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Fishman Declares Candidacy for Montgomery County Board of Education

Long-time education activist and father of four seeks to empower parents and teachers, improve cost-effectiveness

Silver Spring, MD—Veteran PTA and community leader Sheldon Fishman announced his candidacy for Montgomery County Board of Education today. Fishman, who with his wife Lee received the 2001 Maryland PTA Family of the Year award in recognition of two decades of service to the public schools, believes he has the experience, knowledge, and vision to supply the kind of responsive leadership parents seek from the board.

In announcing his candidacy, Fishman, who has seen four children through the Montgomery County Public Schools, stressed one theme above all. “I truly believe that knowledge is power,” he said. “Knowledge empowers children, it empowers teachers, and it empowers parents. That’s why I want MCPS to track the progress of each child from month to month and from year to year and to make sure that parents and teachers have that information at their fingertips. This is how we raise outcomes and close gaps: one child at a time—through knowledge.”

Fishman also believes the system needs more rigorous, objective knowledge about itself. He advocates independent evaluations of old and new programs and a thoroughgoing analysis of administrative systems with regard to cost-effectiveness.” There’s a difference between honest self-evaluation and PR,” he said, “and I’m not always sure MCPS understands the distinction.”

Fishman was encouraged to run by members of the Parents’ Alliance, a burgeoning coalition of community organizations dedicated to educational reform (<http://parentsalliance.20m.com/>). He has enthusiastically embraced the alliance’s five principles of coherent, content-rich standards, higher outcomes, educational options, transparency and accountability, and meaningful community input.

An engineering graduate of Tufts with a masters in biostatistics from Harvard, Sheldon has devoted much of his last 25 years to education. He has served as PTA president at Oakland Terrace Elementary, PTSA vice-president at Einstein High School, Einstein Cluster coordinator, MCCPTA delegate from Blair High School, and MCCPTA vice-president for administration. He has also served on the board of the Partnership for Educational Policy (PEP), the Education Committee of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, and the Community Awareness and Education Committee of the Mid-County Citizens' Advisory Board.

In all these activities, Sheldon has earned the admiration of parents, teachers, and civic leaders for his rare blend of dedication, integrity, and affability.

Sheldon's commitment to knowledge and education has shaped his professional life as well. In addition to managing information systems for the National Institutes of Health and the Federal Reserve Board, he has taught courses at Johns Hopkins University and Strayer College. He is currently working as an internet specialist for the law firm of Swidler Berlin Shereff Friedman.

Fishman now hopes to apply this impressive fund of experience and expertise to the urgent task of raising outcomes for all Montgomery County children. "The key," he says, "is not just high expectations but also a clear vision backed by proven, tested methods. Members of our Board of Education need to be able to provide leadership in these complex matters. That's something I can and will do."

Each county voter will have the opportunity to vote for all three BOE seats up for election in 2004, even though two of these seats are reserved for candidates from specific districts. Sheldon Fishman is running from District 4, which includes the Silver Spring neighborhood where he has lived with his wife Lee, a nursery school teacher at Ohr Kodesh Early Childhood Center, for 30 years. His campaign is being chaired by Julie Greenberg, a math teacher at Montgomery Blair High School and a founder of the Jaime Escalante Charter School. Joseph Hawkins, an education consultant and former MCPS accountability officer, is treasurer.

Sheldon Fishman for Board of Education
Julie Greenberg, Chair
Joseph Hawkins, Treasurer

Send contributions to
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