

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?**

School Assignment: Develop a school assignment plan that is predictable and rational.

Fiscal Responsibility: Find additional savings in the operations budget so CMS can hire more teachers and get them back into the classroom.

School Construction: Identify ways to reduce construction costs, such as the use of standardized building plans and supporting changes to the state's lease-purchase statutes to encourage public-private partnerships. Build schools when and where they are needed.

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?**

Parental involvement, or lack thereof. Students who perform well tend to have a support system in place (parents or mentors) that understands the link between education and economic success. CMS needs to develop ways to emphasize this important relationship for these at-risk youth and their parents.

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 prefer the use of voter approved debt (General Obligation bonds), followed by pay-as-you-go and Certificates of Participation. G.O. bonds allow voters to have a say in the approval process. The repayment of the debt becomes the responsibility of all citizens. Let's not forget, property taxes paid by new residents help pay for debt associated with capital projects approved prior to their arrival. An additional tax on new homes would actually result in an unfair, double-taxation on newcomers.

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

Look for additional savings in the transportation department. Identify consolidation opportunities with Mecklenburg County (i.e. HR functions, payroll, athletic field maintenance, etc). Continue to develop partnerships to locate "non-traditional" schools in the community (CPCC, JCSU, & UNCC and offer schools with limited extra-curricular activities).

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. Transparency and accountability are important issues for citizens and decisions makers as we seek to build the public's trust and support for CMS activities.

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

The poor economy has killed the public's appetite for any new local taxes or fees. For 2 years, school enrollment increases have been less than projected, offering a much needed reprieve to the capital budget. Instead of focusing on new revenue, CMS needs to focus on ways to build schools more efficiently (standardized building plans). Secondly, CMS needs to work with the state to develop ways to make lease-purchase agreements and public-private partnerships more effective 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?**

I support the decision to no longer provide transportation to students who "choice" into schools. I would like to review the cost savings of eliminating transportation for students who live within a certain radius of a school. I don't have a problem with high school students riding public transit to school. However, the challenge is that transit routes are not designed to serve the transportation needs of high school students. I am willing to study ways CMS and CATS can work together on this issue.

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

I believe the most important role of a school board member is to build trust and accountability with the community. Decisions need to be made in a thoughtful, logical manner. We need transparency in everything we do, both good and bad. Citizens and other stakeholders need to be included in the decision making process. The goal should be to create a school system where all students feel safe and are encouraged to meet their full academic potential.