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**Press Release**  
**Montgomery County Education Association's Endorsement Announcement for Apple**  
**Ballot recommendations for the 2026 Election**

Rockville, MD – The members of the Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA) are proud to announce our initial endorsements for the County Executive, County Council, and the Board of Education races. These candidates will appear on our coveted Apple Ballot for the 2026 primary election.

The endorsements come after panels made up of MCEA members from a wide spectrum of job classifications spent many hours reading extensive questionnaires and conducted in-depth interviews of candidates. These panels presented recommendations to our Political Action and Legislative Support Committee who, in turn, presented endorsements to the MCEA Board of Directors. The Board of Directors then voted to recommend endorsements to our union's Representative Assembly, where elected representatives from across the county's school system debated and voted on the final endorsements.

“We were fortunate to have had the opportunity to interview such a dedicated group of candidates who understand that public education is the basis for the success of our entire community. When public education is under attack on many fronts as it is now, we know we can count on these candidates to work with us to fully fund the education budget, put educators and students first, and prioritize public education,” said MCEA President, David Stein, “Montgomery County voters trust the Apple Ballot because they know educators have done their homework and have chosen the right candidates. We have total confidence in our endorsed candidates’ commitment to not just hold the line, but work with educators, parents and the community to move our schools and our County forward.”

Danillya Wilson, MCEA Vice President, added, “MCEA has a tradition of making endorsement decisions democratically by our members staying informed, debating, and voting. I am especially proud of the MCEA members who engaged in the long process of determining who to endorse. Participating in this process took time and commitment, but our members care deeply about which candidates earn our trust and endorsement, so they took the time to educate themselves about where the candidates stand, read lengthy questionnaires, and sat through many hours of candidate interviews. Public education is the foundation of democracy and, through our Union work, MCEA practices what our members teach.”

“Now that MCEA members have endorsed candidates, our work has just begun. MCEA will do what we do best - educate our members and our community about the importance of electing these

pro-education candidates”, said Stephanie Gawlinski, Chair of the MCEA Political Action and Legislative Support Committee, “Educators know how to organize and that’s exactly what we will do come election season.”

MCEA proudly endorses the following candidates for the 2026 primary election:

County Executive - Will Jawando  
County Council District 1 - Julie Yang  
County Council District 3 - Izola Shaw  
County Council District 4 - Kate Stewart  
County Council District 5 - Kristin Mink  
County Council District 6 - Natali Fani-Gonzalez  
County Council At Large - Fatmata Barrie  
County Council At Large - Josie Caballero  
County Council At Large - Marc Elrich  
County Council At Large - Laurie-Anne Sayles

Board of Education District 1 - Grace Rivera Oven  
Board of Education District 3 - Sally McCarthy  
Board of Education At-Large - Omar Lazo

#### **State Legislative Races**

Endorsements for the remaining Maryland House of Delegates and State Senate seats will be announced at a later date by the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA).

#### **About Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA)**

MCEA, one of the largest local affiliates of the NEA with more than 14,000 members, is a leader in efforts to build a new kind of teachers’ union that responds to the needs of today’s educators and students. For more information, visit [www.mceanea.org](http://www.mceanea.org).

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