

2009 SPPACE QUESTIONNAIRE

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CMS Board of Education - District 6

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

The top three issues in our school district that I feel need to be tackled are as follows:

1. Home school boundaries – We know that this is not a new issue. Drawing the lines around home schools will upset parents one way or another. In District 6, our community has been going through this challenge over the last few years. We need the local representation to support our community. I am committed to my local community to ensure that our students get the best education at the school that is meant for them. Transportation more than 10 miles is not a local school for students. That results in longer bus transportation that ends up costing tax payers more.
2. Drop out rate in CMS schools – We know that education starts in schools and in the classroom. We need to be sure that students get an all around education to give them the incentive to stay in school. We should stop cutting out all the extra curricular activities such as arts, music, physical education, dance, and foreign languages from schools. These activities help students grow and learn. It gives students something to enjoy as well as learn. It gives students that break in their day to be able to make it through the rest of the day. If we take away all extra curricular activities, we run the risk of pushing kids out the door. This I believe is what is causing our higher drop out rate every year.
3. Quality of Educational Teachers – We keep cutting out budgets for teachers as well as cutting teachers. I feel these things are causing less educated teachers to be left in the classroom. We need more qualified educators to be teaching our children. We need those teachers that have been around the education system and know our children. This means more local teachers with the knowledge educating our children. These local teachers know what is going on in our community schools. It is imperative that we keep qualified teachers to teach our children.

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?

As I stated above, this is one of our major issues today. We need to stop cutting out all extra-curricular activities to keep the students in school. Learning is the critical most important need in schools, but we all know that we learn better when we keep our mind as well as body active. Allowing kids to express themselves through art, sports, music, and dance helps keep kids at school and wanting to learn. This in turn helps kids stay in school and go farther in their education.

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?

We are all part of the same community. In some ways, we are all responsible for the costs of schools, parks, roads, transit, police, and fire protection services. This is our obligation to our community. There are ways to control these costs though. I do not think we should be paying for these funds at the time of buying a house, but I do think through our taxes, time, and putting the right leaders in place is what we can do to do our part of controlling expenses.

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

I think reducing expenses in the areas of transportation and reimbursement of unnecessary spending are where we can start. Expenses that reimbursed should be reviewed more carefully. Transportation costs can be controlled by where the buses are going as well as making fuel purchases in advance and locking in those costs in longer contracts. These expenses end up in the community, which result in higher costs for the community.

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?

I do support tracking per-pupil school expenses, but I also feel that every child is different, and should not be limited to resources because of expenses. Some children will incur more expenses based on their individual needs.

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

Some ideas for innovative funding sources are not new, but they have been proven. Depending on the type of project, it can be divided up between the school, county, and state. There are many PTA's and PTO's that are willing to help raise funding for these type of projects from the local communities, and the school board has not approved these ideas in the past. Another idea would be to allow equal representation from the school as well as the school board to choose contractors and builders to ensure that we are choosing the right fit for the project. We should do a better job at requiring more RFP's to be sure that we are receiving the greatest quality of work at the best price.

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?

I do support older children using public transportation if it is what the parents are comfortable with. This would greatly reduce costs of school provided transportation. Other ways to reduce these costs is to keep kids at their local what should be "home" schools. This would equate to less transportation costs and less time for drivers, if they are kept in closer boundaries of the home school that students are being transported too.

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

If elected, I view my role as a School Board Member to be a representative of my local community. I act on behalf of what my community needs are. I believe my role should be to speak and act on their behalf. I will not act alone or on my own. I plan on visiting our local schools and polling parents to ensure I am representing our needs to the overall school board.