



2022 Charles County Commissioners Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATE : _____

OFFICE SOUGHT : _____

CAMPAIGN ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER(S): _____

EMAIL: _____

WEBSITE: _____

*I confirm that the responses provided here are my official positions in seeking local office and I understand that **EACC** reserves the right to share my responses with members and interested parties.*

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE SUBMITTED:** _____

Candidates: To be considered for a recommendation, you must indicate your response to each of the questions. Clarifications, explanations, and other information may be attached, but please be certain to clearly indicate the questions(s) to which you refer. Please return your completed and signed questionnaire to EACC.

Education Funding

Background Points

- With a critical need in closing education gaps, expanding programs and services, community schools, and improving student achievement, in 2016, lawmakers formed the Kirwan Commission to meet the challenges of a changing global economy and prepare Maryland students to be successful citizens in the 21st century.
- The Kirwan Commission's recommendations evolved into The Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which originally passed in 2020, was vetoed by Governor Hogan, and had its veto overridden in 2021. The Blueprint revises the state's school funding formula for the first time in nearly two decades. Over the next 13 years, the Blueprint calls for billions of dollars of new investment in Maryland schools that would expand career and technical education programs, community schools, and pre-k; provide more resources for students from backgrounds of poverty and students with special needs; increase educator pay; hire more educators and expand and diversify the educator pipeline; and create a new, more rigorous accountability system. These programs are designed to raise achievement and address Maryland's economic inequality with programs to target concentrated poverty.
- The County Commissioners will have a significant impact on the implementation of the Blueprint, and the future funding and success of Charles County schools. The Blueprint is landmark legislation, but there is a continued need for investment in Charles County schools to see that the Blueprint is successfully implemented, and in ensuring that educator voices are heard and respected throughout implementation.

1. Please provide your general and specific thoughts on how the county can address the unmet needs (e.g. disparities in internet infrastructure, teacher shortages, mental health professional shortages, transportation, substitutes, special education support, etc.) facing our schools. Detail how you would prioritize aid for education in your budget deliberations.

2. During the implementation of The Blueprint for Maryland's Future, each county will need to provide money to cover their local share for the Blueprint. What is your plan to meet our county's required local share?

3. There is considerable room for improvement in addressing educator recruitment and retention. Class sizes have increased because of cost-cutting measures and due to resignations and retirements. And Maryland is always challenged with filling educator jobs because we import nearly half of all certificated teachers from prep programs in other states. The coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated these shortages. At the same time, the Blueprint calls for the hiring of 15,000 additional educators to provide more individualized attention to students. How will you address critical concerns with educator recruitment and retention?

4. Do you support or oppose Maryland's updated maintenance of effort law that requires local jurisdictions to fund the local share of all wealth-equalized formulas, instead of only the foundation formula?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

Explain your rationale:

Public Funding for Private Schools

Background Points

- The EACC believes any education dollars spent outside of improving public schools makes it harder to make the progress necessary to provide a world-class education for every student.
- The Maryland State Department of Education requires a certificate of approval or registration for private schools; it does not accredit or license them. Private schools do not have to report or administer teacher qualifications, class sizes, adherence to College and Career State Standards, student retention rates, graduation rates, demographics, or discipline or suspension policies. Without these measures, it is impossible to ascertain the standards to evaluate any of the funded programs funneling public tax dollars to private schools.
- Carroll County Commissioners created a \$400,000 "Educational Opportunities Fund" to enhance and enrich the educational opportunities for home- and private-schooled students. The EACC is opposed to this type of diversion of public funding with no accountability.

5. Do you support or oppose allocating public funding to home and privately schooled students?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

Explain your rationale:

Collective Bargaining

Background Points

- The EACC supports efforts to protect and enhance collective bargaining rights.
- Collective bargaining is the negotiation of a contract – including wages, salary scale, benefits, and working conditions – between employers and employees. The items agreed to in a ratified collective bargaining agreement apply to all employees in a bargaining unit, providing a benefit to employees and employers in not having to negotiate thousands of individual contracts.

6. Do you support or oppose public education employees' rights to bargain collectively?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

Explain your rationale:

Continuing Impact of the Pandemic

Background Points

- The pandemic has exacerbated a pre-existing, multi-faceted housing crisis. Housing costs continue to rise, keeping some families out of the market entirely, while those whose incomes were slashed during the pandemic have fallen so far behind that:
 - The Census Bureau estimates 7 million households as of late June 2021 faced eviction when the temporary moratorium on eviction enacted during the pandemic was lifted.
 - The National Equity Atlas estimates approximately 129,000 Maryland households, as of August 2021, were behind on rent and faced possible eviction when the temporary moratorium on eviction enacted during the pandemic was lifted.
- The pandemic has also increased stresses, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), food insecurity, and digital divide issues for our students.

7. How will your budget address the increased needs for mental health supports for students and educators in the wake of the pandemic?

8. Safe and affordable housing is necessary for all students to be able to succeed in school. How will you address the affordable housing crisis in Charles County?

9. The pandemic further illuminated the immediate need for reliable, affordable access to technology for all students and educators in our state. How would you propose to eliminate the digital divide?

