

Howard Thompson

- **Do you have a student or have you had a student in the St. Mary's County Public School system?**

Our daughters graduated from Leonardtown High School.

- **Do you have any personal experiences with special education services delivered through our school system? Please explain your answer.**

We have not had any personal experiences with special education services that are provided by our school system

- **How are you going to meet the needs of the continuously growing number of special education students in our county?**

I have a good working relationship with Dr. Smith and the Board of Education. I am always ready to listen to their needs and then, through whatever avenue it takes, find a way to fund or find grants to provide funding for what the BOE would need to help the students.

- **Do you feel funding for special education staff and programs should be a priority for our school system? Please explain your answer.**

Yes. Anytime we can provide our students the funding to bring the services they need is part of what our Commissioner's Board is elected to do. I was told that some of our students have to leave the county to get these services. Maybe by studying this more, we can add to those funds, and provide those services here, making the services easier to monitor by parents and BOE alike.

Clarke Guy

- **Do you have a student or have you had a student in the St. Mary's County Public School system?**

My son graduated from Chopticon in 2016 and my daughter from Chopticon in 2017. They attended all 4 years at Chopticon. I was a student at Mechanicsville Elementary, Mother Catherine Spalding, Margaret Brent and also graduated from Chopticon in 1993.

- **Do you have any personal experiences with special education services delivered through our school system? Please explain your answer.**

Not in the St. Mary's County School system but in Prince George's County when my son was diagnosed with a learning disability. We had an educator come to our home to help us manage and provide my son and us, as parents, coping methods. My cousin is a paraeducator with the school system and other cousin's son is in a special education program within the school system.

- **How are you going to meet the needs of the continuously growing number of special education students in our county?**

I plan to be a full partner with the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools and will work to ensure every funding request is honored to our fullest capabilities.

- **Do you feel funding for special education staff and programs should be a priority for our school system? Please explain your answer.**

Every program in the school system is a priority. There are so many needs right now but our attention to the needs of all students cannot outweigh one another. All programs should be budgeted for appropriately and I will do my best to meet all of the funding requests from the School System.

Eric Colvin

- **Do you have a student or have you had a student in the St. Mary's County Public School system?**

No, my son is 10 months old so I will have a child in the school system in a few years!

- **Do you have any personal experiences with special education services delivered through our school system? Please explain your answer.**

Yes, for the past 5+ years I have served on the St. Mary's County Commission for People with Disabilities (COPD), a board appointed by the Commissioners. While I was chair we were able to successfully advocate for a full time ADA coordinator for the county. Last year we partnered with the school system to host a life stages fair for families of children with disabilities. We need more consistent representation from both parents and the school system on the COPD.

- **How are you going to meet the needs of the continuously growing number of special education students in our county?**

Provide the required resources that the Board of Education needs. The BoE is the elected body of citizens that determines school policy and direction.

- **Do you feel funding for special education staff and programs should be a priority for our school system? Please explain your answer.**

Yes, definitely. Acknowledging our differences and helping everyone to achieve their full potential makes us a better community!

Thank you for reaching out with the questions. I am embarrassed to say that I am not familiar with CACSE, but I would encourage you to send a representative (as many as you'd like, open meeting!) to the Commission for People with Disabilities meetings. We meet the third Thursday of every month at the Governmental Center in Leonardtown at 4 pm.

Rose Frederick

- **Do you have a student or have you had a student in the St. Mary's County Public School System?**

Yes, I have a daughter who attended St. Mary's County Public School. She attended, Banneker Elementary, Leonardtown Middle and graduated from Leonardtown High in 1982. Also, I raised two sisters who attended public school.

- **Do you have any personal experiences with special education services delivered through our school system? Please explain your answer.**

My most recent experience was working as a substitute teacher. In addition, I have a nephew who transitioned thru the public school system six-years ago, a sister, now 45 and a brother-in-law, now 25. They are Special Needs persons. My nephew now work at Lowes. The time between my sister, nephew and brother-in-law are worlds apart. My sister was in the public school system when the Special Needs students were taught and kept separate from non-Special Needs persons. My nephew and brother-in-law came thru the system when Special Needs persons were integrated into the classrooms. My nephew takes a while to decipher things and my brother-in-law is autistic. I am able to see a difference between separation and non-separation of student in the classroom. Non-separation is better because it taught my nephew and brother-in-law to communicate with persons outside of their normal relationships and routine.

- **How are you going to meet the needs of the continuously growing number of special education students in our county?**

Part of my platform is affordable housing and Highly Qualified Educators.

- I plan to work with the Board of Education, Superintendent and my co-Commissioners to identify areas of improvement.

-Work with the Board of Education and Superintendent as they identify the need for more school counselors that address Special Needs students early.

-Meet with parents of Special Needs students to address their issues and concerns. There are those that I've met that want to become more involved, I will encourage them to join/meet the Advisory Committee for Special Education and to let their voices be heard.

-Work with Business Owners to identify jobs within the community for Special Needs persons.

- **Do you feel funding for special education staff and programs should be a priority for our school system? Please explain your answer.**

I have Special Needs family members that have come thru the public school system. Anyone who has lived or worked with a child who has to wear a helmet and strapped in a chair, not able to get their words out, will truly understand what Special Needs really is about.

It takes a special kind of educator to work with the families and the students of those needs and that is the reason I support funding Special Education within the school budget presented by the Board of Education and Superintendent. I look at Special Education as a priority and plan to do all I can to fund the Board of Education.