



2026
Carroll County
Board of Education
Candidate Questionnaire



NAME of CANDIDATE: Sharon Wilhide _____

OFFICE SOUGHT: Carroll County Public Schools- Board of Education

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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.

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE: Sharon Wilhide DATE SUBMITTED: 03/01/2026

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@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 kids in Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS), and other ways in which you are involved in our community.

I am a Maryland native that moved to Carroll County in 2009. I graduated with my Master's in Deaf Education from McDaniel in 2010 and started teaching for CCPS. I began teaching for BCPS in the fall of 2015. I have 2 children (ages 5 and 10) that attend Mechanicsville Elementary School. I am the Vice President of the PTA and have helped plan numerous PTA events including Teacher Appreciation Week. My daughter is a Girl Scout, and I volunteer with her troop activities including camping and teaching them ASL (American Sign Language).

Student Supports

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

I graduated from Towson University with my bachelor's in psychology. I understand the growing demand of the mental health crisis in our youth, witnessing it firsthand. Students and staff need to feel valued and appreciated to be successful. We need more mental health providers and services in our schools across all levels. We need to make workloads more manageable for staff. We need to support students by providing outlets for them to express themselves in a safe way.

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."

As a special educator, my entire world is advocating for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. I provide in-service trainings to classroom teachers annually on how to provide equitable access to the curriculum. I believe that a public school system is responsible to ensure ALL students get a high-quality equitable education. I have been impressed with the recent "intervention" blocks added to many school schedules to provide the extra time students need to be successful.

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?

Short term, educators need quality professional development related to the specific age group that they teach. Often educators sit through lengthy professional development that does not apply to their specific job. I believe that we need to be providing educators the tools they need to navigate today's children at their level. Long term, we need to be providing more accessible workshops and information to families about the ways in which children can be school ready. We need to work together with families to build our community strong. Afterall, it takes a village.

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?

After basic physical needs are met, safety is the next most important human need on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Therefore, our educators and students need to feel safe in their schools in order to succeed. As a member of the Board of Education, I believe that partnering closely with the security team of CCPS and using multiple security risk analysis companies is key. I believe that bullying prevention education at all levels helps to minimize safety concerns. In our modern world, I also think it is critical to get more effective cyber security on all of our CCPS devices.

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?

Educators are leaving the profession because they do not have the support they need to do their jobs. I believe that one of the most challenging aspects is the amount of testing at every level. Although it is important to use data to drive instruction, educators need to be respected as the professionals they are and have time to teach. The curriculum is increasingly challenging, and educators need time to adjust to new curriculum. Although professional development is important, educators also need time during their duty day to complete their never-ending tasks.

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?

Blueprint covers a lot of critical areas, but the one area it is lacking is supporting our Education Support Professionals. I believe it is up to the Board of Education to take responsibility to ensure that all CCPS employees have a living wage, safe working conditions, training, and benefits. As a Board of Education member, I will always vote in a way that benefits our students and our students would not have a high-quality education without the diligent work of ESPs.

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

Yes, I will absolutely the ESP Bill of Rights. Our education system would not be able to function without our Education Support Professionals. They are some of the hardest working professionals and do not get nearly enough credit for their hard work.

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 what 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.

Blueprint is meant to improve the quality of education of all children in Maryland. The heart of education is the educators. Educators need to be respected for the professionals they are. We need to lessen scripted curriculums and provide educators with more autonomy in the classroom. We need to involve educators on the many board appointed committees that make major decisions about our school system.

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

My concerns on Blueprint are full day pre-k and starting teacher salaries. I recognize the importance of early intervention but worry it will be seen as free childcare. I also worry standards are pushed on students who are not developmentally ready for academic instruction. Regarding starting teacher salaries, I recognize the important of higher teacher salaries, but I am concerned for our seasoned educators who do not see any benefit or increase.

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?

The purpose of public schools is to teach all students what society needs them to know. Public funding should go to public schools only. Parents have every right to choose a private school or homeschooling, but that is their decision. The only possible exception would be for students with disabilities if the public school system is not able to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

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)?

As a special educator, I am extremely disappointed in the number of contracted services being provided across Maryland schools. It is a way that Boards of Education are able to pay less for their employees if they don't have to provide benefits. This in turn hurts our children because there is more turnaround of service providers and the quality of work is substandard. It goes back to the quality of mental health of staff if they are not valued and supported.

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?

If we do not learn from the past, we are doomed to repeat it. Therefore, teaching honest history as it happened using multiple points of view is critical in teaching critical thinking skills. Our educators are professionals and experts in the area of child development and should be trusted to know what is appropriate based on the developmental level they are teaching. Sometimes learning can be uncomfortable, but that is how we as humans grow.

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?

As a member of the Board of Education, I will always vote in the best interest of our students and educators. Even when contentious, I believe that our educators need to feel supported and trusted to do their jobs. I will defend educators within CCPS and highlight their extensive accomplishments. I believe it is important that the Board of Education is present in our schools by engaging in real, meaningful conversations with educators asking how they feel supported.

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?

The role of the Board of Education is to advocate for the school system and be a liaison between the school system and the community. I believe that part of rebuilding the public's trust in public education and CCPS specifically is professionalism both inside and outside of the board room. The Board of Education represents CCPS at all times. Families need to be able to trust that CCPS will provide the essential supports their children need to be successful. I also think effective communication by the Board of Education to employees within CCPS and the community at large is critical. CCPS has a lot of great relationships with local community partners, and I believe expanding those partners will help rebuild that trust. We need to show the community that they are a part of our village and as the saying goes, "It takes a village." We need to get back to working together for the investment in our community's future.

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 that the Board of Education should be a non-partisan position, focusing on the success of its students, not using social media as an output of political divisiveness. As an elected official, a member of the Board of Education should be cautious of anything they put in writing or on the internet because they are a representative of the school system. I think it is critical for all stakeholders to work together and find common ground. I manage my own campaign social media account and would also continue to manage my BOE social media account if elected.

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 am not a politician. I am an educator. I am tired of the people in power making decisions about education having no background or experience in education or child development. If elected, every decision I would make as a member of the Board of Education would be to put students and educators first.

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