



2014 GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

CANDIDATE: ___ Delegate Heather Mizeur, Maryland General Assembly ___

CAMPAIGN ADDRESS: ___ PO Box 11290, Takoma Park, MD 20913 ___

POINT OF CONTACT: ___ Jeremy Crandall, Political Director, (202) 316-1202

PHONE NUMBER(S): ___ (202) 316-1202 _____

EMAIL: ___ Jeremy@heathermizeur.com _____

WEBSITE: ___ www.HeatherMizeur.com ___

I confirm that the responses provided here are my official positions in seeking the office of Governor of Maryland and I understand that MSEA reserves the right to share my responses with members and interested parties.

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE:  _____

DATE SUBMITTED: ___ 8/23/13 _____

Candidates: In order to be considered for a recommendation during the MSEA Representative Assembly October 18-19, 2013 in Ocean City, you must:

- 1. Indicate your response to each question. Clarifications, explanations, and other information may be attached, but please be certain to indicate clearly the questions(s) to which you refer. **Return your completed and signed questionnaire to MSEA no later than August 23, 2013.***
- 2. Participate in a one-on-one interview with MSEA President Betty Weller. **The interview must be taped no later than September 13, 2013.** Your interview and completed questionnaire will be shared with all delegates to the MSEA Representative Assembly.*

If you are the recommended candidate, we ask that you agree to participate in our Educate for a Day Project, a day-in-the-life of an MSEA member, during American Education Week in November 2013.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Thornton Funding – State Aid for Education

Background Points

- In 2002, lawmakers passed the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act (also known as the Thornton Plan) based on the recommendations of the Thornton Commission. While this increased investment has helped Maryland’s public schools and students achieve outstanding results and develop a reputation as a national leader, many unmet needs remain. MSEA supports increasing the per pupil expenditure, offsetting the impact of continuing inflation and growth, full funding of programs mandated by the General Assembly and/or the State Board of Education, additional state funding to reduce class size, funding to provide state of the art technologies that promote student achievement, increased funding for the education of students receiving special education services, and legislation to support high-quality programs for all students at-risk.
- During challenging economic times, the General Assembly made changes to the Thornton Funding formula by slowing the growth of funding according to inflation. This resulted in \$718 million less in state funding than originally projected for 2014.
- The cost of educating students continues to increase. Over the last 10 years, Maryland has seen an increase in our Title 1 student population of 129 percent and limited English proficiency students of 88 percent. With year to year increases in special education needs, it is clear that the changing student population is a significant driver of costs.
- But the return on investment is incredible. In 2001, 49 percent of students were ready for school when entering kindergarten. In 2011, that number was 83 percent. In addition to being the number one public school system in the country for five straight years, Maryland is also #1 in student achievement growth (1992-2011); 4th grade reading and math improvement (proficient level); and AP performance (2008-2012). And Maryland’s graduation rate is at 87 percent – the highest ever.
- There is continued room for improvement in closing education gaps, expanding programs and services, and improving student achievement.
- The next governor will have a significant impact in the future funding and success of Maryland schools. The Thornton Plan required the State to study the adequacy of education funding by June 30, 2012. The 2011 session of the MD General Assembly, however, acted to delay this study until 2016.
- MSEA supports legislation to be introduced in 2015 to create a “Thornton-like Commission” to study education funding, recruitment and retention of educators, appropriate facilities, and student achievement in Maryland to determine the many factors and mandates impacting education since the passage of Thornton in 2002. This Commission should report on a parallel timeline of the 2016 adequacy study.

1. Do you support or oppose legislation to create a “Thornton-like Commission”?

Support
 Oppose

If you support, will you include this legislation as an administration bill in 2015?

Yes, I will include legislation creating a “Thornton-like Commission” in the 2015 Regular Session as an administration bill.

2. Please provide your general and specific thoughts on how education funding challenges can be addressed during your first term as governor? How would you prioritize state aid for education in your budget proposals?

Maryland's Constitution mandates that state government fully provide a public education for every child in this state. I strongly believe in that mandate, and each budget written under my administration will adhere to it, ensuring fully funded K-12 public education needs in the classroom as well as fully supporting current and retired educators.

As Vice Chair of the Education and Economic Development Subcommittee on Appropriations, I have consistently fought to protect that mandate, by fully funding Thornton and the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) and by standing with educators in opposition to the pension shift. As Governor, education funding will be one of my first budget priorities.

