

December 1, 2025

The Honorable Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive
Office of the County Executive
12 East Church Street
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear County Executive Fitzwater:

I am writing to express my interest in the vacant seat on the Frederick County Board of Education. As a long-time public servant, a beneficiary of strong public schools, and a Frederick County parent actively involved in our school community, I would be honored to serve.

I grew up in West Virginia in a family with limited means, and my public education opened doors I could never have imagined. It enabled me to build a successful 22-year career with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), where I worked to strengthen public institutions, safeguard taxpayer resources, and improve people's lives around the world. That journey—rooted in the opportunity my public schools gave me—shaped my belief in education as a powerful force for equity and upward mobility. I have seen how strong public schools contribute to a more just, inclusive, and equal society. I view public education as one of our nation's most essential institutions, capable of transforming lives and strengthening communities. And this conviction has only grown stronger since becoming a parent.

As a parent of an elementary school student in Frederick County, I have a personal stake in ensuring our schools remain strong and well-supported. Over the past two years, I have volunteered regularly with Myersville Elementary School and its PTA, gaining firsthand appreciation for our educators' dedication and the pressures they face. I have also seen the direct impact of budget decisions on students: my daughter's class recently lost a first-grade teacher due to budget cuts, a change that affected class size, teacher workload, and student support. This experience strengthened my commitment to advocating for adequate, stable, and responsible school funding.

If appointed, I would bring a practical, collaborative approach to the Board and a focus on:

- Transparent, responsible stewardship of public resources;
- Policies that promote student achievement, teacher success, and safe, supportive learning environments for all, regardless of background or other distinguishing factors;
- Funding decisions that protect classroom stability and prioritize student needs; and
- Constructive engagement with educators, families, and community partners.

Thank you for considering my interest in this important role. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how my experience, values, and dedication to public service can support the Board's work during this transition period.

Sincerely,
Melissa Patsalides