2026 GENERAL ASSEMBLY CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

CANDIDATE: Rhiannon Brown

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POINT OF CONTACT: Rhiannon Brown

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I confirm that the responses provided here are my official positions in seeking state office and I understand that MSEA reserves the right to share my responses with members and interested parties.

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE: Rhiannon C Brown

DATE SUBMITTED: 3/23/26

Candidates: In order to be considered for a recommendation, you must indicate your response to each of the questions. ***Clarifications, explanations, and other information may be attached, but please be certain to indicate clearly the question(s) to which you refer.*** *Please return your completed and signed questionnaire to MSEA.*

1. Please share why you want to run for the Maryland General Assembly.

   I am running for Delegate 1B because we need better representation in this area. I am a proud Marylander and also a proud citizen of Allegany County. Western Maryland Delegation needs to

2. Please outline your top three public education priorities, how you will engage educators, and how you would achieve and measure success on each.

   My top 3 public education priorities are:
   • Retaining good teachers (limits on class sizes, higher pay packages, teacher prep periods, access to professional developments)

3. Please explain how you would work with your state and local education association when faced with potential legislation relating to education issues (i.e., adequate funding, employee rights, special education, teacher certification, curriculum development, union rights, student discipline).

   I would stay current on issues to related to ACEA/MSEA. As a former teacher, I know the struggles and the concerns of teachers today. I would like to have a strong relationship with the ACEA board members so that I know the hot topics for the educators in our community.

4. Please provide your general and specific thoughts on the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Also discuss how you would prioritize state aid for public education (K-12 and community college) when helping to craft the state budget or voting on it.

   4. Overall, I think the Blueprint for Mayland's Future is moving in a positive direction, but it is not a perfect plan. Teachers deserve a higher pay base and more resources available in the schools. A genuine concern is budgeting and will it be fully funded, especially when cuts are

5. With any large piece of legislation like the Blueprint, adjustments and amendments will be needed throughout implementation. Do you commit to work with MSEA when developing any amendment proposals to the Blueprint law?

   ◯ Agree
   ◯ Disagree

6. MSEA not only represents certificated teachers, but many other educators in the school buildings. These folks are typically called Education Support Professionals (ESPs) and are made up of nine career categories: Clerical Services, Custodial and Maintenance Services, Food Services, Health and Student Services, Paraeducators, Security Services, Skilled Trades, Technical Services, and Transportation Services.

   Too many ESPs need to 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

Please share policy priorities/initiatives that will help make the ESP Bill of Rights a reality in Maryland:

7. How have you and how will you continue to use your position to protect Maryland educators, students, and residents in the face of threats from the federal government, including the recent rollback of rights for immigrants, the LGBTQIA community, and other marginalized communities?

   I will always support all students that are enrolled in Maryland public schools, regardless of their immigration status, their sexual identity, or any other marginalized community. Being a woman with a hidden disability and also a woman who identifies with the LGBTQIA community, I try to

8. Mental and behavioral health continue to be a serious issue for students and educators. Research shows that an increase in mental health supports for students results in better academic performance, better attendance, and reduced disciplinary issues. How do you believe we can increase mental health supports for school populations, including educators?

   There needs to be an increase in services available to both students and staff. Teachers should not be given the responsibility of counselor as well. As teacher often face very challenging and

9. Safe and affordable housing is necessary for students and educators to succeed. What is your position on affordable housing and how it relates to education?

   If you look at the statistics in Montgomery County, low-income children that live in affordable housing and live in lower-povery level schools tend to have gains in their reading and math scores. When housing is affordable, families are more likely to stay put and be less mobile

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Background Points

- MSEA believes any education dollars spent outside of improving public schools makes it harder to achieve the progress necessary to provide a world-class education for every student. The vast majority of students in Maryland are served by the public schools.
- Private school funding for programs in the budget such as textbooks, technology, school construction, and vouchers reduce the state's General Fund while subsidizing the cost of private education. Data from the first few years of the BOOST program indicate that most voucher recipients already attended and paid for private school before receiving the voucher.
- The Maryland State Department of Education requires a certificate of approval or registration for private schools; it does not accredit or license them. Private schools do not have to report or administer teacher qualifications, class sizes, adherence to College and Career Readiness Standards, student retention rates, graduation rates, demographics, or discipline or suspension policies. Without these measures, it is impossible to effectively evaluate the programs funneling public tax dollars to private schools.

