



2026 Board of County Commissioners
Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATE: Joshua Kyte

OFFICE SOUGHT: District 3 Commissioner

CAMPAIGN ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

PHONE NUMBER(S): [REDACTED]

CAMPAIGN EMAIL: [REDACTED]

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: ElectJoshuaKyte.com

I confirm that the responses provided here are my official positions in seeking local office and I understand that EASMC reserves the right to share my responses with members and interested parties.

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE: _____ DATE SUBMITTED: _____

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 question(s) to which you refer. Please return your completed and signed questionnaire to EASMC.

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. Public education is one of the most important investments a county can make. A strong school system supports our kids, strengthens our workforce, and will help keep the quality of life that makes St. Mary's County a great place to live and raise my family. As Commissioner, I would prioritize responsible and sustainable funding for our public schools while ensuring our tax dollars are spent effectively and transparently.

My 3 top priorities would be: Teacher/Staff recruitment and retention, Reducing class sizes, and Maintaining and Improving school facilities and resources.

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?

Funding school priorities starts with making sure the county is spending taxpayer dollars responsibly. Education is one of the most important things we fund, but we also have to make sure that money is being used effectively and not wasted.

Another part of the solution is growing our economy the right way. When we bring in responsible development and new businesses, we grow the tax base and generate more revenue without putting more of the burden on the people who already live here.

I also think the county's tax structure should be reviewed from time to time to make sure it's fair and still makes sense for our community, while keeping taxes reasonable for our residents.

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

If the state or federal government reduces funding, the county is going to have to take a hard look at the budget and focus on what matters most. Our schools are a major priority, and we should do everything we reasonably can to protect funding that directly impacts students and teachers.

We also have to be honest about the county's financial limits. I believe in working closely with the school system to understand their biggest needs and making sure the money we provide is being used as effectively as possible. It's about supporting our schools while still being responsible with taxpayer dollars.

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?

A big part of dealing with class sizes and caseloads is making sure we can attract and keep good teachers. If we want strong schools, we have to make sure St. Mary's County is a place where educators want to work, live and build a career.

That means staying competitive on pay and benefits, but it also means making sure teachers feel supported and have the resources they need to do their jobs. As a Commissioner, I'd work with the Board of Education to keep recruitment and retention a priority and make sure the funding we provide is being used where it helps students and teachers the most.

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

How can you help with the shortfall?

If there's a shortfall, the county will have to look closely at the budget and make sure we're focusing on the things that matter most. Our schools are a big part of that. I believe in working with the school system, understanding where the real needs are, and making sure the money we're spending is actually helping students and teachers. At the same time, we still have to be responsible with taxpayer dollars and make sure we're planning for the long term.

6. Please discuss your philosophy related to charter schools. Do you believe they should be expanded in our county public school structure?

My main focus is making sure every kid in St. Mary's County has access to a good public education. Charter schools are still public schools, and if they meet the same standards and accountability as the rest of the system, they can be another option for families.

I don't think we should expand charter schools just to expand them. Any decision like that should come down to whether it actually helps students and fits into the overall school system. We also have to make sure it's not taking resources away from the rest of our public schools.

7. How will your budget address increased needs for mental health supports for students and educators in our community, where mental health access is so limited?

Mental health is something our schools are dealing with more and more, and it's clear the need is there. Students and teachers both need access to better support.

From the county side, that means working with the school system to make sure we're funding things like counselors and support staff where we can. We should also be looking at partnerships with local providers and organizations to help fill some of the gaps.

Like everything else in the budget, it comes down to making sure we're focusing resources where they'll actually help people the most.

8. What is your opinion on local efforts to create and support community schools?

I think community schools can be a positive thing if they're done right. Schools already play a big role in the community, and when they can help connect students and families with things like tutoring, counseling, or other services, it can make a real difference.

We also have to make sure it's something that actually works for our county and is sustainable long term. If it's helping students succeed and supporting families without creating unnecessary bureaucracy or costs, then it's something worth supporting. The focus should always be on what helps students the most.

9. SMCPS is in a period of enrollment decline. Our newest building is 10 years old. What should influence any decisions to redistrict?

Redistricting decisions should come down to what makes the most sense for students and families while also making sure we're using our school buildings and resources efficiently. With enrollment declining, it's important to look at things like school capacity, enrollment trends, and transportation.

Just as important is making sure the community is part of the conversation. Redistricting can have a big impact on families, so it needs to be handled carefully and with input from the people it affects.

Public Funding for Private Schools:

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

_____ SUPPORT ___X___ OPPOSE

Additional comments:

Public education should remain the priority for our education funding. The majority of students in St. Mary’s County attend public schools, and our focus should be on making sure those schools have the resources they need to succeed.

I understand that some families choose different educational paths for their children, and parents should always be involved in those decisions. But when it comes to public funding, I believe our first responsibility is to support the public school system that serves the vast majority of students in our county.

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

___X___ SUPPORT _____ OPPOSE

Additional comments:

I support allowing non-public school students to participate in extracurricular activities if space allows. Things like sports and clubs are important for kids, and being able to participate helps keep them connected to their community.

Students enrolled in the public school system should always come first. It also shouldn’t take away opportunities or resources from them.

