



CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

MAYORAL CANDIDATE: CARL STOKES, DEMOCRAT

<http://carlstokes2016.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?**

Cradle to Career

In 2014, five organizations in Baltimore received grants for a 5-year Birth-to-Five Pilot program. In 2017, halfway through the programs, I will ask for an evaluation of success and challenges of the program so that planning can begin immediately on formulating plans to increase funding, reaching out to the Department of Health and Human Services for additional years and expansion.

Eighty-nine percent of fourth grade students and 87 percent of the eighth grade students in Baltimore City Public Schools failed to meet the reading standards. In mathematics, 88 percent of both fourth and eighth grade students failed to meet the standards. And these numbers are worse for poor black children. We cannot pick and choose who we educate. If the problem is home then we must address those problems; if the problem is school leadership or teachers we will address those problems; if the problem is resources, these problems will be addressed.

Beginning in middle school, students need ongoing exposure to and preparation for postsecondary and career opportunities. While Maryland continues to lead the nation in the percentage of students passing Advanced Placement (AP) exams, there is still significant disparity in participation and performance of low income students. The Stokes Administration will promote the early identification of academically talented students for honors and Advanced Placement programs.

Based on industry forecasts, the number of Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs to prepare middle and high school students for high-skill, high demand careers will be expanded as will local partnerships that provide dual enrollment, internship, apprenticeship and job shadowing opportunities.

Priority

First off, we will redirect operational funds to schools and away from the police. Currently we invest \$200 million in our children and \$500 million to our police. The city spending on police is at an all-time high, spending on education and youth is at an all-time low. We have our highest crime statistics and our greatest achievement gap among our students. This will change under my administration. This increase in funding will allow us to decrease class size and address other needs. I will increase funding to education from 13 to 30 percent of the city's budget in the first 4 years of my administration. I will be certain to make available funding for out-of-school time programming for *all* students with a strong focus on grades 4-8.



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- 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?***

I believe that the mayor should own, be accountable and responsible for our city schools' performance. The Commissioners are essentially appointed by the mayor, and there is where the current disconnect lies (no governor has vetoed a nomination by the mayor.) It's not even a matter of hierarchy, it's a matter of working together, leading as a mayor with known expectations of what the school system needs to accomplish.

I will encourage and support the elimination of bureaucratic obstacles to school success including excess staffing and ineffective processes. Just as the city government must conduct audits, it is clear that City Schools must do the same on a regular, not as-requested, basis.

With the appointment of strong school-based leaders, traditional public schools should be given the same autonomy as charter schools to make decisions on how their budget is spent.

- 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?***

I co-founded two schools for middle school boys with extended day, half-day Saturdays and year round. This time was not just for standard academics, it also include cultural, athletic, STEM, and academic programming. I would work to have that similar model in all PreK-8 schools for all students attending Baltimore City public schools.

Mandatory extended day for 4-8 grades

Extended day does not mean a longer math class or more social studies. Extended day will incorporate additional activities to engage the students in cognitive learning techniques not often learned in the classroom. Student will learn math and problem solving in robotics; reading and comprehension in learning an instrument, and teamwork, research and writing in debate. Extended day would also include dinner.

Structuring Out of School Time programming to achieve academic excellence

Not only should out of school time locations be safe, they must be fun and engaging in order to keep and maintain participation. Out of school time activities might be conducted at the school, a recreation center or church. They might be run by the school system, recreation staff or nonprofits. And all out of school time programming should continue into early evening and include dinner.



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Recreational Programming

I will immediately form a Task Force to use the recreation and parks audit to look at consolidation and appropriate expansion of facilities. Whatever decisions are made, the mandate of the Stokes Administration will be to put the programming where the children live and learn. A mega center in an area not well populated, not near schools, and not on a bus line is not a well-planned center. We will mandate the task force to look at programming before bricks and mortar. The more diverse programming targeted to the neighborhood the more successful the programs will be in keeping our children safe after school and on the weekends. We will approach churches and community centers to hold programming in their facilities with rec and parks staff and equipment. In some communities there are churches are nearly every corner.

If church A offered basketball two times a week, then church B across the street offered debate, sewing, hip-hop dance a few other days, and church C down the street held Storytime and crafts for younger children on other days those coordinated efforts will bring the community together and keep our children safe.

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?

First, I am the person who called for audits of Rec and Parks when I returned to city government because I was astonished and appalled that the mayor wanted to close some rec centers. There also hadn't been audits in almost 30 years. I will call for audits in the first year of my administration. We will be able to determine how we've been spending our money and look at how we can be more efficient and effective in spending our funding.

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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?***

If a young person wants a job they should have a job, if a young person needs a job they should have a job, if a young person wants to learn skills for a career they should be provided internship opportunities. Using the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, we will expand our youth offerings with additional liaisons for business development and work skills training. Some of this activity may occur at the school level in partnership between MOED and City Schools. With the top 25 employers in Baltimore City alone employing over 110,000 people (Maryland Dept. of Commerce, 2015), there are opportunities in some of these businesses as well as the many other businesses that provide services to these larger employers. The city alone employs over 19,000 people – there are opportunities there as well to hire and mentor young people.

As the CEO of the city, it is up to the mayor to serve as a champion for its citizens and for too long we have not done that effectively for our young people. I will do what we did at my charter school, setting up partnerships with Morgan State University and UMBC scholars and fraternities who worked with our students on entrepreneurship; Wombwork Productions teaching children how to create their own art; and the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship.

- 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?***

First I will be very supportive of the community school concept- full wrap around services for students and families. Bring in full social services team, trauma-informed teams in all schools. We will provide programming in community centers and churches.

Trauma professional development for teachers is an optional program. In this day, with the many ways in which our children are traumatized, trauma training should be required of teachers and police equally.

- 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***



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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?

Curfews generally are abridgement of the constitutional right of citizens of any age unless there is an emergency in a community. I am not a big proponent of curfews; therefore, curfew centers aren't and will not be needed. I would be in favor of having 24/7 “youth support” centers. With my out-of-school time plan, youth will be engaged until at least 7pm each evening and rec centers open until 9pm each evening in addition to calling on the city's business community to working with youth on employment.

The trust between youth and law enforcement will take time to rebuild in Baltimore. My safety plan calls for re-training of police in mediation and what we simply call “people skills.” PAL centers are options or integrating the police into recreational programs is most likely the least complicated and most cost efficient way to re-establish those 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?

In theory, every school should be a community school. It will take the support of and engagement of nonprofits, the business community, along with city government to bring full resources for funding needed. Without these partnerships/cooperative efforts, it will be an immense challenge for the government alone and taxpayers alone to fund community schools.

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?

Keeping families and children healthy in Baltimore is a struggle. Strategies to address Baltimore's health challenges will include:

1. Lead the fight to sue lead paint companies in order to provide funding to abate homes of lead paint and to provide much needed mental health services to those already poisoned.
2. Provide mental health services to children and families in the schools.
3. Emulate healthy eating programs in all schools using best practices from around the country.



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4. Charging the health department with aggressively identifying solutions to our food deserts based on previous and ongoing programs analyzed for their successes and challenges.
5. Increase programming in recreation centers to get kids active again. Serving as an example to others, the city will implement weekly employee programs in health and wellness with incentives.

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?

First have Baltimore City police, transportation department (DOT), traffic control, and school crossing guards work together in morning and evening to ensure pathways are monitored closely. Through forging a positive relationship with MTA have them work with Baltimore's DOT to put in place a safety plan on buses for morning and evening.