

PA-PAC Questionnaire for NC Superintendent of Public Instruction

When answering this questionnaire, please work from this document or repeat the questions in your response document with their numbers as they are organized here. Type your responses a different font to distinguish your responses from the questions. Thank you for your participation!

Please return completed form along with your resume describing education, work history, community service and prior political experience AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, but by **December 27, 2019 at the latest. Please respect the word limits for each question.**

Email responses to page.mc@frontier.com and tom-miller1@nc.rr.com

Please note that following above deadline, the Durham People's Alliance PAC may publish your responses to this questionnaire and your resume.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire and your willingness to serve the people of North Carolina.

Candidate Name: **Jen Mangrum**

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State Superintendent:

1. What experience do you bring to this office that make you the best candidate for the job? 250 word limit

I taught 2nd and 3rd grades from 1987-1999. In 1989, I earned my Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education. I took on leadership roles such as NCAE representative, member of the National Paideia Faculty and chair of the School Leadership Team. I taught all subjects with an emphasis on literacy. From 1999-2001, I became a literacy facilitator and supported staff in teaching reading and writing.

In 2001, I was able to use my retirement to earn my PhD in Curriculum and Instruction. Attending full-time allowed me to teach at the university level and work on a variety of research projects. My professors and I studied "Lighthouse Schools", low performing schools that experienced academic success.

In 2003, I took a district office position as Coordinator for Paideia and Cooperative Learning. I also completed my dissertation sharing how a low performing school's faculty participated regularly in conversations on important issues such as race, poverty and trust. My work was published in Kappan, a journal for educators.

After earning my PhD, I was hired at NC State to create and implement the first elementary education program; a multi-million dollar project. After completion, I accepted a faculty position.

In 2008, I accepted a position at UNCG. I am an Associate Professor in Teacher Education. In addition, to coordinating two programs and teaching, I co-founded the UNCG STEM Teacher Leader Collaborative. We support low-performing elementary schools as they implement engineering.

My work in education, equity, leadership and administration makes me the best candidate.

2. List your top three priorities and, beside each, the first two steps you would take to get your priorities enacted. 200 word limit

1. Expand equity and access across the state
 - a. Create an Office of Equity Affairs in DPI to provide support and professional development across the state. Use findings from Leandro Report to establish goals. Hire a Deputy Superintendent for Equity with extensive experience in educational practice and equity.
 - b. Model equitable practices in my decision-making in DPI (hiring, funding, curriculum etc.) Continue my own development and education on issues of equity.

2. Professionalize careers in education.
 - a. Lobby stakeholders for better wages for all school personnel and generate a budget proposal from the Superintendents' office that reflects people as a priority.
 - b. Expand the teacher pipeline, with emphasis on teachers of color, by developing and funding a high school teacher cadet program, develop a community college aspiring educator program and lobby the NCGA to extend the Teaching Fellows by including HBCUs.

3. Properly fund schools.
 - a. Visit schools in every district to discover and acknowledge their needs firsthand and foster positive relationships to repair current issues of trust and respect.
 - b. Consistently communicate the findings of the extensive Leandro Report which highlights the inadequate and inequitable funding for schools. Districts with more concentrated levels of high needs students should receive more funding.

3. Will you fight for a moratorium on charters, for greater accountability and for avenues for charters to come under school board control? Why or why not? (200 word limit)

I will absolutely fight for a moratorium on charter schools, for greater accountability and for avenues to move charters under school board control. As State Superintendent, the goal is to provide every child with a sound education. The current charter system is starving traditional schools of funding and segregating our schools, thus expanding the inequities between schools and districts. Under these conditions thousands of students' needs are left unmet.

The original intent of charters, before being hijacked by the GOP leadership, was to create labs of innovation. If the school innovations were successful, the goal was to move that school into the traditional system. There are charter schools that are diverse by design, provide breakfast, lunch and transportation and have an innovative approach to instruction. These successful schools should be moved under traditional school board control. Charters that are unsuccessful, should be monitored, improved and if not, closed.

4. Describe an experience as an elected official or a volunteer on a board where you took initiative to change a policy or service or initiate a new policy or service. Were you successful or not, and why. (200 word limit)

At UNCG, I chair the Elementary Education Committee. We are a select group of faculty, supervisors, and support personnel who make recommendations regarding our program to the administration.

During one meeting, I read data that many of our students were spending their extensive internship and student teaching placements in predominantly white, affluent schools. Apparently, schools were selected by a UNCG supervisors at random. We didn't have a policy or collective understanding about how schools should be selected and how they impact our students' growth as educators.

At the next meeting, I presented information on our School of Education mission. We have a written commitment to high needs schools. Then I led the group in an activity in which we identified and respectfully argued which key criteria should be used for selecting placements.

After this meaningful conversation, I recommended a new policy. It required our students to spend at least one semester in a high needs school and that all schools had to be diverse in either race, socio-economics or culture.

This policy had a positive impact on our students' growth as educators and initiated future policy revision around issues of equity.

5. Describe your experience as a supervisor: how many people were you supervising? How would you describe your "style" of supervision? (100 Word limit)

I am the Coordinator for two programs at UNCG. I supervise approximately 20 people, including advisors, cohort leaders, assistants and adjunct faculty. They come to me when there are concerns or when they have ideas they'd like us to consider. We meet monthly as a group and I'm always available for private meetings.

