



CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

CITY COUNCIL 11th DISTRICT CANDIDATE: ERIC COSTELLO, DEMOCRAT

<http://costelloforbaltimore.com/>

- 1. Please articulate your overall vision for how young people will be supported from cradle to career in Baltimore City? What will be the priority strategies within your first four years in implementing this vision?**

I am advancing community schools, using schools to strengthen communities. I helped organize the first Building Trades Fair, providing students a pathway to dignified careers through apprenticeships in skilled labor. We must continue to explore creative partnerships for out-of-school opportunities to introduce youth to programs that expand their breadth of experience in a well-rounded education. My top priorities for children are: increased programming at recreation centers, community schools, and trade fairs.

- 2. The Mayor and City Council do not currently have oversight authority over Baltimore City Public Schools. Would you advocate changing the current city/state partnership? What changes would you recommend to the overall administration/approach of public education in Baltimore City?**

The current shared governance structure needs to be fixed before a discussion of an elected school board can take place. Under the current governance structure, I believe that there is no elected official who is completely accountable for the success (or failure) of our school system. I supported the bill introduced by the House of Delegates to provide the Mayor and City Council the power to appoint and approve all commissioners of the School Board, as this is a necessary step to create accountability of the school system.

- 3. Eighty percent of a young person's life is spent outside of school, yet just 15% of Baltimore's school aged young people have access to afterschool programs. City leaders from around the country have begun to identify the importance of afterschool and summer programs as a critical support and have invested in citywide systems. Participation in out-of-school time opportunities boosts academics, attendances, school promotion and completion and it helps connects young people to caring adults. If elected, what would your approach be to addressing opportunities for youth beyond the school day and school year?**

I will continue to advocate for additional commitments for increased funding for out-of-school activities. City YouthWorks and my CHOICE Trades Fair are good examples of the types of programs we could replicate and expand with additional resources. I will also continue to help small businesses, like Frozen Desert Sorbet and Made in B-More Clothing, to give kids from all neighborhoods opportunities to be entrepreneurs and learn how to manage their own small businesses.

- 4. In the 70's and 80's Baltimore operated around 130 recreation centers. That decreased by nearly half by the early 90's. Currently, Recreation & Parks operates just 40 recreation centers. There are ongoing questions about the available resources of the Department based on the lack of**



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audits. Some of the recreation centers require major upgrades in both physical plant and programming. While a few new, modern recreation centers are being built, it is clear that many neighborhoods lack quality recreational opportunities. How would you change the trajectory of Recreation and Parks? How will you address the challenges of programming and physical plants?

Expanding youth programs in the City is a top priority. As a member of the Budget & Appropriations Committee, I successfully worked with my colleagues to secure an additional \$4.2M for out-of-school youth funding. Additionally, I supported the proposed charter amendment that would guarantee 3% of the city's budget for youth programs in the city, like recreation programs, youth mentorship, and afterschool programs. We need to spend our precious financial resources on effective programs -- programs that have measured outcomes.

5. Young people want jobs and they are natural entrepreneurs. Unfortunately, youth unemployment is at an all time high and young people are denied the experiences and skills they need to be prepared to enter the workforce. If elected, what will be your approach to youth employment and entrepreneurship? How will you partner with Higher Education and Industry?

I will continue to serve as a conduit between youth, industry, and small business. For example, I helped organize the first Building Trades Fair, which is a partnership between Digital Harbor High School, CHOICE Trades, which represents 17 organized labor trades unions in the Baltimore metropolitan area, and my office. It was an incredible opportunity to expose our high school students to the building trades. The trades provide a pathway to skilled labor through an apprenticeship program, ultimately leading to a sustainable and good-paying career, which will allow them to provide for a family and retire with dignity. We exposed approximately 600 students to additional career opportunities, and I look forward to executing plans to expand this program to other schools and with other trades in the spring.

6. The resilient young people of Baltimore City experience trauma every day. They are both witness to and victims of violence. They have very real reasons to feel stressed and afraid. A growing body of research recognizes the importance of understanding and implementing trauma informed care within schools, community services, social services, and law enforcement. What approaches will you take, if elected, to implement trauma-informed-care and/or restorative practices in the public sectors?

