



CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

CITY COUNCIL 9th DISTRICT CANDIDATE: JOHN BULLOCK, DEMOCRAT

<http://bullockforcouncil.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 provide more constructive recreational opportunities for young people as well as partner with locally-based companies to sponsor summer and year-round jobs.

- 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?**

A fully or partially elected school board would provide greater accountability and local control. In such a structure, school board members would have to answer to Baltimore City residents and be more transparent.

- 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 an educator, I recognize that schools must be more than buildings that hold classes from 8 am to 3 pm. Historically, schools have operated as a central part of the community; and now more than ever, we need places that provide holistic services. It is important to partner with them for extended school days and after school programs. All of Baltimore would benefit if this were a citywide effort.

- 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?**

We must seek an increase in funding and staff for recreation centers through public and private partnerships. Programming should not only focus on sports but should also include art, music, dance and computer programs to provide greater enrichment.



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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?*

It is necessary to ensure that there is pipeline for trained workers. This is an effort that should be supported by the public and private sector. I would like to connect a sustainable training center with socially responsible local employers who are willing to hire young people. We must also utilize our two- and four-year colleges as training centers and business incubators.

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?*

Post-traumatic stress is a reality for many of us in Baltimore. I will work to support efforts around such care and partner with organizations who are working in this area.

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?*

As a father, I find it troubling when I see minors outside and unsupervised during late night/early morning hours. I agree that it is important to provide supportive resources for young people and their families. In addition, programs like the Police Athletic League would go a long way in establishing such positive relationships.

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?*



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Yes. I believe that this strategy can be strengthened by increasing the opportunities for neighborhood residents to participate in mutually beneficial activities and creating partnerships to sustain such efforts.

- 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?***

My agenda will be to increase green space in city neighborhoods. The multitude of abandoned houses and vacant lots presents an opportunity for community gardens and urban agriculture. Also, diminished air quality leads higher rates of asthma which is the most common reason for students to miss school. Given the pervasiveness of lead poisoning, it is important to increase testing for children as well as follow up and outreach from the Health Department. Additionally, an expanded lead abatement program with the Housing Department would help address this critical issue.

- 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?***

More foot patrols and positive interaction with neighborhoods would go a long way in addressing this issue. Also local community associations could assist in providing additional eyes on the street and fostering a safer environment.