



## CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

**CITY COUNCIL, 1<sup>st</sup> DISTRICT CANDIDATE: MARK EDELSON, DEMOCRAT**

<https://www.electedelson.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?***

We must ensure that each student has a quality education, and that the school system is being held accountable for this vital task. To support our young people from cradle to career, I believe we must have a diversity of options for our students, including magnet and trade programs. As a city, Baltimore must also work to provide meaningful afterschool and summer programs, to ensure individual student success and positive community engagement. I believe in multiple pathways to success for our children, and believe the residents of Baltimore are uniquely positioned to train and support our students with internships and mentorships. In addition to engaging students in the community, it will allow for our local business to train and educate the next generation of skilled employees and industry leaders in our city.

- 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?***

There must be better oversight of our schools. As a city councilman, I would work to make sure our schools are held accountable for giving each student a high level of education. I believe quality instruction, not standardized tests, ensure the positive intellectual development of our students. While some state oversight of the schools is likely necessary, it's also important for Baltimore City to have some autonomy and flexibility in how it approaches public education. For far too long, the children of Baltimore City have been underserved by a lack of leadership and the solutions to fix the schools should come from our city's elected leaders.

- 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?***

Quality education and afterschool programs are two of my top priorities. That means supporting our students throughout the year, so our most vulnerable student's aren't hindered by summer learning loss. I believe getting our community more involved in educating our students is one way more of our children can be successful in the classroom and in life. From summer and afterschool programs in the classroom to internships at our city's small businesses and institutions, we must do more for our students 365 days a year.



## CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

- 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 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?***

Having access to high-quality recreation centers is vital for Baltimore's children. As a race day wingman for Athletes Serving Athletes, an organization that helps individuals with disabilities participate in road races, I know how important physical activity is for both the mind and the body. Improving the programming and physical plants at our recreation centers will give our children more positive ways to spend their time. They'll also be able to learn first-hand how physical activity can be fun, as well as a way to release any stress from their school or home life. Increasing the programming physical plants of our recreation centers would be a boon to the entire community. They would provide good jobs for members of the community and create positive spaces for our residents of all ages.

- 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?***

On the council, I will work to create multiple pathways to success for our students so they have the tools they need to become entrepreneurs and get quality jobs. I am a young business owner myself, and I believe we have the resources in Baltimore to implement strong and creative internship and apprenticeship programs to provide exciting opportunities for students to stay in the city and contribute to the global economy. As councilman, I will work to facilitate partnerships with local businesses and with universities and community colleges to provide exciting and diversified after-school opportunities for learning that prepare Baltimore's students for quality jobs once they're out of school.

- 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?***

Baltimore is home to some of the best hospitals and medical facilities in the world. In order to deal with the unfortunate trauma that many of our children face, the public sector must collaborate with our city's outstanding doctors, social workers, and mental health professionals. By creating partnerships between these experts and our public institutions, like our schools, we can link our vulnerable children with the assistance that they need, when they need it.



## CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

- 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?**

I believe we need to work with schools, parents, educators and law enforcement to make sure our kids have safe after school activities. First, I believe that the curfew should be pushed back to later in the evening. Regarding curfew centers, we need to work to make sure these locations are a safe place where children can get access to the resources and help that they need, rather than a place that is associated with punishment. Thus, we need to incentivize a strong youth-police relationship and an open and honest dialogue at both curfew centers and on the street. But I believe curfew centers alone are not enough to help keep kids out of trouble after school. I believe we need to increase the availability of safe activities for kids afterschool to keep them out of trouble, such as midnight baseball league. Rather than create more curfew centers, I strongly support utilizing the community school model for our city schools. Involving the community in our children’s schools can make parents more involved in their children’s education. This can help to improve a student’s grades and make sure they get the support they need, both at school and at home. Community schools can also offer after-school activities for students to keep our kids off the streets and put them into situations and environments where they can thrive and grow.

- 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 believe every school should be a community school. In the last year, I’ve talked with countless Baltimoreans and even those who don’t have school-aged children want to help improve our schools. To expand the program, our school and community leaders must make more of an effort to reach out to individuals and organizations who might be able to help more of our schools convert to community schools. When I look at the list of community schools, I see many of our city’s outstanding organizations partnered with our schools. But there are many more institutions in our city that could serve as resources for our students. As leaders, it’s our responsibility to help facilitate those connections.

- 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**



## CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

***what works, how will you approach making sure every child has the opportunity to grow up to become a healthy adult?***

I believe it is critical that every child has an opportunity to grow into a healthy adult in our city. The first step to making sure our kids can grow up to become healthy adults is we need to make sure each school in our city has a registered nurse present at all times. As a City Council member, I will fight to make sure funding is provided to put a full-time nurse in every school in the city.

What's more, we need to make sure every student has access to safe and healthy transportation options so they can get to school and to work safely. I believe that through improvements to our biking and walking infrastructure, we can improve the quality of life for our Baltimore youth and help them live longer, healthier lives. These transportation solutions help eliminate pollution and traffic, which could lead to less stress and improved overall health. Of course, they are both great forms of exercise and set an example for our city's children that movement is important.

Lastly, we have a housing crisis throughout Baltimore and in District 1 and we need to make sure everyone can access safe and affordable housing. As rent continues to rise, we need to be sure that we're providing affordable housing for our city's neediest families. As a member of City Council, I will advocate to expand the affordable housing options for families in Baltimore, and I will not approve any new residential development without plans to incorporate affordable housing units.

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

This issue is one of the reasons I decided to run for City Council. I believe that it's critically important to have a 21st century transportation system in Baltimore. Our transit system needs urgent upgrades and revitalizations and we need to embrace multiple transportation solutions in order to make sure our kids can safely get to school. My transportation vision for our city is a system that is multi-modal, interconnected, safe, reliable, and efficient. This includes an expanded Circulator program, using the water taxi as a form of transportation, safe and contiguous bike lanes, a fully developed bike share program, a Bayview MARC station, a functional bus system, and centrally located transit hubs to bring the modes together.

The first step to reforming Baltimore's transportation system will be to partner with the private sector to incorporate transportation solutions into future growth plans. Other steps include working with the state delegation to bring new funding to the city for transportation projects, advertising our various options within the community and their benefits, and working with organizations and businesses to incentivize alternative transit options, such as providing bike racks and pre-tax deposits to be used on public transit.