10. How will you address state aid for private and religious schools through the nonpublic school textbook, technology, school construction, and voucher programs?

- ◯ Increase funding for private schools
- ◯ Maintain funding at current levels for private schools
- ◯ Decrease funding for private schools
- ◉ Eliminate funding for private schools

Additional Comments:

11. Do you support requiring any school (public or private) that receives public funding to adhere to policies regarding antidiscrimination, student achievement standards, school safety and discipline standards, certified teachers, employee protections, and student assessments?

- ◉ Support
- ◯ Oppose

Additional Comments:

HEALTHY AND SAFE LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIROMENTS

Background Points

- MSEA supports funding for school construction and renovation necessary to ensure a high-quality teaching and learning environment, including construction to reduce class size and appropriate heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems. MSEA supports legislation establishing and funding air quality and climatization assurance programs within the school construction and renovation programs, and legislation requiring the construction and maintenance of secure facilities to protect the health and safety of education employees in the performance of their duties.

- According to the Maryland Department of Labor, prevailing wage is defined as, "The hourly wage, usually benefits and overtime, normally paid to the majority of workers, laborers, and mechanics within a particular area." Prevailing wages are established by regulatory agencies, such as government, for each public works trade and occupation, as well as by State Departments of Labor or their equals. Prevailing wage laws address shortages in skilled labor workforce by increasing apprenticeship opportunities, reducing injury rates, and increasing worker productivity. Because they ensure a stable, well-qualified workforce, prevailing wage laws produce good value for taxpayers.

12. How would you use your position in the General Assembly to make a difference in supporting a healthy working and learning environment for educators and students?

I would support funding for school renovations and construction, and new construction that could reduce class size.

13. Do you support or oppose protecting Maryland's existing prevailing wage requirements for school construction projects?

- (●) Support
- ( ) Oppose

Additional Comments:

RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Background Points

- Maryland and U.S. history are far more diverse than is generally reflected in the content and courses currently taught in our public schools. Far too many Marylanders can progress through their formal primary and secondary education and rarely, if ever, see themselves reflected in the content they are learning or hear about themselves in the stories they read and are told. This lack of inclusivity negatively impacts not only our students' ownership of and agency in their learning, but it also adversely impacts their overall engagement in their learning. Unfortunately Maryland is no stranger to the politicized attacks from extremist activists seeking to ban books and deny students access to resources.

- MSEA is committed to developing critical thinking skills in our students because we know that they enable them to better understand the problems our society faces and to develop collective solutions. To that end, we are abundantly clear that truth and honesty are fundamental components of teaching and learning, as are academic integrity and professional responsibility. Our essential mission is to prepare our students for college, career, and life and to play an active role in our democracy.

14. 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?

- (●) Support
- ( ) Oppose

Additional Comments:

Teachers need more freedom to teach!

15. What specific policy goals and objectives will you pursue aimed at addressing racial and social justice?

Diverse hiring and promotion; restorative justice rather than suspensions in some cases; opposing censorship and banning books; protecting all students when they are in our care.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Background Points

- MSEA supports Maryland's current charter school law. It protects high standards, the collective bargaining rights of employees, and the local autonomy and needs of a school system. The law also provides flexibility for charter providers and employees to reach agreements outside of a collective bargaining agreement that allow the school to meet the needs of its mission and students. This combination of protections and flexibility makes Maryland's charter school law the best in the nation.

- Studies have consistently shown that although some charter schools may do well, on average, most perform about the same as or worse than traditional public schools.

