

2009 SPPACE QUESTIONNAIRE

Susan Walker CMS Board of Education – District 5

1. **What are the top three issues facing our school district? How would you propose to tackle these issues?**

Pupil Assignment: CMS must have clear guidelines that are transparent and applied consistently throughout the district. The plan should insure stability and predictability with strong feeder patterns.

Fiscal Responsibility: Parents and taxpayers want greater transparency and efficiency. We need to protect teachers and the classroom by finding both capital and operational savings. We need to benchmark and evaluate expenditures in greater detail.

Academic Achievement: We need to begin with the premise that every child can learn and prepare students for a lifetime of success. Increase the graduation rate, close the achievement gap and gain parental support.

2. **Why are so many students (especially low-income and minority youth) failing state exams and dropping out, and what can Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools do to change that?**

This is not unique to CMS but is also a national problem. Children of poverty often lack the support systems, role models, mental and emotional resources needed. Truancy is also a large factor in failure and dropping out. CMS needs quality teachers in every classroom. Each child learns differently and we need to develop plans for each. We need to focus on vertical articulation.

3. **How do you believe Mecklenburg County should fund school capital costs, parks, roads, transit, police and fire protection needs for the County? Should purchasers of new homes be responsible for funding these services for the entire County? Do you believe that these types of proposals are a fair way to pay for required services to existing taxpayers?**

I believe that voter approved bonds are the best method of paying for schools and parks. On a limited basis COPS can also be utilized. Roads, transit, police and fire protection are funded by the City. I do not support impact fees or transfer taxes.

4. **What would you propose to do to reduce expenses in line with the reduced funding from the state?**

We need to benchmark contracts to insure best pricing. Increase use of technology. Given the recent reduction in force, future cuts need to be made outside of the classroom. Administration and transportation costs should be streamlined and any area of consolidation

with the county must be strongly considered. We need to look to outsource all non-core services such as transportation and food service.

- 5. Would you support the use of an accounting system that tracks per-pupil/per-school expenses and student performance at the individual school level for comparative purposes?**

Yes, but only if it can be cost justified by the Board to increase student achievement or find savings.

- 6. What are your suggestions for innovative new funding sources for school capital projects?**

Solicit private sector funding sources. Solicit naming rights to facilities such as auditoriums, gyms and stadiums. Solicit land donations or transfers and explore lease/purchase options.

- 7. What suggestions do you have that would reduce transportation costs for the District? Do you support allowing older children to use public transportation to get to and from school?**

Continue to consolidate bus routes and extended walking distances to bus stops. Establish mandatory walking within a revised radius of the school. Explore safe drop sites where parents can bring students for daily bus pick up/drop off. I support allowing older children to use public transportation but CATS has limited cross town bus routes.

- 8. If elected, how do you view your role as School Board Member?**

As an elected official I serve at the will of the people and am keeper of the public trust. My role is to provide vision and leadership and work together with the Superintendent, staff and fellow members to facilitate academic excellence for all of our children. We must operate with transparency and seek public input. I will establish open lines of communication with my constituents and treat them as valued customers.