

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 17, 2023

Board of Education of Harford County Welcomes New Members

Four New Members Being Seated at July 17, 2023, Meeting

The Board of Education of Harford County (Board) welcomes the three newly appointed members of the Board, Mrs. Terri Kocher, Dr. Aaron Poynton, and Ms. Lauren Paige Strauss. All three were appointed by County Executive Bob Cassilly. Additionally, the new Student Member of the Board, Miss Madina Sabirova, is joining the Board. Each new member will be seated at the July 17, 2023, Board meeting.

Mrs. Terri Kocher has lived in Harford County for more than 36 years and two of her grandchildren are current Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) students. Mrs. Kocher retired from the U.S. Army after a 30+ year civilian career working at the Pentagon and Aberdeen Proving Ground. Additionally, she was a multi-term member of a local church nursery school and Day Care Center Board. Mrs. Kocher holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Salisbury State College and a master's degree in systems management from Florida Institute of Technology. Her husband retired after 30 years working as a teacher in Baltimore County. "I am honored to be appointed to the Board of Education," says Mrs. Kocher. She hopes to use her experience as a Board member and analyst to provide positive support to the families and teachers of Harford County.

Dr. Aaron Poynton is the CEO and founder of Omnipoynt Solutions, a strategy and business development consulting firm in the aerospace and defense, national security, and health and safety markets. He is also co-founder and chief commercial officer of A3 Global, a next-generation company focused on the future of mobility in the circular economy. Before transitioning into business, Dr. Poynton served in the U.S. Army, attaining the rank of Captain, and was stationed at Aberdeen Proving Ground, where he served as the Company Commander of an Advanced Individual Training Unit. Dr. Poynton holds a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County; a master's degree in project management from George Washington University; an MBA from Duke's Fuqua School of Business; and a doctorate degree in public administration from the University of Baltimore. "It's an honor to be a member of the Board of Education," says Dr. Poynton. "There is much work to do, and I intend to bring a strong focus on academic excellence to the school system during my tenure."

Ms. Lauren Paige Strauss is a certified project management professional who has lived in Harford County for 12 years and currently resides in Havre de Grace. Ms. Strauss works as the Director of Program Management for a small business in the Department of Defense industry and is the mother of a recent graduate and a current student of Havre de Grace High School. "I am deeply honored, humbled, and excited to be serving on the Board of Education for Harford County Public Schools," says Ms. Strauss. "I am deeply committed to ensuring that HCPS remains transparent and accountable for educational performance and that collectively we create a learning environment that fosters growth and high academic achievement."

Miss Madina A. Sabirova is a senior at Harford Technical High School and will serve as the 2023-2024 Student Member of the Board. She is enrolled in Harford Technical High School's culinary arts program and is involved in multiple school clubs. Miss Sabirova is Vice President of her school's Muslim Student

Association and is a member of the Debate Team, National Honor Society, Rho Kappa, and Voices of Equity Club. She is also a member of Harford Tech's varsity tennis team.

Harford County Public Schools thanks the outgoing members of the Board, Dr. Joyce Herold, Dr. Roy Phillips, and Ms. Patrice Ricciardi, who completed their four-year terms at the end of June 2023, as well as the 2022-2023 Student Member of the Board, Miss Noa Blanken.

"It was an honor and great privilege to work with, and get to know, Ms. Ricciardi, Dr. Phillips and Dr. Herold in our time together on the Board of Education of Harford County. They are all passionate advocates for the students of Harford County Public Schools and we thank them for their dedicated service to making our schools a safe place for all students to learn and grow," said Dr. Mueller. "I look forward to the opportunity to continue that work with our newest Board members as we strive to provide the best education possible to the students of HCPS."

"I want to thank Ms. Ricciardi, Dr. Phillips, and Dr. Herold for their passion at working towards the best interests of the students of Harford County Public Schools," added Dr. Sean Bulson, Superintendent of Harford County Public Schools. "Their dedication to being strong advocates for the students, classroom teachers, and all HCPS staff is a testament to their commitment to their community. I look forward to fostering a similar positive relationship with Dr. Poynton, Mrs. Kocher, and Ms. Strauss as we continue to strive to do what is best for our students and ensure we carry on in our mission of providing a safe learning experience for all Harford County Public Schools students."

All four new members of the Board will be seated at the next Board of Education meeting on July 17, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.

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