

PN Questionnaire:

Questions for Board of Education Candidates 2014

1) **Achievement Gap:** As stated in our Legislative Agenda, Progressive Neighbors believes in schools that give all students an opportunity to reach their full potential. What are your ideas on how to reach that objective? How would you address the issue of the achievement gaps that exist between students of color and other students and between students from lower and upper income families? **The achievement gap will be a priority on my agenda if elected; this is an issue that affects all of our county residents not just the families facing this issue directly. The achievement gap cannot be eliminated with programs it has to be reduced a small piece at a time using processes that work. There are various processes that can move the needle closer together between the fortunate and less fortunate and we must look for other ways starting at a much younger age group than we do now, by the time a student gets to the high school level their chances of making it if that have not been making so far are greatly reduced and this is where the gap is measured, but as we know the gap widening started as early as pre-k and kindergarten. A known fact is that a student whose parents have a bachelors or master's degree hear over 30k words spoken around them on a continuous basis and a child whose parents maybe graduated HS themselves hear and respond to only 10k words are already at a major disadvantage before kindergarten, so we have to get to these children and parent at a much earlier age.**

2) **Your Priorities:** What are your priorities for what you would like the Board to achieve? Why do you want to be on the Board of Education? **I think the Board should not only be the governing body who presides over the budget but should be more involved in the day to day budget operations and be able to give significant input on programs and processes being implemented as well as curriculum programs. I desire to be on the Board because of the many years I have felt we had minor input in these areas but need to be more involved because we are the direct link to the parents in the community and their mouth and earpiece.**

3) **Role of Board of Education:** In your view, what is the proper role the Board of Education should play in relationship to the County Superintendent of Schools? **We as Board members should have a direct line to the County Superintendent and be able to express what we see that actually works in this county and what is not working and discuss altering or changing altogether some of these programs. We must also have trust in some of the educational decisions that are made by our superintendent and be able to work alongside the superintendent in implementing and rolling these various processes out to the local level.**

4) **Collective Bargaining:** What is your position on collective bargaining rights for teachers

and other school employees and on collaboration with unions in the schools? **Unions can be a great tool in getting the best out of the best if properly utilized, our unions our the cream of the crop but we must always make sure that we are able to maintain the best quality for our residents when it comes to staff, union workers, and school employees and not be forced to keep those that are not up to standard with our goals of success.**

5) **Standardized Tests:** What role do you think standardized tests should play in our schools and the education of our children? Is there too much emphasis on standardized testing? What can be done to rectify the discrepancy between the new Common Core curriculum and the tests which measure the old curriculum? **The topic of standardized testing and the new common core curriculum has recently been at the top of the list of most organizations. Standardized testing though used for many years as a gauge for how well our students are doing is just that a gauge of their academic prowess but not of the whole student. Montgomery county who used the standardize testing to show how well our students were doing over the past decade or so and to show Montgomery county as the best public school system in the country did reflect well but it did not show the gaps we have in the diverse groups that now inhabit our schools. The common core standard of testing I feel will give us a better feel for the overall student if implemented properly and making sure staff is adequately trained and time given to remove the mindset of standardize testing will be a better system of instruction. Common core is here and being implemented into the elementary schools and working its way to the middle school and high curriculum over the next decade so we need to embrace it and look at ways of improving it to fit the students of today.**

6) **Cafeteria Food:** How would you make progress in serving nutritious, appetizing and, where feasible, sustainable and locally grown food in school cafeterias as well as supporting programs to educate students on the importance of healthy diet? **There are various organizations in our county who already have ample data and can assist in getting our school cafeterias to the place we all would love them be, if we don't serve it at home we don't want to serve it at our schools. We all know nutrition is a very important topic on most of our parents and a lot of our students minds as well, obesity in America is at an epidemic proportion and we must work closely with our school cafeterias and various outside programs to build a more lateral relationship among the two, we can always accomplish more united than we ever can apart.**

7) **Charter Schools:** What is your view of public charter schools? If you support them, under what parameters should they operate? **Charter schools as we know have reached an all-time high with 40 states currently chartering them, almost 2 million students being educated in 5300 plus schools across the country I do not think that they are going anywhere no time soon. That said we must be extremely cautious of making sure that needed funding for county and state controlled schools meet very strict guidelines at all times and there is not a situation of over funding a specific group or target set of schools beyond what our standard public schools are receiving per student.**

8) **Experience:** What experiences have you had that would help you be an effective Board member? What groups have you participated in or led that would give you such experience? **I have been a leader in all aspects of my various careers from sports, entertainment, automotive, property management to a leader in advocating and lobbying for our children's needs in our county and state. Some of my leadership roles consisted of being the MCCPTA VP of Legislation, Legislative Committee chair, MCCPTA Board Liaison for Committee for Montgomery Education committee, Board Liaison for Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce on Education, Maryland Hotel and Lodging Association Chairman of Education and various others committees and educational programs.**

9) **Your Motivation:** What has motivated you to run for public office? Is there a political event or something in which you have been involved that has particularly influenced you? **Public office to me is a continuing of community service in which all citizens should be a part of. To build a better world we first have to be better citizens, to be a better citizen I must first serve the public, so public office is a way in which I feel I can better serve the community. The event that started me on my pathway to community service was during my daughters fourth grade year when I became a full time PTA member at her school and realize the need for someone to advocate for the many students whose parents either couldn't, wouldn't or did not how to advocate for their children, so I became their voice.**

10) **Other Comments:** Do you have any other comments to make that might help us make a decision in our endorsement process? **I feel these questions were very to the point of what an organization should be looking for in someone to endorse for such a critical position as the Board of Education and would be proud to endorsed by your organization if chosen, thank you for the opportunity.**