Racial and Social Justice

Background Points

- The EACC unequivocally believes that our diversity makes us stronger. We fundamentally believe that schools should be safe, welcoming, and nurturing learning environments for students of all backgrounds and beliefs, and places where all our students see themselves in the lessons they learn and experiences they enjoy. While students of color made up approximately 64% of the student population across the state in school year 2019-2020, our state employed only 29% teachers of color, 38% principals of color, and 45% assistant principals of color.
- MSEA was represented on the Kirwan Commission and a vocal advocate of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future in part because of our support for training and developing high-quality teachers and education leaders, particularly those from diverse and historically underrepresented backgrounds.
- Every child, regardless of their background or zip code, deserves education justice and equitable access to opportunities, resources, and supports. We believe that the lives of our Black and Brown students matter and that all our students have a fundamental right to be educated in safe, healthy, and supportive learning communities and all our educators deserve safe, healthy, and supportive working environments.
- Maryland and U.S. history are far more diverse than is generally reflected in the content and courses currently taught in our public schools. Far too many Marylanders can progress through their formal primary and secondary education and rarely, if ever, see themselves reflected in the content they are learning or hear about themselves in the stories they read and are told. This lack of inclusivity negatively impacts not only our students' ownership of and agency in their learning, but it also adversely impacts their overall engagement in their learning and portrays a one-sided view of our history for all students. This is further exacerbated by the dearth of a more diverse field of educators in our schools and by the disproportionate (and sometime inaccurate) representations seen in society and in our culture that ultimately reinforces a sense of "otherness" for the people, communities, and cultures who have been rendered less relevant and less valuable.
- The EACC recognizes the vital importance of ensuring that all students learn about historical figures who not only had a tremendous impact on the forming of our state and our nation but whose actions and sacrifices laid the foundation upon which this nation's pledge of "liberty and justice for all" must be built.
- The EACC is committed to developing critical thinking skills in our students because these skills enable them to better understand the problems our society faces and to develop collective solutions. To that end, we are abundantly clear that truth and honesty are fundamental components of teaching and learning, as are academic integrity and professional responsibility. Our essential mission is to prepare our students for their future and maintain an active role in our democracy.

10. The EACC supports honesty in education. To encourage analytical thinking, we believe educators should have professional autonomy within their classrooms. Do you support or oppose this position?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

Explain your rationale:

11. How will you support diversity, equity, and inclusion for all students throughout the county? What specific policies do you support whose goals are focused on providing equitable access, opportunities, resources, and supports?

Community Schools

Background Points

- Poverty dramatically and negatively affects the well-being of children, particularly in the areas of physical health, mental health, safe housing, access to technology, parental support, family planning services, nutrition, youth employment, and education. Each of these areas play a large role in whether students can learn and do well in school—making it imperative that these opportunity gaps be closed if we want to provide an equitable education in our communities. According to data collected by MSDE, 48% of Maryland public school students were enrolled for free and reduced-price meals this school year (meaning their family income level is at or below 185% of federal income poverty guidelines).
- The EACC supports the establishment of community schools, where applicable, which are designed to close these opportunity gaps by making the school a hub for essential services that students in disadvantaged communities lack.
- Community schools generally have the following four components: (1) they serve a high concentration of students in poverty; (2) they employ a full-time coordinator to lead community school-related services; (3) they conduct a needs assessment to identify key obstacles to learning and the services needed to close the opportunity gaps; and (4) they work with community partners to bring those needed services into the school building or nearby locations to make them accessible to students and community members.
- The Blueprint phases in community schools beginning in FY20, starting with 219 schools with 80% or more of their students enrolled for free and reduced-price meals. Community schools will be added, phased in according to highest levels of poverty first, until FY27, when a predicted 557—nearly one-third of all schools in the state—are projected to become community schools. That makes this one of the largest scale expansions of community schools in the nation.
- The American Rescue Plan provided additional funding to assist with the expansion of small group instruction delineated in the Blueprint. Of these funds, at least 20% must be used to address pandemic-associated learning gaps through the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs.
- The EACC supports equitable and adequate resources to provide every student with an opportunity to learn in a safe and non-disruptive environment. Establishing and funding community schools is a research-based strategy for closing opportunity gaps and building strong communities.

9. Do you support or oppose local efforts to create and support community schools in areas of concentrated poverty?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

Explain your rationale:

Parental Involvement and Public Support

Background Points

- It is calculated that school age children spend 70% of their waking hours (including weekends and holidays) outside of school.
- Research shows that the most consistent predictors of children's academic achievement and social adjustment are parental involvement in schools and parental expectations of the child's academic attainment and satisfaction with their child's education at school.

10. What would you do to increase public support of and parental involvement in our public schools?

Privatization

Background Points

- The EACC opposes any effort to outsource or privatize education jobs that are part of a bargaining unit. We maintain that any attempt to outsource or privatize jobs of public educators violates collective bargaining agreements because such an effort is in essence terminating or firing bargaining unit positions.
- Outsourcing and privatization efforts have threatened teacher and education support professional (ESP) jobs for years. In the last few years, Anne Arundel County has attempted to outsource teaching services for deaf and blind students, Talbot County has discussed privatizing transportation services, and Kent County has attempted to privatize custodial services. There have been multi-county efforts on the Eastern Shore to outsource the hiring of occupational therapists and physical therapists to work in the schools.
- When jobs are outsourced, quality control is diminished, and safety is compromised. Public employees are subject to background checks that private employers often do not require. After privatizing, local school boards lose control over the individuals working in schools and have little ability to provide input on job performance.
- Privatizers often use an argument of cost-savings as a means of winning contracts. The amount is often misleading because they intentionally underestimate first year operating costs. Ultimately, they reduce hours, health care coverage, or just cut jobs. All these steps lead to increase in local unemployment and less money in the community overall.

11. Are you in favor of contracting out educator, custodial, cafeteria, and maintenance services rather than have those services provided by Board of Education employees?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

Explain your rationale:

Essay Questions

A. What are the top three things you would like to accomplish in the next four years if you are elected to Office?

B. What is your view of the current local tax structure? For what changes, if any, would you advocate?

C. Explain how you will work with the Board of Education and your Commissioner Colleagues and the EACC to address the needs of the public schools in Charles County.