



## CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

### CITY COUNCIL 7<sup>th</sup> DISTRICT CANDIDATE:

**SHAWN Z. TARRANT, 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 first line of support for young people is fighting to keep schools, rec centers, libraries and educational institutions open and accessible. As students graduate through the school system, I will always advocate for their job readiness and skill development. I plan on working with businesses that normally hire from outside of the city because of lack of perceived talent or skills in the City. I will share with the school system the type of employment it needs to prepare our children for a career or working for themselves. Children need to be supported by government agencies to help secure full time help with living wages. A motivated student will excel that lives in 7th district.

- 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, our city government should have oversight over the cities school system. I would change the school system's approach, especially in high schools, to focus on careers and vocation to prepare young people successful, skillful, and employed. I would urge the public schools to have more outreach and a tighter relationship with parents and the community at large. There will need to be more partnerships with non-profits and for profit companies in Baltimore City.

- 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?*

Recreation centers! Recreation centers! Recreation centers! Youth need meaningful activity outside of school. Rec centers give the activities to focus on, and outlets for creativity and physical fitness. With the lack of dollars available to assist children after school we will need to find more partners willing to help children be employed and extra work to strengthen math and science skills.

- 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*



## CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

*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?*

I would like combine more recreation center with schools. For example, Mt. Royal's recreation center is attached to the school. We need to have new centers built attached to school so it will be state of the art and in use 8-8pm. Kids should have physical education classes during the day in the centers.

**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?***

Yes, I will support partnerships with industry and nonprofits that can offer wages to our students to help them take care of themselves and their families. As young people gain their independence, early access to employment helps them to build work ethic. I would certainly ask industry leaders in our district and city to provide paid internships to students. Our district has two colleges. I would ask MICA and Coppin for high school job readiness and mentoring partnerships.

**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's youth are the most tragic victims of the latest civil unrest and decades of neglect. There is a mental health crisis in Baltimore City and we must acknowledge that fact and address the issue aggressively. We must better provide effective and positive alternatives for our youth so that they can be valuable contributors to their community versus falling to negative influences. We need fulltime social workers in the schools from the University Maryland School of Social Work and other institutions in the city to reach out and engage our youth at an early age thus breaking down the stigma of mental health treatment.

**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***



## CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

***position on Curfew and Curfew Centers be? How would you build more positive interactions between youth and law enforcement?***

This is an opportunity for community leaders and stakeholders to assess what is going on with our City's children and address their needs at home and at school. We do not want our children to feel like they are getting arrested or it is their fault when we know this is a parent problem not a child problem. In general, I believe our children should be on the streets after dark unless it is work, community building, or medically related. We need to play in integral part in keeping our youth busy with positive and character building activities, especially when they are out for school during the summer. Youth centers need to be open daily and throughout the summer so that kids have a place to go and have a support system in place that ultimately will enhance development of our children. In addition, City Public Pools need extended hours that will allow kids to have a safe and healthy place to hang out with their family and friends over the summer.

"Baltimore needs to hire police who respect the community, and like the community." Shawn Z. Tarrant

Crime in Baltimore is simply at an unacceptable level. Baltimore as a community cannot truly grow and prosper at the current crime level. However, this uptick in crime did not happen in a vacuum and we cannot simply arrest our way out of this problem. We must rebuild the relationship between law enforcement and the community and that starts with all patrol officers having body cameras. I also believe in community policing, and I would implement various comprehensive and holistic approaches while working closely with the community to improve public health and safety, hold law enforcement officials accountable for their actions, and target the most violent and repeat offenders before they do harm in our communities.

I will continue to support incentives for officers who live in the city. Police officers need to again become active and local participants in the communities they are serving, and this can be achieved living among those they protect, mentoring neighborhood children from an early age, and holding career fairs in the community.

I would advocate for additional training in de-escalation techniques.

I would support community advisory boards with teeth to make necessary changes to protect our community from bad actors on the force.

Police offers more than any other profession needs diversity training to better understand the community they are serving. This will be a requirement once elected. I served on the Minority Health Disparities committee for four years in Annapolis, and cultural competency training is a must for officers. I will meet with the Fraternal Order of Police and community to come up with a realistic plan to put the necessary policy into place.

***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***



## CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

***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?***

Community schools are a good idea and good practice because they create a partnership between the school, students, teachers, and parents and a local business or entity. Funds, resources, and man power can be used to help better the school community, which in turn increases the overall achievement of students, buy in from students, and involvement of parents. For example, Johns Hopkins University, the YMCA and UM Baltimore has resources and staff that can take any school to greater heights. I will work extra hard to bring more of these agreements in line to assist our children and staff.

***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?***

The above statement is an unfortunate and irrefutable fact in Baltimore City. A Resident of Roland Park on an average lives 20 years longer than a resident of Sandtown-Winchester. This requires an aggressive and coordinated response from Federal, State, City, and community leaders.

Raising more money for after school activities is a key for the development of our children. The City should not be in the hotel business that is not profitable. The parking garages make money every year and should not be sold for a temporary budget fix. Raising more money by partnering with businesses and Institutions in our community is the right thing to do.

Middle and high school students should have the opportunity to work on service learning hours and participate in job training and application activities. I would also expand mentoring opportunities with the local communities and businesses in addition to increasing tutorial programs at the community centers in order to reduce remedial issues with city students and get them up to grade level.

I want to expand the City's middle school sports program. The highly successful middle school lacrosse program is a great example of the positive influences and aspects of youth sports. We need to build a bench for students who want to get good grades, learn sportsmanship in competition, and develop positive and healthy habits early on in development. I am such a believer in the benefits of youth sports participation that I have help sponsor the Philadelphia Stars, a youth baseball club located in the Rosemont, Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park Communities, and part of the James Mosher Baseball league, the oldest continuously operating African American youth baseball league in America.



## CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Better economic opportunities for Baltimore City's young people are also a must. We need to better develop job training and re-training programs that will create a skilled workforce that can compete and create livable wage jobs with benefits. I will strengthen local hiring requirements for City residents. I will also support projects that create skilled training opportunities and apprenticeships that would drastically increase chances of residents for skilled living wage jobs that pay \$15.00 dollars an hour and provide benefits. Those who are chronically unemployed, on government assistance, and the formerly incarcerated would receive a special focus from my office when it comes to job training and re-training because making these often forgotten members of society productive citizens again is a must if we want to bring all of Baltimore back up.

We must have cooperation and collaboration with our corporate, medical, educational, and technological communities. We need to help Baltimoreans obtain the skill set for and land jobs in these well-paying sectors. I would work with our previously mentioned private partners, and public partners including Baltimore City Community College and various local, state, and federal government agencies to push this goal forward.

***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 will need to revamp the footprints system and help children select schools and routes that make since without losing so much time traveling. The bus routes need to be a priority to be on time for our children.