

Harford County Council



everychild.onevoice.

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Education (including institution and degree): Master of Science, 1988, Kent State University, Hydrogeology
Bachelor of Science, 1984, University of Northern Iowa, Geology

Years residing in Harford County: 20 years (Since 1990)

Ages of children and where they attend school: Alex, 8, JVES
Jack, 13, NHMS

1. What prompted you to see election to the school board?

I was raised to believe that we all have an obligation to serve our community in some capacity, and I feel that not only do my interests lie in the area of education, but my management skills allow me to bring a unique perspective to the Board of Education.

As the father of two Northern Harford middle school and elementary school age children, I believe that investing in our children's education is the most important investment we can make for our future. And that is how we should view the use of our educational tax resources – as capital for investing in our children's future. We must do so as wisely and judiciously as we can.

Since I firmly believe that one of the cornerstones of my own success was education, I am following my call to service to give back to Harford County by donating my time and expertise to support our educational efforts at the local level. I was raised in a family of educators, and I've chosen this path so that I might help others build a strong educational foundation for their children's futures.

2. Share some examples of your involvement with the public schools in Harford County or elsewhere.

My involvement with public schools started as the son of two educators. I observed first-hand the difficult job teachers have in the classroom, and the challenges faced by administrators. But more than that, I saw how a community can successfully work together for the benefit of the students.

Since my children started attending public school in Harford County, I have been a regular member of the PTA at both Jarrettsville Elementary and at North Harford Middle School, and have made substantial financial contributions to help offset decreases in funding.

Through the years, my wife and I have contributed to local schools in a variety of ways. For example, we have participated in Career Fairs at Fallston Middle School, given a talk on The Water Cycle for the 5th graders at Jarrettsville Elementary School, served on the Science Advisory Board of Harford Friends School, and donated several microscopes and other scientific teaching aides to both Jarrettsville Elementary and North Harford Middle Schools. Additionally, my wife and I wrote and published the healthy living book "I Can Live to 100 – Secrets Just for Kids" to raise funds for the playground equipment at JVES. On several occasions we have presented its message at local elementary schools, when invited.

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3. What qualifications and/or experience do you have that will help you make a positive contribution to the school board?

For the past 17 years, I have managed the finances of my company as Chief Financial Officer and Vice President. I have real-life experience in expanding and growing a business in a fiscally conservative manner, and I know what it's like to make payroll every month, decide salaries and raises, invest in IT, finance the purchase of expensive scientific equipment, and ensure that there is a profit at the end of each year. I will bring that experience to bear as a member of the Board of Education.

As an employer of scientists, I know firsthand how important it is for America to continue lead in the fields of science, engineering and technology. But, I also understand that no one can excel in their chosen field without a firm foundation in written and oral communication, and strategic thinking.

I hold a Master of Science degree from Kent State University, and I have personally managed several, large public service projects for state agencies. These projects have given me unique experience in working with multiple contractors, meeting deadlines, navigating Maryland's labyrinth of regulations, negotiating complex contracts, appreciating other team members' perspectives, and communicating complex issues to lay audiences. I know how to find the waste in project budgets. And, I also know how to get things done within a government system.

4. If elected, what are three priority issues that you will advocate as a school board member.

It is very important to me to stress that I am NOT seeking this board position because I have an agenda to promote. Rather, I am seeking this position because I feel strongly that the Board of Education could benefit from having a member with my financial skills and project management experience.

If I was forced to choose only three issues to advocate, they would be the following in order of importance.

First, is addressing the poor communication between the BOE and other government entities with which they must interact. Everyone wants to do the right thing, but it is nearly impossible to do so if you do not have a firm grip on roles and responsibilities. An inordinate amount of time and money is wasted when government sectors work at cross purposes to achieve the same goal. A good example would be the snafu regarding the proposed elementary schools on Red Pump and Shucks Roads.

Second, are the operational and capital improvement budgets of the school system. Sound financial decisions can only be made if the existing poor communication between different county groups (and the State) is first resolved. Deciding what monies are spent, and exactly how they are spent is a critical task for the BOE, and I plan on giving this issue my undivided attention.

