



Melissa M. Dart

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Ms. Cocke, Ms. Ogburn, Mr. Montgomery and Dr. Cooper

Henrico County School Board
3820 Nine Mile Rd.
Henrico, VA 23223

Dear Ms. Cocke, Ms. Ogburn, Mr. Montgomery and Dr. Cooper,

I am writing to introduce myself to you and express my interest in being appointed to the interim School Board Seat vacated by Ms. Marshall last week. Ms. Marshall served the Board and the Tuckahoe District with great commitment and integrity for many years and has left a void which will not easily be filled. That said, her vacancy is an opportunity for new voices to come forward to represent the families of the County who are facing issues unlike any with which they have previously dealt. It is my sincere hope to be appointed to the Tuckahoe Seat to represent and amplify those voices.

My husband, James, and I have lived in Henrico for more than 21 years and in the Tuckahoe District for nearly 13. 2 of our 3 boys attend Gayton Elementary and the third will be there soon. James and I consider ourselves incredibly lucky to live in this community and are committed to serving in any way we can.

Part of my desire to serve grew out of my advocacy for our eldest son, Leo, who has special needs. As part of my journey to support Leo, I applied and was appointed to the Special Education Advisory Committee in 2016. I serve on the SEAC not just to support Leo but to represent the 6,000 other students throughout the County who receive Special Education services and whose caregivers might not have the time and resources to attend meetings and speak for their children.



As you may know, last year I ran for the House of Delegates. My candidacy was a transformative experience which was first and foremost fueled by my passion for public education. A well-funded school system sets our children up for future success in a way nothing else can. I want to serve on the School Board to help ensure the continued excellence of Henrico County Schools.

Professionally, I work in Healthcare Administration and earned my Master of Science in Health Administration in 2001. I specifically chose Health Administration rather than a business degree because I wanted to build a career in a profession that could directly improve the quality of people's lives. I currently work for a small company that designs, owns and manages health plans that serve Medicare and Medicaid populations. We are actively improving the quality of our members' lives which is incredibly rewarding.

My experience in this start-up environment has prepared me for being part of a small team and finding ways to compromise to solve problems. Demands shift continuously and I'm often part of different teams of folks with whom I sometimes disagree. My professional success is readily translatable to the School Board environment where the work that is being done contributes to the greater good no matter what my personal interests may be.

Having run for office last year, my family and I are well versed and comfortable with the time I must spend away from them to go to meetings. When my boys ask me why I have to go out regularly in the evening, I tell them I have to go to help people who are not able to help themselves. James and I believe it is an important sacrifice to make for our boys. As ever, none of the work I do would be possible without James' unwavering support.

I look forward to speaking to you at length next week during my interview, and in the meantime, I hope that my desire to serve and my passion for public education come across. Whether it is diversity and equity, teacher pay, classroom size, Special Education, Gifted Education, school safety, free and reduced lunch programs, our schools are an investment in the future that I take incredibly seriously. It would be a great honor to be appointed to the Tuckahoe seat and give back to the County that has given so much to my husband and our family.

Best regards,

Melissa M. Dart