Collective Bargaining:

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

___X___ SUPPORT _____ OPPOSE

Additional comments:

I support school employees having the right to strike as part of the collective bargaining process. Teachers and school staff should have the ability to stand up for fair pay and working conditions.

A strike should always be the last option. The goal should be to work things out at the table so it doesn't disrupt students and families. Good faith negotiations should always come first.

13. 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?

My understanding is that the Board of Education and the Superintendent run the school system and handle negotiations with employee unions. The county government's role is mainly through the budget, since the funding decisions we make directly affect what the school system is able to do.

As a Commissioner, my job would be to work with the Board of Education and the Superintendent, listen to what their needs are, and make responsible decisions during the budget process. We're not at the negotiating table, but the county still plays an important role in making sure the school system has the resources it needs while also being mindful of the taxpayers.

14. 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?

X _____ YES _____ NO

Additional comments:

Racial and Social Justice:

15. EASMC supports honesty in education. To encourage critical thinking within our classrooms, we believe educators should have professional autonomy on how to implement curriculum to meet the needs of our students. Do you support or oppose this position? How would you respond to political pressure threatening that professional autonomy?

X _____ SUPPORT _____ OPPOSE

Additional comments:

I support giving teachers the professional autonomy to do their jobs and teach the curriculum in a way that works for their students. Teachers are trained professionals, and they should be trusted to use their judgment in the classroom.

I also think parents should be able to understand what their kids are being taught. But we shouldn't be turning classrooms into political fights. Teachers should be able to focus on teaching and helping students learn without that kind of pressure.

16. Do you support or oppose a curriculum that reflects the perspective and background of diverse learners? How would you respond to political pressure requesting changes to content and curriculum?

SUPPORT OPPOSE

Additional comments:

I support a curriculum that reflects the different backgrounds and experiences of students. Learning about different perspectives helps students better understand the world around them.

If concerns about curriculum come up, those discussions should go through the Board of Education and the normal review process. I don't think politics should be driving what's taught in the classroom. Our focus should be on making sure students get a strong education and are prepared for the future.

17. What specific policy goals and objectives will you pursue aimed at addressing racial and social justice, including support of diversity, equity, and inclusion for all students and providing equitable access, opportunities, resources, and supports?

My focus is making sure every student in St. Mary's County has the same opportunity to succeed. That means making sure our schools have the resources they need, supporting our teachers, and making sure students can access the programs and support services that help them learn.

From the county side, that also means supporting things like mental health resources, safe schools, and strong partnerships between the school system and the community. At the end of the day, it's about making sure every student has the support and opportunity they need to succeed.

18. Immigration enforcement is a matter of federal jurisdiction. What is your position on how local law enforcement should interact with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement? And how will you work to ensure school grounds, bus stops, and other school spaces are safe havens against immigration enforcement actions?

Immigration enforcement is a federal responsibility. Local law enforcement's main job is keeping our communities safe, and that should be their focus. I believe they should cooperate

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](#).

Do you support the ESP Bill of Rights?

SUPPORT OPPOSE

Additional Comments:

Education support professionals are a big part of what keeps our schools running every day. Custodians, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, and maintenance staff do a lot of important work, and schools wouldn't function without them.

When people doing those jobs are struggling to make ends meet, that's something we should be paying attention to. I support efforts like the ESP Bill of Rights that recognize the value of the work they do and push for fair treatment and stability in those jobs. Supporting the people who keep our schools running helps our students and our community.

22. Please share how you would use your office to help make the ESP Bill of Rights a reality in the county.

As a Commissioner, most of the role the county has is through the budget. I would work to make sure the school system has the resources it needs to support the people who keep our schools running.

Education support professionals are a big part of that. Custodians, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, and maintenance staff all play an important role in our schools. I'd support working with the Board of Education and the school system to make sure those positions are supported and treated fairly. Supporting ESPs helps keep our schools running and supports the community too.

Essay Questions:

A. Why are you running for this position? What personal attributes, characteristics, and experiences make you the right candidate for this position?

I'm running for County Commissioner to make sure St. Mary's County stays on the right path, not just for today, but for generations to come.

I was born here and raised here, and this community means a lot to me. I love this county and everything it represents, and I want to do my part to preserve what makes St. Mary's special while helping build a strong future for the families who live here today and the ones who will call it home tomorrow.

That means listening to the voices of our entire community and making decisions that reflect the needs, concerns, and values of the people who call this county home. County government should be focused on serving the people who live here and making thoughtful, practical decisions about our future.

We also have a responsibility to spend taxpayer money wisely. That means having a clear and thoughtful plan so we can protect our quality of life while preparing the county for the decades ahead. I believe in a common sense approach to leadership. Listening to people, working together, and focusing on solutions that actually work for our community.

B. What are the top three things you would like to accomplish in the next four years if you are elected to [county commission/BOE]?

If elected, there are a few things I'd like to focus on over the next four years.

First, making sure we're managing growth the right way. St. Mary's County is growing and changing, and we need to make sure development is planned carefully so we protect our quality of life and the character of our communities.

Second, making sure we're being responsible with taxpayer dollars. The county needs to spend money wisely and have a clear plan so we can continue supporting things like schools, public safety, and infrastructure.

Third, making sure St. Mary's County remains a place where families and working people can afford to live. That means looking at issues like housing and economic opportunity so people who live and work here can continue to call this county home.

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.