

2026 FREDERICK COUNTY PRIMARY ELECTION

Apple Ballot Candidate Bios

BOARD OF EDUCATION (pick no more than 4)

Casey Day

Casey Day is a longtime FCPS educator focused on workforce stability, fair compensation, and ensuring employee voices are included in decision-making. She supports competitive pay, multi-year negotiated agreements, and disciplined budgeting that prioritizes student-facing services and staff support. Day also advocates for reducing initiative overload, expanding equitable access to programs across schools, and investing in facilities and infrastructure to support students and employees.

Rae Gallagher (Incumbent)

Rae Gallagher is an incumbent Board of Education member who emphasizes collaborative governance and interest holder engagement in decision-making. She supports increasing wages for the lowest-paid school employees, strengthening benefits, and improving working conditions to recruit and retain staff. Gallagher also advocates for expanding diverse educator recruitment pipelines, transparent budgeting, and maintaining public control of school services rather than outsourcing them.

Dean Rose (Incumbent)

Dean Rose is an incumbent Board of Education member focused on steady leadership, collaboration, and engagement with educators and the community. He supports strengthening compensation and benefits for FCPS staff, improving working conditions, and prioritizing high-impact initiatives that support students and employees. Rose also advocates for equity-driven school renovations, clear communication with interest holders, and continued collaboration with employee associations.

Chad King Wilson, Sr.

Chad King Wilson, Sr. is an educator and community advocate focused on equity, transparency, and strong partnerships between schools and the community. He supports fully funding Frederick County Public Schools, lowering class sizes, and ensuring competitive compensation and respect for all educators and education support professionals. Wilson also opposes privatization of school services and supports strengthening diverse educator pipelines and "Grow Your Own" programs to build a sustainable workforce.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE & COUNTY COUNCIL (pick 1 of each, 2 for at-large)

Jessica Fitzwater — County Executive (Incumbent)

Jessica Fitzwater is the current County Executive and a former public school educator who emphasizes investing in public education and supporting students, educators, and families. She highlights increasing education funding by 30% during her first three budgets, expanding school construction to address overcrowding, and establishing dedicated funding for renovating aging school buildings. Fitzwater also emphasizes collaboration with education unions and state leaders to secure stable long-term funding for public schools and strengthen Maryland's educator workforce.

Louisa Conklin — County Council District 1

Louisa Conklin is a candidate for County Council District 1 who emphasizes stronger investment in public education and equitable opportunities for students across the county. She supports increasing educator and support staff compensation, expanding school funding beyond Maintenance of Effort, and pursuing new revenue sources to address operating and capital needs. Conklin also advocates for prioritizing school construction to address overcrowding, strengthening collaboration with education unions, and maintaining public control of school services rather than outsourcing them.

Jamie Shopland — County Council District 2

Jamie Shopland, candidate for County Council District 2, is a technology strategist, longtime Urbana resident, and parent who focuses on people-centered, data-driven decision-making for Frederick County. She supports fully funding public schools to meet enrollment growth, investing in student services and special education supports, and ensuring competitive compensation and sustainable workloads for educators and staff. Shopland also emphasizes transparent budgeting, proactive infrastructure planning for school capacity, and strong collaboration with educator associations to guide policy decisions affecting students and school employees.

Christian Benford — County Council District 3

Christian Benford is a Frederick native, public servant, and community organizer running for County Council District 3 with a focus on affordability and strong public institutions. He supports fully funding Frederick County Public Schools, strengthening compensation and working conditions for educators and support professionals, and ensuring classrooms are adequately staffed and uncrowded. Benford also emphasizes stable long-term school funding, protecting public sector jobs from privatization, and maintaining strong collaboration with educator associations to guide budget and policy decisions.

Kavonté Duckett — County Council District 4 (Incumbent)

Kavonté Duckett is the incumbent County Councilmember for District 4 and a lifelong Frederick resident focused on expanding opportunity and strengthening public institutions. He supports strong and sustained funding for Frederick County Public Schools, competitive compensation for educators and staff, and strategic planning to address enrollment growth and school capacity. Duckett also emphasizes diversifying the county's revenue base, investing in modern and safe school facilities, and maintaining strong collaboration with educators and their associations to guide education policy decisions.

Johnny Mercer — County Council District 5

Johnny Mercer is a candidate for County Council District 5 who emphasizes strong public education as a cornerstone of community success. He supports sustainable and predictable funding for Frederick County Public Schools, including investments in school capacity, modern facilities, and competitive compensation to recruit and retain educators and support staff. Mercer also highlights the importance of collaboration between the County Council, Board of Education, and employee associations to ensure education policy and budgeting decisions reflect the needs of students, educators, and families.

Renee Knapp — County Council At-Large (Incumbent)

Renee Knapp is an incumbent County Councilmember At-Large who focuses on policies that support working families, strengthen public services, and expand opportunities for residents across the county. She supports funding Frederick County Public Schools well above Maintenance of Effort levels, investing in modern school facilities, and ensuring educators and support staff are valued through competitive compensation and stable funding. Knapp also emphasizes responsible fiscal planning, strong use of tools like the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance to manage growth and school capacity and maintain ongoing collaboration with educator associations to guide education policy decisions.

