

I would like to better understand the experiences of educators so I can better support them, and this desire definitely extends to the question of why their jobs have become more difficult to navigate. I cannot yet identify short or long-term steps; I can only say that I will work at this. I look forward to much input from Carroll County educators.

5. Educators have increasing concerns about safety in our public schools. As a member of the Board of Education, what suggestions or ideas would you bring to address those concerns?

I understand educators’ increasing concerns about safety in our public schools. As a parent who sends five beautiful children off to school every day, I share their concerns, and I mourn the fact that any of us should have to fear for our, or our loved ones’, safety at school. That said, I do not at this time have any particular suggestions or ideas for policy changes related to safety and security. I look forward to learning more on this count, and to hearing educators’ own suggestions and ideas.

6. What strategies or policies do you have to address the unsustainable workload for educators where expectations/responsibilities continue to increase without additional compensation? How would you support educators and ensure workloads remain manageable?

I am aware of educators' concerns about their unsustainable workload, and this is an area I particularly want to learn about as I run for the Board of Education. I plan to speak to and gather comments from educators to better understand the challenges they face on this count, so as collaborate on solutions.

7. Our Education Support Professionals (CASE bargaining unit members) are underpaid and underappreciated. What would you do to ensure that our Education Support Professionals (ESPs) receive adequate and appropriate benefits, training, safe working conditions, and a living wage?

I believe that the Board of Education is responsible for doing everything in its power to secure sufficient resources for CCPS. I also believe that CCPS should fairly compensate the employees it has determined that it needs. Having spent much time in my children's schools, I can attest to the importance of Education Support Professionals in ensuring that schools run smoothly and that children get the help and attention they need. I believe such professionals are vital, and that they should receive adequate and appropriate compensation and benefits. If elected to the Board of Education, I would work hard to ensure that Carroll County's Commissioners (and its residents) understand the real and necessary costs associated with running a public school system, including fairly compensating all of its employees. I would also welcome feedback from employees regarding their concerns about training and safe working conditions, and do what I can to address those concerns at a policy level.

Will you support the ESP Bill of Rights (**attached to email**)?

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future

In the spring of 2025, CCEA collaborated with CCPS, the County Commissioners, and with the Carroll County Delegation to advocate for a waiver from the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB). This is a concrete example of bipartisan effort to focus on supporting the best interests of is best for Carroll County students and staff.

8. The Blueprint, at its heart, is about elevating the profession of educators and changing the top to bottom approach to public education in Maryland. Describe what ideas you might bring to the Board of Education about providing our educators with more autonomy and being more involved in decision making in CCPS.

As a co-founder of the Carroll Education Coalition, I spent much of last year learning about the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and advocating for more funding and flexibility for CCPS so it could implement Blueprint in a way that would not cost dozens of employees their jobs and contribute to dramatically increased class sizes in some parts of the County. I traveled to Westminster and Annapolis numerous times to testify before the Board of Education, the Board

of Commissioners, multiple State legislative committees, and the AIB. I also put much work into writing advocacy materials for the Coalition, coordinating with CCPS staff and members of Carroll County's delegation to the Maryland General Assembly, and pounding the pavement in Annapolis so that legislators and legislative staff would have faces and in-person arguments to associate with all the emails and phone calls they were getting from Carroll County residents. I am grateful for the role CCEA played in advocating for Carroll's waiver, and I was encouraged to see how well so many different components of Carroll and State leadership collaborated to find a workable solution to CCPS' difficulty in implementing the funding component of Blueprint.

Having dug into Blueprint, I understand that the law is about more than funding. I appreciate its goal of elevating the profession of educators. I agree with changing the top-to-bottom approach to public education in Maryland. As a parent, I love when my children's teachers supplement their curricula with instruction that feels more personal and interesting to their students. I believe that teachers should have more autonomy to innovate and to focus on methods and subject matter that engages and inspires children. If I were elected to the Board of Education, I would welcome feedback from educators regarding autonomy, curricula, the demands on their time, and other matters that impact teachers' ability to teach well.

9. Apart from funding, what are the biggest concerns you have regarding the implementation of The Blueprint for Maryland's Future in CCPS?

Apart from funding, my biggest concern regarding the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future in CCPS is that it won't, in fact, change the top-to-bottom approach to public education. I respect the goals of Blueprint, but I remain concerned that as school districts attempt to implement it, they may become so caught up in the law's requirements that they don't make room for autonomy and innovation. Maryland is a diverse state on many levels, and I think local jurisdictions should be given more freedom to find their own ways to help their students succeed. It is completely fair to insist that school systems meet certain standards, and that disadvantaged students receive additional funding and assistance, but I would like to see school systems (and schools, and educators) given more autonomy in determining the best ways to help the students they've been entrusted with.

