



Questionnaire for School Board Candidates Seeking Endorsement

Fairfax County Democratic Committee—2023 Elections

Please return to FCDC electronically by email to your filing point of contact when you file your other filing materials and no later than 5 pm on April 6, 2023.

Name: **Hamid Munir**

District or At-Large: AT-LARGE

Provide a brief background statement that demonstrates why you believe you are best suited to serve on the Fairfax County School Board. This should include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Why you decided to run for this office
- Your professional, educational, and public service background
- Your background in education (as a student, teacher, staff, etc.)
- Any personal connections to Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)
- What you believe the role and responsibility of a School Board member to be

I am a longtime county resident and a parent of children in Fairfax County Public Schools who has worked to build a bright future for the children of Fairfax County through active membership in the Fairfax County Democratic Committee, through community leadership and organizational advocacy, and through consistent support for ensuring that all children have a quality education and have both their physical and mental well-being need met.

I am an immigrant American who has overcome many challenges to earn undergraduate and master degrees from George Mason University and to become a successful IT professional. Fairfax County public school gave me an education that put me on the path of success, and I am grateful that my own children are now in Fairfax County public schools.

I care about public education, health, and community. That's why I have volunteered to lead multiple organizations and initiatives for our community. I have been a leader in the Parent Teacher Association at the local, regional, and statewide level. I serve on the boards of Celebrate Fairfax and Stop Child Abuse Now (SCAN) of Northern Virginia. The next four years will be a critically important period for the Fairfax County School Board as it confronts key issues, many of which predate the COVID-19 pandemic, but that were exacerbated by it. We must build a platform to take our great Fairfax County schools to the next level of world-class education. On the board, I will continue to advocate for our kids and our parents. I will advocate for better pay for our teachers and better technical infrastructure and resources that can help our teachers teach effectively, helping our kids learn, and supporting hybrid learning when necessary. I also want to address inequalities among our schools, working

to build up schools to the highest quality levels. And I will be an unwavering advocate for ensuring that all our children, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, or need of special services receive a first rate education.

Answer the following questions. Please try to limit responses to each question to no more than half of a single-spaced page.

1. Please list and explain your top five priorities if elected.
 - a. Help kids learn to be critical thinkers, to help understand their world and to share and accept many viewpoints.
 - b. Enhance mental health support for students
 - c. Promote programs to prevent bullying, harassment, substance abuse, and hate speech
 - d. Expand year-round literacy and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) programs, with a focus on widening the interest and participation of under-represented students.
 - e. Ensure we attract and retain the best educators through competitive pay and planning time

2. Over the last few years, there has been increased scrutiny on public schools. Concurrently, nationwide we are seeing attrition among teachers and staff at exceptionally high levels and unusually high numbers of teachers terminating their contracts mid-year. How can we ensure that FCPS operates in a way that attracts and retains a robust, exceptional, and diverse teaching and administrative force?

FCPS must have high quality faculty and staff to continue being one of the top school districts in the nation. This requires providing competitive salaries and benefits to staff along with acknowledgement of their value to the school district. According to the 2023 WABE-Guide, FCPS teacher average salaries are lower than Arlington, Alexandria City and Falls Church City school districts which makes it even more challenging to keep teachers in FCPS instead of going to a neighboring school district. Also, one main reason teachers are leaving school districts is the current negative environment instigated by anti-public education disruptors. FCPS must provide positive and safe environments in order for effective teaching to take place and having an enhanced workplace environment must be promoted in order to attract and maintain diverse and

engaged employees. I look forward to being part of the initiative to ensure we attract and retain the best educators through competitive pay and appropriate planning time.

3. Fairfax County Public Schools serves over 180,000 students from diverse backgrounds including religious and ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA+ students, students with disabilities, profoundly gifted students, twice exceptional students, and students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. How will you ensure that every FCPS student is “met by name and by need?”

It’s important that each student have their needs met where they are – both academically and emotionally. While FCPS has strived to accomplish this, there is more to be done. Having knowledge of student needs and supports that are needed for student success will provide the appropriate planning to accomplish these goals. I look forward to being part of the change.

4. While the school board is a nonpartisan role, in the current political climate, public education has been subject to a great deal of partisan politicization and FCPS has seen a great deal of national media coverage. Are you prepared for this? How will you manage this both professionally and personally?

I know that none of the current school board members were prepared for the partisan politicization of education and schools, public attacks on school staff, administrators, and school board members this past term. However, lessons have been learned. Providing facts and transparency is key to building trust with the community. I have always been truthful and search for solutions in both my professional and personal life and I will continue to find common ground with truth as the foundation of relationships going forward.

5. What challenges need to be overcome for FCPS to close opportunity and achievement gaps in accordance with the One Fairfax policy framework?

One Fairfax policy provides a framework to address racial and social equity. FCPS new strategic planning process takes these issues into consideration for the future of FCPS. I look forward to seeing the new plan implemented so we can move forward in making sure that every student has an opportunity to be successful – not only during their K-12 education, but after graduation.

6. What are some things you want to learn more about that can help you serve the school division?

There's always more to learn in order to be effective in your position. I look forward to learning more about curriculum policy and being able to expand year-round literacy and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) programs, with a focus on widening the interest and participation of under-represented students.

7. Members of the School Board are expected to engage with and take input from students, parents, teachers, and other community members. How would you stay connected with the school community to ensure FCPS's governance is in line with community priorities?

I currently participate on several volunteer boards with a focus on connecting with our community to identify any needs or issues residents are concerned about. Through my service in PTA, I have worked with schools in Fairfax County and neighboring school districts with an understanding of their needs. I am engaged not only with my children's schools, but with other schools in the community to support them and to listen to their concerns. As a school board at-large member, I look forward to continuing my engagement with schools, their administration, and parent groups.