My style is collaborative, trusting and efficient. I work with our team to solve problems, remove barriers and provide resources. I trust my team because of their expertise. I insist on being efficient so as not to waste their time and I plan meetings that are meaningful.

6. What is your plan for bolstering DPI services to low wealth, rural districts? (200 word limit)

In consulting with former State Superintendent, Bob Etheridge and his associate Dr. Dudley Flood, (1989-1996) they suggested we decentralize DPI and physically place more DPI personnel out in the rural districts so they are more readily accessible.

I also spoke with former Superintendent, Dr. June Atkinson and rural District Superintendents Rob Jackson (Edenton-Chowan) and Patrick Miller (Greene County). From these conversations I have learned that we often create barriers for rural, low wealth districts.

Dr. Jackson described how the current Superintendent forces mandates that require financial resources but he doesn't provide funding. Dr. Jackson was clear that he needs autonomy and flexibility to make decisions based on the needs and resources of his small, rural district.

Dr. Greene told me he has three elementary campuses; K1, 2-3, and 4-5 due to space issues and the havoc of a hurricane. He'd like them considered one elementary school (K-5) but DPI refuses. Because of DPI's inability to reclassify, especially in regards to accountability, he loses resources. His 2-3 school is labeled low performing and yet when those students move up to 4-5 that is no longer the case.

It is important DPI allow rural districts differentiation and support them fully.

7. How can DPI assist districts that are attempting to reduce discriminatory outcomes in suspensions of children of color? (200 word limit)

DPI must provide resources and support for districts to be trained in restorative justice practices. Restorative Justice is a relational model of discipline, not an authoritarian model. The school community, including students, hold the accused accountable and then provide support and healing for **everyone** involved, including the accused. These schools utilize mediation and problem solving strategies and this results in fewer uses of expulsion and suspension. Research shows RJ schools focus on mutual respect and therefore create safer spaces.

In addition, we know that our students of color are suspended at a higher rate than other students. Therefore, DPI should also provide resources and incentives that encourage districts to implement Racial Equity Training. I was fortunate enough to attend REI and it is exceptional. Statesville-Iredell is currently attempting district-wide training with REI. I am following their progress and consider it a pilot program on how to create a systemic model.

Our educators have experienced the "apprenticeship of observation", meaning that they manage behavior most likely the way they observed and experienced K-12 as students. Providing educators with equity training and a new approach to behavior management will reduce the number of suspensions; particularly those that are subjective in nature.

8. What is your plan for bolstering the recruitment and retention of teachers of color? (200 word limit)

50.2% of all US public school students are of color and yet only 17.3% of all teachers are teachers of color. This is unacceptable. We **know** that teachers of color increase achievement for students of color! That should be reason enough to find ways to retain teachers of color but they also challenge assumptions and establish connections for students in a global society.

Because teachers of color are three times more likely to be placed in a high poverty school, teacher turnover rate increases. DPI must assist in developing and mentoring strong administrative leadership in *every* school, promote teacher autonomy in decision making, provide and disperse resources equitably and offer differentiated professional development.

DPI must take the lead in supporting schools that nurture the physical, social and emotional needs of students. We know that Adverse Childhood Experiences (known as ACES) impact our children's ability to learn. All classroom teachers need the support and access to more school nurses, psychologists, social workers, and specialists.

When teachers of color experience a strong administration, autonomy, resources and optimal personnel support, their job satisfaction increases and they are more likely to stay in the teaching profession. DPI will advocate on their behalf.

9. What is your current involvement in and personal work regarding using a race equity lens in making decisions? If you are or have been a school board member, please offer an example from board decision-making. If not, please offer an example from a personal or professional experience. (200 word limit)

I made an important decision when I co-founded the UNCG STEM Teacher Leader Collaborative. My colleague and I were limited in funds and had to make hard decisions about who would receive our services. The collaborative includes a summer institute for elementary educators in which we teach an engineering unit. We give each teacher engineering materials worth \$500, and help them learn the curriculum, content and process for implementation in their school. Most importantly, we support these educators throughout the school year. Our work is in high demand but limited in scope.

We knew this work could disrupt definitions of smartness and help students identify as STEM-capable. We understood that 1) students of color and girls are marginalized from STEM content and they are less likely to identify with STEM. 2) Teachers who work in schools with predominantly students of color and students living in poverty have less opportunity to teach engineering and less access to resources and support.

The decision to use this work to combat inequities in STEM education is why we chose to support educators who work in schools high in poverty and predominantly with students of color. We believe we are helping level the playing field.

10. Lightning round: For each item, answer yes or no and include one sentence explaining your answer.

Do you support:

- a. Opportunity Scholarships (vouchers)? Yes **No** (No)

- b. The Innovative School District? Yes **No** (No)

- c. The two NC Virtual Charters? Yes **No** (No)

Personal Information

1. **Please describe your educational background, noting any degrees and honors you have earned. (skip if included on resume)**

ON RESUME

2. **Do you have children? If so, where do they, or did they, attend school?**

I have two daughters. My oldest attended public schools K12 in Guilford County, and then graduated from NC State University with a BA in English and from the NC School of the Arts with an MFA in Film. My youngest daughter attended public schools K12 in Guilford County and is a sophomore at NC State University majoring in Communications and minoring in Spanish.

3. **Please describe your adult employment history (skip if included on resume)**

ON RESUME

4. **Please list civic engagement activities, including service on boards, volunteer activities, elected positions, etc. (Skip if included on resume)**

ON RESUME

