

MAURA McMAHON – ArINOW – May 4, 2017

My husband, Michael, and I chose to live in Arlington largely due to the reputation and quality of Arlington schools. We have a daughter in the 4th grade at Barcroft Elementary and a son in the 6th grade at Jefferson Middle School.

My school and community involvement has grown over the past seven years and has fueled my passion for education in Arlington – particularly for the future of Arlington Public Schools. We have much to be proud of, from our awarding-winning schools to our innovative instructional programs. But we are also facing considerable challenges.

I have served as PTA Vice President, as Odyssey of the Mind Coordinator and in other volunteer roles, and as representative to the County Council of PTAs - for which I currently serve on the executive board. I also have had the privilege to be part of both the Thomas Jefferson and South Arlington Working Groups. These experiences have given me a deep appreciation for the diverse needs of our community, the strength of collaboration, and the need for fresh, innovative solutions and long-range planning.

I am the only candidate or board member with the point of view of a current elementary school parent – a valuable perspective absent from the Board and missing in its decision-making. I know our problems first-hand. I am focused on the future and how we can maintain the quality of all of our schools as we continue to grow.

I will bring focus to the broader issues challenging our schools today: educational equality and opportunity, ways to foster diversity beyond “choice” and boundaries, and County policies as they impact APS’ needs and ability to serve its students—housing, transportation, development. My advocacy efforts in our community are evident in the County’s Affordable Housing Master Plan and in a number of policy recommendations currently being considered as the School Board revises APS’ admissions and transfer policies.

I will provide the leadership APS needs to:

- implement a vision for instruction, but focus on managing the infrastructure, resources, and tools our teachers need to engage students in the joys of learning;
- solve our capacity crisis cost-effectively through long-range planning, including a 4th comprehensive high school, and thoughtful growth of option programs to maintain students’ access to opportunities;
- develop a network with County departments, community groups, and businesses to increase available resources and streamline services in ways that mutually benefit APS and the broader community;

- establish an Academic Partner School program that brings students of different backgrounds and abilities together to understand the benefits of diversity firsthand rather than learn about diversity from books and special presentations;
- foster PTA collaborations for joint-programming, fundraising, and advocacy efforts.

I will be a strong advocate for our school system by:

- making sure our County leaders understand how their decisions impact APS;
- ensuring schools are an integral component of the community's overall planning;
- pushing the County to resolve existing traffic and student safety problems along Carlin Springs Road and in other places to enable the most efficient use of APS properties;
- working with the County now to plan for the additional facilities we expect to need *and* how we are going to pay for them.

As our school system continues to grow and evolve, our leadership needs to adapt to our changing needs. Our past ways of thinking and problem-solving no longer fit APS today. We need a new voice, a fresh perspective, and a different approach.

I have stepped outside my comfort zone as a parent and advocate to run for school board because I feel so passionately about the critical issues our schools face today. I appreciate the contributions each of my fellow candidates has made to our community over the years. But I will bring the fresh perspective, proactive thinking, and the voice our schools need today.

Please join me by making me your first-choice candidate in next week's caucus. For more information, visit mauramcmahon.org and follow me at facebook.com/mcmahonforarlington.