



HoCoJAG

Howard County Jewish Advocacy Group

Board of Education Candidate Questionnaire

Dear Candidate for the Howard County Board of Education,

HoCoJAG is a 501(c)(4) non-profit, non-partisan, independent volunteer group whose mission is to protect the Jewish community through political action and advocacy. HoCoJAG is not affiliated with any political party.

We are inviting you to complete the attached Board of Education Candidate Questionnaire. Your answers will be posted on our website, hocojag.org, and distributed to interested Howard County voters.

We will endorse and support candidates that support HoCoJAG's vision of fostering a Howard County in which Jewish residents are safe, included, and integral to the fabric of the community.

Please submit your completed questionnaire to boesurvey@hocojag.org by March 22, 2024.

1. Should HCPSS adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism?

Yes or No: [Yes, IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is a good start.](#)

Please explain your response:

[It is important to have a clear definition of Antisemitism so we can identify the incidenc of Antisemitism and prevent it from happening.](#)

2. Should HCPSS anti-discrimination polices protect Jewish students and staff in the same manner as other protected classes?

Yes or No: [Yes.](#)

Please explain your response:

[Jewish students and staff are part of our diverse student and staff population and should be protected in the same manner as other protected classes.](#)

3. Should HCPSS educational equity policies help combat implicit and explicit antisemitic bias?

Yes or No: [Yes](#)

What specifically would you add to the curriculum:

[The existing curriculum should be reviewed and assessed on whetner the contents should be adjusted so people can be aware of implicit and explicit antisemitic bias.](#)

4. How would you address failure of the HCPSS Office of DEI to create an inclusive environment for Jewish students where they can be valued, respected, and appreciated?

[If HCPSS Office of DEI fails to create an inclusive environment for any protected class, including Jewish students, then BOE should request Office of DEI to improve its work in this area.](#)

5. Should HCPSS policies regarding Student Expression supersede policies guaranteeing students a Safe, Supportive, and Non-Discriminatory environment?

Yes or No: **No**

Please explain your response:

A safe, supportive, and non-discriminatory environment is very important for all students and nothing should supersede it.

6. HCPSS faculty and students have held walkouts, rallies, and petitions against Israel and have pressured students to sign, attend, and/or participate. This has led to discrimination, bullying, harassment, and intimidation of Jewish students.

What will you do to protect Jewish students?:

Any activity that involves discrimination, bullying, harassment, and intimidation against any group of students should have no place in HCPSS. I will do my best to make sure this will not happen.

I confirm that the responses provided here are my official positions in seeking an elected position on the Howard County Board of Education and I understand that HoCoJAG reserves the right to share my responses, or my decision not to respond, with interested parties.

Signature: *andre gao*

Date: April 18, 2024