Privatization and Use of Public Monies

10. What is your position on providing public funding for students who are homeschooled or attend private schools and why?

When it comes to education, I believe the first duty of the County is to provide for the students who are enrolled in its public school system. And while that system faces financial pressures so serious that it struggles to maintain programs and staffing levels from one year to the next, I cannot see providing public funding to students who are homeschooled or who attend private schools. That said, were the system's financial situation to improve, and the County to provide

enough resources to both address CCPS' needs and provide some help to families who homeschool or send their children to private school, I would support that development.

11. As a potential Board Member, what is your position in the contracting out of services rather than having those services provided by Board of Education employees (i.e. Speech and Language Pathologists, custodial, cafeteria, and maintenance work, to name a few)?

I do not have a settled position on the contracting out of services. This is a question I would need to wrangle with based on the particulars of the situation in front of me. In general, I believe the Board of Education should set high expectations for the services provided to it (and to the students of Carroll County), and make financially prudent decisions regarding how those services are provided. I would not want to see a service contracted out as a cost-savings measure if the change would result in worse service to or outcomes for our students. But neither would I want to see the possibility of contracted services ruled out entirely.

Honesty in Education

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.

12. CCEA supports honesty in education across all subject areas and in all areas of the CCPS approved curriculum. To encourage critical thinking, we believe educators should have professional autonomy and should be afforded the deference to teach truth in their classrooms, schools, and districts. How would you ensure honesty in education?

I am committed to the truth, even when the truth is uncomfortable. I would oppose any effort to obscure the truth of the American experience when it comes to difficult subjects such as slavery, the Jim Crow era, lynchings, etc. It is important that our students be given the full picture of our nation's and our community's history. We do them – and our society – no favor when we prioritize comfort over truth. I do think it is important that such weighty subjects be treated somewhat differently based on the age of the students, but I trust that educators would teach in age-appropriate ways and I support their professional autonomy in addressing such subjects.

13. How would you support our educators and show you trust their professional judgement in implementing the approved county curriculum, even when it may be contentious?

I have great respect for educators and I intend to convey that respect in my words and actions. I would like to be in dialogue with educators to better understand any contentious matters related to the approved County curriculum. By the same token, I would like to be in dialogue with the community to understand their concerns. Overall, I would like to do my part in helping the

community to understand the rationale for the curriculum and for educators' efforts to implement it.

Rebuilding Trust and Faith in Public Education

14. What is the role of the Board of Education in rebuilding the public's trust in public education and, more specifically, CCPS (there are still people in this community who believe there are litter boxes in the bathrooms at schools for those who identify as animals)? If elected, what steps would you take to address misinformation and strengthen confidence in our schools?

Over the past year I have put much time and effort into understanding the challenges facing our school system and conveying those challenges to our community in an accurate and compelling way. If elected to the Board of Education, I intend to continue that work in a more substantive way. I earnestly believe that transparency and good communication are essential if trust is to be restored. Through my volunteer work and my personal efforts among my near community (welcoming, helping, and connecting people), I have been working for some fifteen years to build up my community, and to strengthen people's ties to one another. More than perhaps anything else, I hope that if I am elected to this office, I can continue that work on a broader scale. I think it is so important that a community be able to trust its public school system, and I hope to contribute to not only making our school system healthier, but also making its relationship with our community healthier.

15. CCEA has raised concerns about how some Board of Education members have used their official position in ways perceived as divisive (example: using social media to malign those who may have a different worldview, sometimes including groups of employees). What precautions would you take to avoid potential conflicts of interest and what assurances would you make about how you would communicate with various stakeholders? Who manages your campaign social media account and who would manage your BoE social media account if elected?

I believe very strongly in respectful dialogue in all settings, but perhaps especially online, where it can be easy to misinterpret others' comments. Moreover, I believe that civil, constructive discourse is vital to a healthy society. We have a choice in what we want our society to be. We each have the power to build it up or tear it down. I believe that when we focus our efforts on dividing ourselves from those we disagree with, we contribute to our decline. I believe that if we want to make our communities and our society healthier and stronger, then we need to engage – civilly, in good will – with those with whom we disagree. I promise to never be intentionally divisive. I promise never to malign anyone. I promise to treat all CCPS employees, and all those with children in CCPS or with business before it, with respect. I manage my own campaign social media account (though it's possible I might get some help monitoring comments as the campaign progresses). If elected, I would continue to manage my own accounts.

16. What is one thing that you would like our members to know about your candidacy that wasn't addressed in a previous question and answer?

I just wanted to emphasize that I am new to the world of education policy, and I know I have a lot to learn. But I am a curious, hard-working person who genuinely cares about our schools, students, and educators, and I want you to know that if elected, I will do the work necessary to become an informed, thoughtful policymaker. Thank you for the opportunity to introduce myself to you.

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