



2026 Washington County Board of Commissioners Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATE NAME: Jonathan Fish

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

CAMPAIGN ADDRESS: _____

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*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: Jonathan Fish DATE SUBMITTED: 03/20/2026

*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?

Yes, education and childcare are top priorities for me.

1. Teacher and staff compensation. 2. Funding initiatives to improve student educational outcomes. 3. Facility maintenance and improvements

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?

I see that the 2027FY budget has a recommendation of no increases to the department of education budget despite rising costs across the board in the economy. I know DoE already represents the largest segment of the county budget but I do not feel that teacher and staff pay, student outcomes, facility quality and child care/extracurriculars are at the level they could be at. I want to aggressively pursue funding options especially if there are federal or state grant opportunities that we are not taking full advantage of. I know our county is very resistant to taxation but there have been several counties that have seen a lot of success in implementing a minor tax solely for education, sometimes exclusively for teacher wages. I believe in approaching this problem from as many angles as possible to make it work. I do not believe that citizens can opt out of funding public education because it is a vital public service that elevates and benefits us collectively in a multitude of unexpected ways regardless of age or parental status.

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

This is definitely going to be a critical issue and is in fact already happening. I think now is the time to come together locally and figure out the real cost of maintaining a community that is not just surviving, but thriving. Underfunding of education is a major factor in why we are in this current crisis nationwide and I do not want it to continue to be the place where cuts are made when things are tight. I want to budget according to our community's hierarchy of needs and education/childcare is a top priority.

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?

Recruiting and retaining quality educators has to be the backbone of improving educational outcomes. If teachers are overworked and underpaid they cannot be expected to spin gold from straw. These conditions lead to educators of 10+ years deciding to leave the career because it is untenable and the loss of educational experience that leaves with them is invaluable. I think we can work on increasing our available funds as well as examine our facilities and distribution of resources to figure out how we can address this crisis that is making education such a difficult and stressful career.

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?

Yes No Additional Comments:

Public Funding for Private Schools

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

Support Oppose Additional Comments: I think education is a shared responsibility and resource of our community.

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: I would like to be inclusive towards all kids. I understand this may be an issue because of costs but I would rather the adults figure out how we can let all kids enjoy the activity rather than try to ban them.

Collective Bargaining

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

Support Oppose Additional Comments:

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?

As I understand, the Board of Education and Superintendent work together in administration and budget proposals. The county government receives reports and recommendations for budget and some administration like zoning from them. I believe the commissioners may either accept the superintendent's budget or ask for a reduction but there may be some stipulation that the commissioners cannot give more than is requested by the superintendent which seems like a source of some problems. The union is independent and is able to bring the concerns and needs of its members to any of the other three. I will continue to reiterate that as a citizen with three kids in our schools and a background in education with lots of personal connections to educators, quality education and childcare are always something I will fight to improve.

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

People come first. I know in our current FY2027 budget the commission managed to divert 9 million towards finishing a brand new public health and safety facility. I tend to approach this based on a hierarchy of human needs, so if money were tight then a contract concerning people's wages takes higher precedence than facility construction.

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: Yes please! I have so much I would like to discuss and ask questions about.

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: Difficult question

with my current level of knowledge. I lean towards keeping all staff as BoE employees but I know when schools do not have a good student count to facility operations cost ratio that sometimes creative solutions are needed to keep the lights on. Ideally I want strong, fully BoE staffed schools with a student count that justifies the facility expense.

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.

ESPs 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](#).

4

Do you support the ESP Bill of Rights?

Support Oppose Additional Comments: Yes everyone

deserves dignity and a livable wage in their career.

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

This is definitely something that I would come to the ESP and Educators union to discuss ideas for. I think the people who are in these jobs day-to-day have a much better idea of what tangible steps could be taken to make their bill of rights a reality. My job as a representative is to listen, synthesize the recommendations and implement an action plan with clear steps.

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.