- In past legislative sessions, charter advocates have championed legislation that would undermine local control of schools, including creating a 25th school district, lowering standards and accountability, and circumventing certification requirements and collective bargaining rights. Our highly ranked schools depend on keeping our standards high and our charter school law strong. MSEA believes it is necessary to continue to reject efforts to overhaul a law that works and meets the needs of students, parents, school employees, school districts, and our state.

16. MSEA supports public charter schools that are under the control of local school boards, require making enrollment open to all students, require the hiring of certificated teachers, are held to the identical high standards as traditional schools, and protect collective bargaining rights of employees hired at the school. Do you support or oppose MSEA's policy statement with regards to charter schools?

- (●) Support
- ( ) Oppose

Additional Comments:

RETIREMENT SECURITY

Background Points

- MSEA believes that guaranteeing adequate income upon retirement, which is best accomplished through defined benefit plans, serves the interests of public education and all education employees by enhancing recruitment efforts, improving retention rates, and creating a high-quality public education system. MSEA also believes that state and local employers are obligated to fund the pension system sufficiently to provide a guaranteed adequate income at retirement.

17. What reforms to the pension system do you believe could help attract and retain more educators?

    Reduce penalties for early retirement, stop taking funds from pension to support other initiatives (blueprint nationally certified bonus), stop adding new workers to current pension pool. Pension debts are currently eating away at school budgets which prevents schools from attracting new teachers

18. Do you support or oppose any action to diminish or threaten pension benefits such as reducing employer contributions or increasing required employee contributions?

    ○ Support
    ◉ Oppose

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Background Points

- MSEA supports efforts to protect and enhance the state's collective bargaining laws.
- Collective bargaining is the negotiation of a contract—including wages, salary scales, benefits, and working conditions—between employers and employees. The items agreed to in a ratified collective bargaining agreement apply to all employees in a bargaining unit, providing a benefit to employees and employers in not having to negotiate thousands of individual contracts.
- MSEA opposes right to work laws. Such laws restrict freedom of association and weaken organized labor in Maryland. The strength of organized labor is critical to protecting workers, ensuring quality, and maintaining fairness, safety, and competitive wages in the workplace.

19. Do you support or oppose public education employees' rights to bargain collectively?

    ◉ Support
    ○ Oppose

20. Please indicate your support or opposition for these proposals to expand collective bargaining rights for educators:

- Making the right to strike for public employees, including educators, legal in Maryland.

  ◯ Support
  ◯ Oppose

- Giving educators the right to negotiate over class size.

  ◉ Support
  ◯ Oppose

- Giving employees at 4-year public institutions of higher education the right to collectively bargain.

  ◉ Support
  ◯ Oppose

- Enacting arbitration reform through binding interest arbitration so state employees have efficient and reliable dispute resolution process when collective bargaining negotiations reach impasse

  ◉ Support
  ◯ Oppose

TAX POLICY

Background Points

- MSEA supports a revenue structure that will provide a predictable, reliable, progressive, and stable source of sustained funding for education. MSEA is a partner in a broad coalition of advocates that support a balanced approach toward solving budget problems by meeting the needs and services of the public with adequate resources.

- MSEA supports an equitable means of maintaining and restoring revenue or of raising and obtaining a fair share of additional revenues that directly or indirectly benefit public education at all levels. Further, MSEA opposes any taxing or spending limitations that directly or indirectly have an adverse effect on public education.

21. Do you support or oppose a balanced approach toward solving budget problems and ensuring adequate resources for funding education such as updating and revising the state income tax structure, broadening the state sales tax, and closing corporate tax loopholes?

◉ Support
○ Oppose

Additional Comments:

22. Please discuss how you would update the tax code to promote fairness and equity.

We should increase tax for high incomes and large businesses and corporations and stop putting the burden on low income families.

23. Please discuss any ideas you have for giving local governments more flexibility in how they can raise revenue to fund services like public schools.

I think there must be a way that local businesses and schools can collaborate to raise funds. For example, Queen City Creamery could have a “store” located in Allegany High. It’s ran by the students and they receive community service and credit hours, all the while they are learning the ins and outs of a small business and how to run it. The business would generate revenue and give a portion of the profits to the participating school. The students “pay” would be