



2026 Washington County Board of Commissioners Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATE : _____ John Franklin Barr

OFFICE SOUGHT : **Washington County Board of Commissioners**

CAMPAIGN ADDRESS: _____ 12404 Rocky Fountain Lane Clear Spring, MD 21722

PHONE NUMBER(S): 301-573-4840

CAMPAIGN EMAIL: _____ jbarr@ellsworthelectric.net

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: _____

*I confirm that the responses provided here are my official positions in seeking local office and I understand that **WCTA, WCESP & WCASA** reserves the right to share my responses with members and interested parties.*

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE: *John F. Barr* DATE SUBMITTED: 3-30-26

*Candidates: To be considered for a recommendation, you must indicate your response to each of the questions. You may use more space than is provided to elaborate on your answers and provide clarification, explanation, and other context, but please be certain to clearly indicate the questions(s) to which you refer. Please return your completed and signed questionnaire to **WCTA, WCESP & WCASA***

Education Funding and Local Budgets:

1. Do you commit to prioritizing public education funding in future county budgets?

What are your top three budget priorities for the public school system?

- 1) Teachers Compensation
- 2) School infrastructure (buildings, grounds, maintenance)
- 3) School programs

2. How do you plan to fund public school priorities? What are your thoughts on the current county tax and revenue structure and any actions you would take to update the tax code to promote fairness and equity?

- The income tax rate should have never been reduced in 2019/2020. The county has lost millions of dollars over the past 6 years due to disparity grand funds lost. The new rate in Maryland is now 3.3 per hundred making it more of an offset.

3. How you would utilize your budget authority to address shortfalls facing our schools if the state or federal government reduces their commitment(s)?

- #1 – public education
- #2 – public safety
- #3 – services/infrastructure

4. In many schools, educators are dealing with high class sizes and caseloads. How will you help address critical concerns with educator recruitment and retention in order to ensure we can increase staffing to reduce class sizes and caseloads?

- Hire more aides and special facilitators to assist teachers with the growing needs of young children having difficulties in the classroom.

5. Do you commit to honoring the role of your elected body in upholding the policy and funding mandates associated with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future?

X

Yes

No

Additional Comments:

The State may need to furlough some of their requirements and phase in over a longer period of time.

Public Funding for Private Schools

6. Do you support or oppose allocating public funding to non-public school students through voucher programs?

Support- ONLY ON A LIMITED BASIS Oppose

Additional Comments:

- Support only on a limited basis- maximum of 50% of cost of public education.

7. Do you support or oppose allowing non-public school students to participate in public school extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)?

Support Oppose

Additional Comments:

- Liability issues and authority over control and logistics

Collective Bargaining

8. Do you support or oppose school employees gaining the right to strike?

Support Oppose

Additional Comments: Collective bargaining but not strike.

- I don't believe this to be in the best interest of the students and their well being.

9. What is your understanding of the nature of the relationship between the Board of Education, Superintendent, county government, and union as it relates to negotiations, budget development, and administration of schools? How do you see yourself utilizing the power of your office in working within this structure?

- The working relationship can and could be much better. Nearly 4 years ago I advocated that the BOCC and School Board meet bi-monthly. This only happened 2 times in the past 3-1/2 years (due to personalities, time, elections).
- Very important that key leadership stay focused and communications between Superintendent / President of School Board / President of BOCC, County Administrator w/ budget finance directors.

10. How do you balance honoring ratified contracts with public employees in the county, including educators, with other priorities, especially in tight fiscal times?

- Always striving to stay competitive w/local and surrounding areas regarding base pay, retirement/pensions and very good benefits.

Additional Comments:

11. Do you commit to meeting with union leadership to talk about the needs facing our schools (including salary and staffing levels) and the revenue or other budget actions necessary to meet those needs?

Yes

No

Additional Comments:

Privatization and Support for Education Support Professionals

12. Are you in favor of contracting out custodial, cafeteria, and maintenance services rather than have those services provided by Board of Education employees?

Support

Oppose

Additional Comments:

- Experience tells me many of the support staff within the school systems are key to teacher morale and have great impact of students, particularly with those students that can't function in a traditional classroom.

13. Too many ESPs work second jobs and struggle to provide for their families, buy homes, save for their futures, and afford community or four-year college tuition for their children to learn a trade and plan a career. The looming threats of privatization by school districts, which would import even lower-paid workers from outside areas, risk the stability of schools and communities and further undermine the value of ESPs and their jobs.

ESP's across the state are organizing to build presence, strength, and power in a campaign focused on a bill of rights that defines the issues long nagging these dedicated employees and now threatening not only the recruitment of new employees but the retention of dedicated veteran employees. You can read about the [ESP Bill of Rights here](#).

Do you support the ESP Bill of Rights?

Support

Oppose

Additional Comments:

14. If elected, how you would use your office to help make the ESP Bill of Rights a reality in the county?

- Honor and support the valuable services they provide. **ALL** BOCC and School Board members must extend support and attend all efforts to ESP personnel.

Additional Information

Along with this completed questionnaire, please provide an up-to-date bio or resume as well as a current list of endorsements for this election cycle.