



## CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

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### **CITY COUNCIL 5th DISTRICT CANDIDATE:**

**SHARIF J. SMALL, 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?***

My vision and purpose of running for office so that all children and youth growing up in Promise Neighborhoods to have access to great schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career. The purpose of Promise Neighborhoods is to significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth in our most distressed communities, and to transform those communities by—

1. Identifying and increasing the capacity of eligible entities that are focused on achieving results for children and youth throughout an entire neighborhood;
2. Building a complete continuum of cradle-to-career solutions of both educational programs and family and community supports, with great schools at the center;
3. Integrating programs and breaking down agency “silos” so that solutions are implemented effectively and efficiently across agencies;
4. Developing the local infrastructure of systems and resources needed to sustain and scale up proven, effective solutions across the broader region beyond the initial neighborhood; and
5. Learning about the overall impact of the Promise Neighborhoods program and about the relationship between particular strategies in Promise Neighborhoods and student outcomes, including through a rigorous evaluation of the program.

***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, plan to advocate amending the partnership and requesting a yearly outside independent audit of the school spending budget for more transparency and accountability. Also, change process from Appointed to more of elected school board members.

***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?***



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I'm currently working on a Summer Jobs Connect to connect low-income youth in Baltimore with opportunities to develop the workplace skills, leadership experience and access to financial education. The purpose of the program is to use the opportunity of a first-employment experience to instill early career readiness lessons and positive financial behaviors for lifelong success.

***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 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?***

The biggest issue is we have spent more on the police department to lock up our youth than on parks and recreation to save our youth. I will make sure we reinvest into our recreation centers to offer afterschool programs to exposure as well prepare our kids with real life skills such as financial education, entrepreneurship, tutoring, music, art and entertainment.

***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?***

Today, 73 million young people are unemployed worldwide, and three times as many are underemployed — often those working in the informal sector, facing low wages, no benefits, and a higher probability of being laid off. A further 621 million youth are said to be "idle" — not in education or training, and not looking for employment. Youth make up 17 per cent of the world's population and 40 per cent of the world's unemployed.

Our approach will be to provide our youth with opportunities to build leadership, management and entrepreneurial skills in the context of sustainable development so we plan to strengthen our partnership with the Maryland Department of Education, Biztown of Junior Achievement, Small Business Administration and local businesses establishing summer, afterschool and in class programs to fighting poverty through large-scale job creation and entrepreneurship for youth.

***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?***

Children experience the impacts of traumatic stress not only emotionally but also through physical changes in the brain architecture. These changes significantly influence child development. Trauma-informed practices and trauma-specific evidence-based treatments are available to address trauma



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effectively. This growing body of knowledge must be used to develop comprehensive policies that change practices system-wide and ensure sustainability of those practices. Fiscal Benefits. We plan to Implement programs to prevent trauma, intervene early, provide treatment, and build resilience that will require financial investments by states and providers. We know that these programs work and that not investing in them imposes great costs on individuals, families, communities, and society

***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?***

We plan to implement Strategies for Youth which is an policy and training organization dedicated to improving police/youth interactions through community engagement, police training, outreach programs for youth, and proactive use of multi-disciplinary approaches to problem solve and build relationships between police and youth.

***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?***

Our young people need a wide range of learning opportunities and supports to succeed. A quality academic program is necessary, but it is not sufficient. It is also essential to address the myriad interdependent factors that affect our young people's success, including the rising opportunity gap and the inequities in many students' lives.

Using schools as hubs, community schools bring educators, families, and community partners together to offer a range of opportunities, supports, and services to children, youth as well as their families and communities. Community schools:

- Provide expanded learning opportunities that are motivating and engaging during the school day, after school, and in the summer; and
- Offer essential health and social supports and services;
- Engage families and communities as assets in the lives of their children and youth.

Every community school responds to unique local needs and includes the voices of students, families, and residents. Schools become centers of the community and are open to everyone beyond school hours, including evenings and weekends.



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Community schools have a climate and culture that enable students to develop cognitive, social, emotional, physical, civic, and ethical competencies and the capacity to thrive in college, career, and life and as participants in our democracy.

Think of community schools as both a strategy and a place. A strategy for bringing together educators, families and community stakeholders to attain collective impact; a place where the community gathers to support the education of its children and youth and a place through which its young people are connected to learning experiences across the community.

***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?***

Too many of our young people are exposed to lead poisoning and is an epidemic among Baltimore's poor and is still claiming young victims years after authorities vowed to eradicate it. At least 4,900 Maryland children have been poisoned by lead in the past decade, their brains exposed to a contaminant that causes lasting learning and behavioral problems. There are likely more victims, because not all children are tested.

***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?***

We plan to create a Teens, Crime, and the Community (TCC) initiative to create safer schools and neighborhoods. TCC's *Community Works* program helps teens understand how crime affects them and their families, friends, and communities, and it involves them in crime prevention projects to help make their communities safer and more vital.

Also, create a Be Safe and Sound campaign to provide a model for how parents, students, and school staff can work together to make schools safer and more secure. Be Safe and Sound in School (B3S) is an initiative of the National Crime Prevention Council conducted in collaboration with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice. B3S is a program that seeks to raise awareness of school safety and security issues and provide the tools and resources needed to effectively address them.