



CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

CITY COUNCIL 2nd DISTRICT CANDIDATE:

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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 overall vision for our youth would be one in which we are able to provide:

- World-class education (to include universal pre-k)
- Increase of trades and apprenticeships
- local hiring
- create career ladders
- fulltime living wage jobs within reasonable travel distance from home

As Councilman, my priorities strategies in my first four years are to enact a local minimum wage law which achieves \$15/hour, to help increase trades, training and hiring opportunities in our schools and communities; to begin educating our children early through universal Pre-K; to move all of our children out of lead poisoned housing; and to provide full college tuition or training-to-career support for all BCPS high school graduates upon graduation thru a council sponsored fund.

My strategies in general are about collaboration and persistence. In order for strategies to be successful it must take collaboration from the Mayor and other members of the city council.

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 Baltimore Public School System (BCPS) is crucial to the city's youth in which it serves. Its very clear that the partnership between the city and state (created in the 90's) has become outdated and needs to be revised.

The Mayor and City Council are responsible for the education of our youth. BCPS, in its current hybrid state, lacks accountability and local transparency with it comes to the youth in which it serves. City Leaders have lost the authority to foster impactful community relationships back into our children's schooling. As Councilman, I will be advocate for city leaders to have more meaningful public and school-based input on fiscal matters and the overall curriculum. If Baltimore City is to be required to contribute more to the education of our children then we should have the authority to have more input on the decisions of our children. The future of Baltimore City relies heavily on bringing our schools back to Baltimore communities.



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- 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?***

As a parent, community leader and product of Baltimore City Public Schools, I understand the importance of constructive activities for our youth. My approach has and will always be to fight for the youth and their opportunities. As Councilman, I will introduce the citywide program for our youth, offering them a continuum of customized services from mentoring and trade training to social skills, recreation and community value building skills. Also I will introduce legislation for the revitalization of existing recreation centers, and expand existing programs to include all youth of the 2nd District.

As a mentor and former operator of a Youth Enriched Summer Camp, I know that underserved children and youth lose academic gains during summer vacations. This is largely due to a lack of positive activities and engaging experiences.

In my current capacity, I have been able to mentor and teach some of our youth the importance of finance and how saving money helps to build their future. Under my leadership, those children were able to increase their math and reading skills during the summer.

I am familiar with the School Age Child Care Centers that are currently being under utilized. At one point these centers were citywide centers providing onsite child care during school hours and during the summer. Now there are only two centers (Northwood and Waverly) left in the entire city. These two centers no longer operate as citywide and are constantly put on the block to cut out of the City's budget. While most of the center's funding comes from the family tuition payments and state vouchers, and with city paying only \$167,000 annual for those centers, I don't understand why such a rash decision would ever be considered. If we are every going to fully support our youth then we cannot ease up on the support during afterschool and in the summertime, as they are the most critical times.

- 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?***

As I previously mentioned, I will be the top advocate for the revitalization of existing recreational centers.

The needs for local youth activities are very essential to the upbringing of our youth and the survival of



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Baltimore's communities. The true idea of a City leader especially a Councilperson is to help the communities find a means to advocate for local youth activities. Our biggest need is for more leaders and mentors at recreation centers and at local youth activities. As Councilman, I would support the sale of city-owned property (that is available and expendable) to help expand or build recreation centers such as the Rita Church Community Center in East Baltimore in other parts of the city. Also this initiative could be a great for the Officer Friendly reemergence.

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?*

Currently, there are many of our youth that are becoming inspiring entrepreneurs, with many of them looking at trades and starting businesses as an alternative to college. I support the increase of trades in high schools not just at vocational-technical schools (i.e. Caver, MERV, Westside) but other schools that could benefit from a trades program. Also I am in full support of a year round Youth Works program, as this would help to increase the skills and experiences of our youth to prepared them for the workforce. While all of these initiatives would be great at give our youth options, there still needs to be a program that would provide ongoing placement for the graduates in their trades and completion of Youth Works.

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?*

I am strong supporter of the expansion of community schools. As Councilman, I will advocate for the need of more community schools citywide. These schools must have established health suites to include mental health services to help families in crisis. Also, a dedicated dental program to provide wraparound services for school kids and families in the community.

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 there 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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While I have supported the curfew legislation, I do believe that the law needs to be revised. Initially the law was put in place to protect those children that were unattended, who are often on their own in the late hours of the night. Also this law helps to protect our preteens and teens from getting into trouble or becoming victims to violence. Curfew centers are there help safeguard our youth who are caught in violation of the curfew.

As Councilman, I would like to have this law revised so that it wouldn't affect those teenagers who are working during the evening. I think the use of a specialized work permit card could be very useful in help to fix this issue. As for the curfew centers, I would expect them to offer a consortium of services to help safe guard our youth while they are there.

Positive interaction with law enforcement is best for all youth in Baltimore City. While I understand that interaction is a two-way street, I also understand that there needs to be training and mentoring done. Our police officers need to be properly trained in understanding the need to mentoring our youth. The resurgence of the Officer Friendly and P.A.L centers could provide positive interaction.

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 believe that every one of our schools should be funded and staffed as a community school and evaluated by a community advisory board on measure of success on a semi-annually basis. The expansion strategy should include an annual share of the school budget to include 3% of the dedication of general funds to youth activities. As proposed by the Charter Amendment from the current City Council in March, which is up for voter approval in November 2016 in the Baltimore City General Election.

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?*

Lead Poisoning is one of the many issues that affect a child's opportunity to grow into a healthy adult. The approach is very simple and concise, total removal and relocation of Baltimore's children from lead poisoned properties. Starting with families that have children 6 years or under who are more susceptible to lead poisoning. There needs to be an increase in lead inspections and the active prohibition of lead contaminated properties. Baltimore City should have lead-free standards in place that are totally transparent and accountable to ensure that these lead poisoning hotspots do not exist. It is my focus to eradicate lead poisoning in our children by eliminating those hotspots all together.



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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 every day safely?

We do not live in a perfect world and making sure our kids are safe is not always a guarantee. However, I do have some initiatives that would help.

- Dispatch more School Officers around the walking passageways to school and after school
- Hire more crossing guards to work at the busiest intersections
- Create a community program recruiting relatives and neighbors to walk elementary children to and from school
- Extend all pedestrian walkways in school zone areas