



CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

CITY COUNCIL 12TH DISTRICT CANDIDATE:

JASON PYERON, DEMOCRAT

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- 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?**

The best way to support our young people is to support their parents too every step of the way; starting with better quality, better paying jobs, safer streets to walk to school and work and safer playgrounds to play. Ensuring everyone is making a livable wage to support their family is crucial. Making our transportation more reliable for hard working parents. Ensuring that education is a top issue so that every student can get an excellent education regardless of their zip code. In addition I have been making after school programs more robust and creating more. When elected I will not only focus on job prep for students but also getting more on the job trainings for our high school students too.

- 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?**

Yes. We need to get the communities more involved in education, not less. We need to push for local elected and/or appointed school boards and not state appointed ones, so we can fully fund our schools. The parents need to have a voice in their child's education and right now they don't.

- 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 have a proven track record - I reopened 2 community/recreation centers. We need to invest in more after school programs for kids. Not only is this good for students but it helps parents too. They have more flexibility with working hours all while students can be in after school programs.

- 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 audits. Some of the recreation centers require major upgrades in both physical plant and programming. While a few new, modern recreation centers and being built, it is clear that many**



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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?

I personally helped with getting 2 Rec Center the repairs they needed. We should be looking into getting more rec centers for communities, not shutting them down. I also want to not only open more Rec centers but also want to look into beautifying our district with more green space and playgrounds where we can.

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 want to help our youth build a better future for themselves. Their job prospects should not be between going to another low wage job and being stuck in a dead end job. We can do better. When elected I will bring more apprenticeships into the community that will partner with local business, new startups along with the local high schools. We can solve so many problems by investing in education and our residents. We just have to make the choice of if they are worth it. To that, I will always say, absolutely.

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?

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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 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?



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We must begin with working to restore respect from police officers. In addition, we must make sure that if the centers aren't working nor do they serve the purpose to which they were created, then they need to be closed.. I am all for a solution to ensuring a curfew for our youth to keep them safe but not if the proposed solution doesn't work or worse puts lives at risk. I will ensure that a thorough review of the program be done within the first 30 days of my taking office.

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?*

Yes I would make this a priority. We must invest in our students. That means actually FULLY FUNDING our schools and paying our teachers what they deserve along with the freedom to let them teach how they can best reach kids. Enough with the over- testing of students. We need to make sure our kids are safe and have every opportunity to learn. Every student that goes to school in Baltimore should get the same great education, have the same resources regardless of their zip code.

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?*

Every child should have access to fresh healthy foods, clean drinking water and safe air to breathe. The governments (City, State, and Federal) have for too long focused on failing agendas and not the root causes and resolution of the root causes. We know that attacking root causes is an effective problem resolution technique. Organizations like Strong City Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, etc are continually addressing and identifying the problems and at the same time they are also identifying what works. The City Council is chartered and empowered to hold hearings, where when I'm elected I will bring in the health department officials and those from aforementioned organizations to hold the Mayor's administration accountable. Also, when elected, I will reach out to businesses and institutions to bring their resources to our city.

9. *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 sometime unsafe public transportation. What will you do when elected to make sure young people can make it to school every day safely?*



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I will work to expand the No Drug Zone not just from schools but in addition to the paths taken to school for students. Our children's safety should be the biggest priority along with all of our residents. In addition anyone caught doing illegal activities along these routes will have to face double the penalties. This is something that I will want to start to work on, on day one when I am elected. This is a common sense approach that everyone can agree on, let's get to work to implement it. Clearly the signs surrounding school zones along with inaction from the current council isn't enough. It's time to do more. I will also work with the DOT and Police to stop issuing traffic tickets to parents dropping off their children but instead use the resources to provide safety at the schools.