

Harford County PTA

Candidate Questionnaire

Robert (Bob) Frisch  
2606 Franklinville Road  
Joppa, MD 21085  
(410)538-8629

Edgewood High School (73)  
Towson University Bachelor of Science - Social Science  
College of Notre Dame of MD - Teacher Certifications in Special Education and Social Studies  
(36 Masters credits – Leadership in Teaching program)

National and court recognized expert on highway safety related topics.  
Numerous law enforcement and Criminal Justice related training programs.

Harford County (Joppa) resident for 47 years

Two children:

Tim and David - both attended Joppatowne Elementary and Magnolia Middle Schools

Tim attended Calvert Hall College High School

David attended Baltimore Lutheran High School

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

First let me acknowledge that a comparison of State data indicates that Harford County has one of the better school systems in Maryland. However, there is room for much improvement. We have the ability, with the right direction and leadership, to again become a premiere system ranking alongside school systems in Montgomery and Howard Counties.

I listened to the concerns of family and friends with children in HCPS regarding the lack of responsiveness, accessibility, and accountability to parents and classroom teachers by the current school board. After my own inquiry I too had similar concerns.

I had been giving serious thought to seeking a seat on the school board but was finally convinced when my wife and I learned we were going to be grandparents. I want HCPS to be the best possible school system when my grandson arrives for school. I believe that I possess the skills necessary to assist the school board in achieving that goal.

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

My wife and I were actively involved in the PTA while our children attended HCPS.

My wife served as Treasurer for most years and continued to conduct tax audits for the individual schools and the HCCPTA for many years thereafter. We served as classroom volunteers, trip chaperones, organized fund raising activities and participated in many other school functions.

I am currently a Social Studies teacher at Kenwood High School in Baltimore County. I serve as a supervising classroom teacher for those completing teacher certifications through various local colleges and universities.

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

Before entering the teaching profession I completed a career in the Baltimore City Police Department. Through my varied assignments have acquired a wide path of experience and skill sets, which I believe are necessary to be an effective member of the school board. Supervisory, management, unit command, budgetary, and training responsibilities give me the needed experience and perspective to look at issues from many points of view and reach logical conclusions.

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

I want to stress the need for legitimate stakeholder input and consideration at all levels of the school system. Stakeholder frustration with the anonymity of the Board of Education and lack of responsiveness by school system administration were driving forces in moving to an elected school board. The public has spoken and we must respond to the community accordingly.

The Board of Education must return to its' mission of leadership for HCPS. Board members need to be more active in setting policy and providing guidance to the Superintendent and central office staff concerning the major operations and policies of the system. The school board can no longer afford an approach of simple expectation, instead we must adopt a willingness to inspect the actions of the Superintendent and central office staff to ensure our goals are being met.

Our schools must provide alternative technical and trade programs in all high schools to train and assist students who choose not to attend college so that they enter the workforce

with skills employers want and need. We must examine current course offerings, requirements, for promotion and graduation to ensure that students are getting the kind of instruction that will prepare them for the demands of higher education and the foundation necessary to enter the work force beyond minimum wage jobs.

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 like to add or eliminate?

The single greatest influence on student achievement are parents and then the classroom teacher. The Board must find ways to attract and retain the best qualified classroom teachers. You get what you pay for. The Board needs to show leadership in this regard. To continue down the road of recent decisions concerning adequate staff compensation presents the real risk that Harford County schools will not be able to recruit the best and will lose quality teachers to other jurisdictions. Doing nothing leaves us with the potential that we do not improve as a system but fall farther behind other counties in the quality of education offered to our children

Reduce the central office bureaucracy and return those positions and cost savings to the classroom where there is the most cost benefit relationship to students is realized. Institute a personnel policy of "Always a teacher" for certified staff. All school system administrators to some degree must be regularly active in the classroom. Keeping ones' feet firmly planted in the classroom makes administrators see and live with the consequences of policies and programs they institute, results in smaller class size, greater use of resources, and makes the best use of teaching skills possessed by administrative staff.

Aggressively examine every line item in the budget. At an operating budget of almost two hundred forty million dollars this year there are expenditures that could be put off or eliminated altogether. Fiscal responsibility and justification of expenditures must become the standard. We must move away from a practice of purchasing unnecessary wants and luxuries, such as plasma screens and write boards, to one of what is actually needed and most likely to be used to maximum benefit for students. Revise current policy to require Board approval on all expenditures of twenty thousand dollars or more in order to more carefully control spending. This is the same level of over site the Federal government uses for BRAC purchases and related construction. The tax payers deserve nothing less.

6. Please list three ways parental/community involvement can be utilized effectively in our schools.

Parents and associated groups want to do more than be trip chaperones and organize fundraisers. They want to be equal partners in their neighborhood schools and do more to help educate their children. Parents represent a valuable and frequently underutilized resource to provide access to community leaders, civic organizations, businesses, equipment, social, and financial services which can be used to enhance and support the education of our children. Parents also want to be informed in advance and be party to decisions regarding theatrical productions and policy decisions that may run contrary to their personal beliefs.

Individual schools, the Superintendent, and the Board should be the subject of ongoing evaluation by parents and students through the use of electronic surveys and other questionnaire media to provide real-time feedback on specific and overall performance.

7. Please use the space provided below to share any additional information not covered in the previous questions.

I am not a politician and I have no political ambitions beyond the Board of Education. I do not come to this election with any political agenda or ulterior motive than to help make Harford County Public Schools become even better than they already are. I have the skills and commitment to do the work necessary to accomplish that goal.

In part I came to the decision to run for the Board because I am a true believer in the concept of ordinary citizens volunteering to help their communities, that we can do a better job than political appointees and career politicians. I was not recruited by any group or elected official in order to be their surrogate or mouthpiece on the Board. I decided to volunteer because our community needed a voice. I am here to listen first and then speak for them.

I am an experienced teacher that will bring a much needed classroom perspective to the Board. Throughout my law enforcement and teaching careers I have developed the ability to work with all kinds of people under some of the most difficult circumstances. While in positions of power and authority I never lost sight of or respect for those that were actually doing the real work and always considered my primary responsibility to help them meet theirs.

Intelligence, experience, commitment, integrity, and character are the core of real leadership. Together we can do what is right for our children, the parents who support them, the teachers who are actually doing the work in our classrooms, and tax payers who deserve to know that their tax dollars are being spent wisely. I look forward to working with you and thank you for your support.