Third, is the curriculum. Let's face it, all monies spent by the Harford County School System are supposed to result in the education of our children. Sometimes, we tend to get a little bored with the tried and true, and are lulled into trying the exotic. I believe in getting the basics right, and then considering alternative areas of study or methods of teaching. As an employer, I cannot tell you how many resumes I receive from college graduates with multiple misspellings and grammatical errors. These are people applying for a high-paying position, and I have to wonder where the focus was in their language arts programs.

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My position on other various issues under the authority of the Board is discussed on my webpage at www.joehau.com.

5. Based on your knowledge and perceptions what are the strengths and weaknesses of HCPS? Are there programs, activities or budgetary items that you would add or eliminate.

Reiterating my answer in Question #4, I believe that the greatest weakness Harford County Public School system is its poor communication with other areas of County and State government. It is well known that there is a complex relationship between the Board of Education, HCPS staff, the Harford County Council, the State of Maryland, and our constituency, itself. When a difficult decision is made, it is important that all stakeholders can participate, or at least understand the decision-making process, and there appears to be a lack of information, and even transparency. Our children's' education is no place for turf wars.

The greatest strength of the HCPS is its collective dedicated teachers and parents. Talking about roles and responsibilities and responsible budgets is necessary, but without our teachers and parents, Harford County School System would not be the fantastic entity that it is. I look forward to expanding the relationship between our schools and community and think we can do no more important work on behalf of our children.

At this time, I think it would be irresponsible of me to advocate the addition or elimination of programs or activities. I will need the opportunity to fully understand the current budget and short- and long-term plans of the BOE before making wholesale recommendations for change. I will, however, strongly voice the opinions of my constituents, if I am elected as a member of the BOE.

6. Please list three ways parental / community involvement can be utilized effectively in our schools. For this question, let me just provide two personal examples and suggestions I have based on those experiences. When my oldest son was in 4th grade, I offered to come into his classroom at any time and give a talk on any earth science topic. I was told by the teacher that she would have to check with the Assistant Principal to get permission and determine whether the talk I would give fit into the curriculum. Since part of the curriculum for 4th grade at that time was Earth Science, I was dumbfounded when told there was no time available for such a talk. Look, if we do not snap up opportunities for real scientists (and mathematicians, and accountants and police officers, etc.) to come into our children's' classroom to speak, we are missing a wealth of opportunities for our children and our schools. This is a prime example where the "system" is getting in the way of "educating." Second, all schools have little capital projects that would benefit the students, but are not accommodated in the budget. It surprises me that the schools have no system for reaching out to local businesses with requests for help. If the project is small, and the cost is low, I would expect many businesses to respond positively to such requests. Thirdly, I will make it my policy to attend, on a mutually agreeable schedule, local and regional PTA, or other community based meetings, for the specific purpose of listening to our community, debating, and preparing formal Board initiatives. And, I will follow through in presenting your views to the Board. I truly intend to be the non-partisan voice of the parents and community organizations in District D.
7. Please use the space provided below to share any additional information not covered in the previous questions.

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I have real management experience, and I am not afraid to get in there and roll up my sleeves, even when my decisions might not make me popular.

As a businessman, consultant, and entrepreneur, I have helped grow my business, Chesapeake Environmental Management, to a \$3 million firm, employing 22 staff. During this time, we have consistently received awards that recognize accomplishments in business growth, increased employment, creative business strategies, financially outperforming competitors, client satisfaction, and demonstrating leadership.

But, the awards I am most proud of are the awards that recognize our service to the community and our educational and philanthropic acts. In 2009, Stephanie, our co-workers, and I were honored to receive a Harford Award from Harford Community College, the Harford County Office of Economic Development and the Harford County Chamber of Commerce. This award was evaluated on criteria that included support of education, business growth, increased employment, community service, environmental sensitivity, use of technology, creative business strategies and enhancement of the county's business climate.