

## **Columbia's Village Associations**

Dorsey's Search, Harpers Choice, Hickory Ridge, Kings Contrivance,  
Long Reach, Oakland Mills, Owen Brown, River Hill, Town Center, and Wilde Lake

### **Board of Education Candidates' Forum**

**Wednesday, September 17, 2014**

**7:00 p.m. - The Other Barn**

Dear Candidate:

Thank you for accepting the invitation to participate in the Board of Education Candidates' Forum scheduled for Wednesday, September 17, 2014 at The Other Barn in Oakland Mills. The format for the forum is as follows: Each candidate will submit answers (via email) to the five questions in this letter. In addition we ask that you come prepared to discuss one of the five questions at the forum for no more than three minutes. Attendees will be given an allotted timeframe to ask questions of one or more candidates.

The following questions are representative of those submitted through Columbia's ten Village Boards of Directors. Please provide a written response to each question within this document and return via e-mail to Sandy Cederbaum, Oakland Mills Village Manager ([manager@oaklandmills.org](mailto:manager@oaklandmills.org)), **by September 12, 2014**.

Additionally, please select one of these questions where you feel you have the most unique position or subject matter expertise and be prepared to discuss it for five minutes at the forum. After each candidate discusses a question, we will open the forum to audience questions. We will provide your written responses to all of the questions below as a handout at the conclusion of the forum.

**Thank you for participating in this event.**

1. Many schools in Columbia's older villages with high proportions of students receiving Free and Reduced Meals Services (FARMS) face major challenges in reducing the significant academic gap between low and middle-income students. Studies show that FARMS rates limited to about 30 percent or less can be more effective. Would you be willing to work with the county Housing and Community Development Office to de-concentrate low-income housing and accompanying high FARMS rates? How would you approach this? Additionally, independent of housing, would you support a redistricting policy that prohibits increasing the FARMS rate of any school to greater than 30 percent and aims to reduce FARMS rates at schools in excess of 30 percent to promote a more equitable distribution?

2. The new school wellness policy and Healthy Howard are steps toward addressing the growing problem of childhood obesity as well as other health issues. What steps will you take to ensure meals and snacks provided through the schools' food service promote healthy diets? How would you incorporate more physical activity into the learning environment? What is your opinion on a move to alter school start times in order to work with adolescent body clocks?

3. Howard County schools are regarded as among the best in the country, but regardless of school record, there is a perception that some Howard County schools are better than others. What will you do to promote parity among the experience of our students across the school system? What will you do to change the perception that some schools are better than others within Columbia and Howard County?

4. While schools with economically-challenged populations receive additional funding through such programs as Title I, organizations supporting those schools like the PTA do not have a similar economic equalizer. There is a substantial difference in the fundraising capabilities of PTAs based on the financial circumstances of the populations they serve. Some school districts have addressed this through revenue sharing so PTAs can support their schools more consistently throughout the district. Would you support revenue sharing or some other approach to ensure students and their schools have similar access to support from organizations like their local PTA?

5. Since members of the Board of Education are elected to represent the community, please explain how you plan to be accountable to your constituents, giving specific examples of ways you would be responsive to parents, students, teachers, and other community members. What will you do to build relationships with your fellow board members in order to enable the Board to work together to the benefit of Howard County?

*Thank you!*

---

The Other Barn is the Oakland Mills Community Center and located at 5851 Robert Oliver Place, Columbia, MD 21045. If you need additional information please contact Village Manager, Sandy Cederbaum, at 410-730-4610 or email [manager@oaklandmills.org](mailto:manager@oaklandmills.org)