

2026 Board of County Commissioners  
Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATE: Wendy Smith Rice Morton

OFFICE SOUGHT: County Commissioner District 1

CAMPAIGN ADDRESS:

[REDACTED]

PHONE NUMBER(S):

[REDACTED]

CAMPAIGN EMAIL:

[REDACTED]

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: \_\_\_\_\_

*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: \_Wendy Rice-Morton\_\_\_\_ DATE SUBMITTED: 3/19/2026\_\_\_\_

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 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, I commit to prioritizing public education funding in the future county budget. My top three budget priorities are academic achievement, graduation rate increase, and attendance made a priority.

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 plan to fund public school priorities with grants, federal money, fundraising, and other funds we can access from and promote school success. The tax code should promote fairness and equality by big corporations and wealthy individuals to pay their share of more compensation. This will help improve the quality of life through the Districts in the county.

3. How would you utilize your budget authority to address shortfalls facing our schools if the state or federal government reduces their commitment(s)? The budget authority helps address the shortfalls. The St. Mary's County needs to make other arrangements to support the county and the school system. It is an outstanding situation because the expiring federal funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Acts should be observed throughout so harmful cuts do not occur without the organization.

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? In my decades of working with and for the Board of Education we have almost always been working through these challenges. Examples, First, year teachers- departments ends should make sure they have a mentor to work with them the whole year to advise them about proper management challenges. Time management- lesson plans, counseling, time to reflect on mistakes and make corrections without getting penalized.

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

How can you help with the shortfall?

In my research I found that the Maryland General Assembly passed the blueprint for Maryland's Future since 2021 to transform public education and improve the student body to world Board of Ed. In conclusion, the blueprint will increase state funding for education for the next 10 years. This will help all students, especially those who have been historically underserved.

6. Please discuss your philosophy related to charter schools. Do you believe they should be expanded in our county public school structure? The Charter School in St. Mary's County should expand to meet the needs through continued growth and development of the students. Yes, the structure of the charter school is important to the whole county in which this ensures parents and students freedom to chose a specific design format and progressive learning program. Through

personal experience the lottery drawing to choose students has helped my family endemically because my nephew was a student at CPCS for 8 years while there he became an outstanding student, intellectually, emotionally and socially with a positive outlook on his future.

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?

The budget will assess the students in mental health aspect by targeting the necessity of funding needs of the proposed rate of the funds allotted. I will work with the student body, diversify more

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

My opinion about the local efforts are to improve student outcome through empowering the community, developing stronger neighbors and reducing achievement gaps. The school's involvement in increasing better grades and test scores. Physical aspects and expansion of people within a community helps the students to become a hub for academic success.

9. SMCPS is in a period of enrollment decline. Our newest building is 10 years old. What should influence any decisions to redistrict? Key components are balancing enrollment, maximizing facility utilization and focusing on the School Boundary policy and Regulations that the Superintendent's Recommendation as accomplished in February 3, 2026.

**Public Funding for Private Schools:**

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

\_\_\_\_\_ SUPPORT  OPPOSE

Additional comments: Voucher programs may drain resources from the Public Schools

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

\_\_\_\_\_ SUPPPORT  OPPOSE

Additional comments: It would beneficial for the children in the Public School to be able to experience everything that is available in extracurricular activies.

**Collective Bargaining:**

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

SUPPORT \_\_\_\_\_ OPPOSE

Additional comments:

Employees have given and sacrificed their own life daily to improve the students that they instruct and teach. They should have support to increase their pay as well as; the St. Mary's county Board of Education providing them with stability while striking.

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? The nature of the relationship between all of these groups and organization seem to be functioning together to develop budgets and do administrated duties. Working with office workers and administration of the school system would make the structure complete.

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?

YES  NO

Additional comments: Learning from the union leadership will improve and engage in numerous conversations. We could gather information, and evaluate the salary and staffing levels.

### **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?

SUPPORT  OPPOSE

Additional comments: Honest is very important to me in daily endeavors. We should have complete professional autonomy while not being allowed to be politically pressured. Do not allow individuals to engage in implementing the needs of our students through instructional support, student support, and not treating people mean and bullying.

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: Diversity in the curriculum is very positive. When people are applying pressure to you always stand your ground. No I would not change my mind not unless they could come up with some great ideas about the subject. We can put the student body, teachers and facility staff in a development of the curriculum. Advising to be firm, fair, and impression to the answering.

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?

Every one as challenges in society. Working together to improve your character will make the county a better place.

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? My stance is the law enforcement should interact with the U. S. Immigrating and Customs Enforcement to stop them from going to the schools and pulling people out of their cars in front of the children. I would have meetings to discuss the best way to protect the incident children from being exposed to adult problems.

19. Stable, safe, and affordable housing is necessary for all students to be able to succeed in school and in the recruitment of educators, including education support professionals, to live in the communities they serve. How do you plan to address the housing crisis in the county?

Open up the Housing freeze and work with the landlords to balance the cost and understanding that it is important for the students in the county to be safe in a home.

**Privatization and Support for Education Support Professionals (ESP's):**

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

\_\_\_\_\_ SUPPORT  OPPOSE

Additional comments: The service workers are doing a good and the principals are in charge as well as; the building supervisors.

21. 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](#).

Do you support the ESP Bill of Rights?

SUPPORT \_\_\_\_\_ OPPOSE

Additional Comments: Increase in pay for the employees that work for the Board of Education.

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

**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 am running for office as the County Commissioner for District 1 to help the children and Seniors in St. Mary's County. Developing programs and letting the Southern Community know that I am supporting them every day.

I am motivated to work hard because Wendy Can Do It!

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]?

Build new facilities for the children and youth in the lower end of St. Mary's County.

Open up a new Southern Area Senior Center so the individuals don't have to travel up to Lexington Park to participate to fun activities.

**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.