It is important to treat the whole patient - mentally and physically - in care. To improve care in our City, I will continue to be a bridge to partner our efforts between schools, community, social services, and law enforcement to implement trauma-informed-care and restorative practices.

7. In 2014, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings Blake, with the support of City Council, established one of the strictest youth curfew laws in the nation and advocated for year round curfew centers. Proponents of the curfew centers thought they were a good strategy to keep kids safe and to connect young people and their families to services. Opponents feared the curfew enforcement would further strain police community relations and disproportionately target young people of



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color. Questions remain about the actual utilization of the curfew centers and whether or not the “Youth Connection Centers” serve their intended purpose. If you are elected, what would your position on Curfew and Curfew Centers be? How would you build more positive interactions between youth and law enforcement?

My focus centers on creating positive opportunities for youth in terms of safe recreation opportunities, quality education, and effective job preparedness.

I continue to fight for increased foot patrols, because everyday interaction between officers and residents is the only way to truly rebuild trust between the police and the communities, particularly the youth, they serve. He pushed for the commonsense rollout of body cameras on our officers and supports more CitiWatch cameras throughout the City. The first step towards positive youth-police interaction is mutual trust, which comes from familiarity and respect.

8. The parents and families of young people are often left out of the equation when we are seeking solutions. Family and community engagement requires long term, sustained efforts to build trust and offer authentic opportunities for families to have a voice and feel supported. The Community School strategy has been shown to increase family and community engagement and improve school climate and culture. The city funded community school strategy is currently operating in 50 schools out of 180. Do you think every school should be a community school? How would you expand the strategy?

I have worked to advance the community school model, as it has demonstrated the positive value schools can contribute to a community beyond education alone. I support extending this positive impact City-wide. Currently, I am intimately involved with Promise Heights, run out of the UMD School of Social Work. Promise Heights operates in five schools in my district in CW Baltimore, each with their own set of challenges: Furman L Templeton, Eutaw Marshburn, Historic Samuel Coleridge Taylor, Booker T Washington, and Renaissance Academy. My efforts to date have included helping to remove Renaissance from the 2016-17 school closure list, anti-violence marches with male students at Renaissance, securing resources for Samuel Coleridge Taylor, progress on reopening Crispus Attucks Recreation Center (attached to Eutaw Marshburn), and promotion of the Promise Heights program to a wide variety of stakeholders.

9. The Baltimore City Health Department provides chilling statistics in its 2014 Health Disparities Report. Factors of race, gender, economics, and zip code can all be determining factors for a short and painful life, and the trajectories begin even before birth. Given what we know now about what works, how will you approach making sure every child has the opportunity to grow up to become a healthy adult?

As an active member of Social Determinants of Health Workgroup, we work to identify the causes and solutions to health challenges in economically-disadvantaged communities. On the City Council Health Committee, I work to provide oversight of the heroin task force and make policy recommendations for addressing the opiate-addiction epidemic. I will continue to work with City Health Commissioner Dr.



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Wen, State Senator Shirley-Nathan Pulliam, Delegate Pete Hammen, and other City, State, and federal counterparts to ensure every child has the opportunity to grow up to be a healthy adult.

10. The bright green footprints painted on Baltimore City sidewalks are supposed to denote safe walking passageways for children to get to school. However well intentioned, the reality is that in many neighborhoods there are no safe passageways, and green footprints cut through active drug and gang territory. With schools of choice, some older students are traveling more than 2 hours both morning and evening on unreliable and sometimes unsafe public transportation. What will you do when elected to make sure young people can make it to school everyday safely?

Broadly, to make our streets safer, I will continue to fight for increased foot patrols. Additionally, I pushed for the commonsense rollout of body cameras on our officers and I support more CitiWatch cameras throughout the City to make law enforcement and street activity more transparent.

Specific to students' commutes, I will continue to push for better public transit. I have been and will continue to fight to expand the Circulator system and make it safer with more scrutinous monitoring.