Brad Young — County Council At-Large (Incumbent)

Brad Young is an incumbent County Councilmember At-Large and current Council President with more than a decade of experience in county education leadership. He supports fully funding Frederick County Public Schools' operating and capital budgets, investing in modern school facilities, and ensuring competitive compensation and strong working conditions for educators and staff. Young also emphasizes predictable long-term funding for schools, renovation of aging facilities through dedicated revenue streams, and continued collaboration with education associations to guide budget and policy decisions affecting students and school employees.

STATE LEGISLATIVE RACES (pick 1 for Senate, up to 3 for Delegate)

Karen Lewis Young — Senate, District 3 (Incumbent)

Senator Karen Lewis Young had a career in corporate and community banking before running for local office in 2009 for the Frederick Board of Alderman. She served several years there before being elected to the House of Delegates in 2014. She was re-elected and then ran for the State Senate in 2022. In 2025 she supported key issues for educators in Annapolis with a 100% voter record.

Kris Fair — House of Delegates, District 3 (Incumbent)

Kris Fair has been a business leader and community activist for over 20 years in Frederick, working with a broad range of groups including The Frederick Center, Amnesty International, the Frederick City Strategic Opportunities Task Force, Moms Demand Action, the Frederick Arts Council, and many more. In 2025 he supported key issues for educators in Annapolis with a 100% voting record.

Ken Kerr — House of Delegates, District 3 (Incumbent)

Ken Kerr has been an elementary teacher and a college professor, teaching both underprepared and honors students as a Professor Emeritus at Frederick Community College. He has previously served on the Frederick County Board of Education, and has served in the House of Delegates since 2018. He was just appointed the chair of the House Government Operations & Health Facilities subcommittee with jurisdiction over Maryland Hospitals. In 2025 he supported key issues for educators in Annapolis with a 100% voting record.

Karen Simpson — House of Delegates, District 3 (Incumbent)

Karen Simpson has had a career defending victims of sexual violence as a Child Protective Services worker and case manager. She volunteers as a suicide bereavement group facilitator to help Maryland families going through the trauma of losing a loved one to suicide. She was elected to the House of Delegates in 2022 and earned a 100% voting record for her support of public education.

Lara Westdorp — Senate, District 4

Lara is a small business-owner, mom, wife, and lifelong advocate for wild spaces, clean water, and individual rights. Having grown up in a small town surrounded by family farms, much like her grandparents' farm, she and her husband Andrew chose Frederick County to raise their family. Since then, Lara has consistently been involved in the Frederick County community, from sitting on local and state boards and commissions and assisting with local campaigns, to traffic mitigation efforts in her neighborhood.

Andrew Duck — House of Delegates, District 4

Andrew Duck served for more than 20 years in the US Army, becoming a Korean Linguist and eventually rising to the position of Military Intelligence Officer. After retiring he worked with the Pentagon on intelligence issues. Andrew focuses on building resilience into our communities, identifying solutions to the challenges we face so that we can build

our communities back better than before. He aims to bring the funds needed to support rebuilding our infrastructure and communities.

Paul Gilligan — House of Delegates, District 4

Paul Gilligan has lived in the Burkittsville area for more than 40 years and has served as its Mayor. He served for more than 25 years as a U.S. Public Health Service Officer. He has dedicated his life as a community leader to protecting and preserving agricultural spaces from overdevelopment and has experience in a wide range of issues, such as financing, corporate law, and health policy.

STATEWIDE RACES

Wes Moore & Aruna Miller — Governor & Lt. Governor

Wes Moore has led a life of public service through his enlistment in the U.S. Army, his work as a nonprofit CEO of the Robin Hood foundation, which fights poverty, and by putting struggling Marylanders at the forefront of his work as Governor. He has consistently emphasized the importance of funding public schools and worked hand in hand with Maryland educators to deal with the challenges of state budgets. Aruna Miller immigrated to this country as a child from India and devoted her life to public service in Montgomery County's department of transportation as a civil engineer focused on alleviating traffic and increasing public safety. She served 8 years in the House of Delegates working on environmental issues, supporting survivors of domestic abuse, and helping small businesses.

Brooke Lierman — Comptroller

Brooke Lierman is an attorney by training who has served as Maryland's Comptroller since 2022. Her legal practice focused on civil rights and disability rights cases. From 2014-2022 she served in Maryland's House of Delegates representing part of Baltimore City. She has devoted her first four years as Comptroller to modernizing the office to serve Marylanders in new ways and to put Maryland's tax dollars to the best possible use in its investments.

Anthony Brown — Attorney General

Anthony Brown is a Harvard-educated attorney and US Army Veteran who has served as Lt. Governor, in the U.S. House of Representatives, and, most recently, as Maryland Attorney General. He has a career of service protecting survivors of domestic abuse, expanding legal aid access, investing in public education, and increasing gun safety laws.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

David Trone — 6th District

David Trone grew up on a Maryland farm near the Pennsylvania Border, cleaning up after the animals and working hard to keep his family's farm going. His family lost the farm after his father went into bankruptcy and David grew up to pursue life as a businessman, graduating from the Wharton School of Business with an MBA. His chain of wine stores was among the first to make it easier for citizens returning from prison to get a job by 'banning the box' on their job applications. While in Congress he worked closely with the small towns throughout the 6th district, showing up everywhere to figure out how his office could help at the ground level. He has worked hard to support candidates who value public education up and down the ballot during his time in office.

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