Specifically, I will work to ensure our education funding formulas reflect our current needs. Much has changed since the Thornton Plan passed in 2002: our Title 1, English proficiency and special needs populations have grown significantly, and technological improvements offer innovative ways for educators to connect with students. It is time to discuss a "Thornton 2.0" to ensure our education formulas reflect today's greatest needs to guarantee educational excellence for every child in Maryland.

3. There is considerable room for improvement in addressing educator salaries (flat for the last four years) and reducing class sizes (layoffs/retirements have a direct impact on a slow and steady increase in the number of students per classroom). How will you use the office of the Governor and your budget priorities to address both salary and class size issues?

Every data point shows that educational outcomes are directly related to smaller class sizes, and when we raise salaries, we position ourselves to compete for the best educators. My "Thornton 2.0" policy approach will include discussions about how we increase educator salaries. I will also work to ease the burden of college tuition and loans on Marylanders who remain in-state and teach in our classrooms by making our state LARP grants non-taxable income.

Reducing class size is a cornerstone to improving the classroom experience for both student and teacher. Plans to do so must be linked hand-in-hand with recruiting new educators. We can learn from the mistakes made in other states like California, where efforts to reduce class sizes were not paired with new tools or recruitment efforts, leaving new classrooms without qualified educators.

Finally, we need an active approach to teacher recruitment. We should model other states, including California and Georgia, who have given college scholarships to high-performing graduating high school seniors who enroll in four-year education programs in Maryland. We also need to work with our state colleges and universities to make sure that every college freshman in a non-education academic major is given information on teaching as a possible profession. Together with increased salaries, the guarantee of retirement security, and 21st-century schools, these active recruitment strategies will help us recruit more qualified teachers and give us the ability to reduce class sizes responsibly.

Geographic Cost of Education Index

Background Points

- This grant program provides additional state funds to local school systems where costs for educational resources are higher than the state average. GCEI was an original component of the 2002 Thornton Plan; however, it was subsequently determined to be discretionary and funding was delayed. Full funding for the geographic cost of education index (GCEI) formula was provided in fiscal year 2009 for the first time.
- State funding for fiscal year 2014 to the thirteen eligible counties is \$130.8 million.
- In 2009 the GCEI index was updated as required by statute; however, to date the General Assembly has not adopted the new index into statute. The 2009 GCEI index would determine fourteen counties eligible and would increase state funding by an additional \$109 million per year.

4. Do you support or oppose mandating the Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) as a part of the state aid for education formula?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

The Geographic Cost of Education Index should absolutely be an integral part of the state educational funding formula. This is a matter of fairness. The cost of education varies from one jurisdiction to another, and our formulas should reflect the increased costs in those areas. I strongly supported GCEI throughout my tenure in the General Assembly, and fought for its full funding as Vice Chair of the Education and Economic Development Subcommittee.

5. Do you support or oppose the state adopting an updated GCEI index (current unfunded index is from 2009) that would increase aid through this formula from \$130 million to \$239 million in FY15?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

Effective leadership means looking far into the future to prepare our state for the challenges ahead. For too long, Maryland state government has taken a shortsighted approach to solving our greatest challenges. As your Governor, I will bring a commitment to long-term planning for public policy in order to avoid “wait to the last minute” battles over our greatest priorities. When we prepare for the future, we position ourselves to adopt the best solutions to our challenges.

Maintenance of Effort

Background Points

- MSEA supports adequate public funding for public schools, significant improvement in the state funding of public education through the state foundation formula including requiring the maintenance of effort by the local subdivisions, legislation to require local subdivisions to increase and/or maintain local education spending when given state funds, and requiring local subdivisions to account for this money in a report to the state.
- Prior to passage of the Thornton Plan in 2002, education funding was 7.4% Federal, 39.8% state, and 51.8% local. For 2013 education funding was 4.9% federal, 48.7% state, and 46.5% local. Education funding is a shared responsibility. Increases in state aid should not be supplanted by decreases in local aid.
- Significant statutory changes were passed in 2012 to the state's maintenance of effort (MOE) law, which requires every subdivision to maintain funding for their local school boards from one fiscal year to the next. Counties will be held accountable for meeting minimum school funding levels, while also enabling some counties to realize additional flexibility by applying to the State Board of Education for a broader one-year MOE waiver or two new types of MOE waivers now available under the new law.

6. Do you support or oppose Maryland's maintenance of effort law that requires local jurisdictions to fund at least the same per pupil allocation in local aid for education as the prior year unless a waiver is granted?

Support

Oppose

Additional Comments:

School Construction

Background Points

- MSEA supports funding for school construction and renovation necessary to ensure a high-quality teaching and learning environment, including construction to reduce class size, appropriate heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems. MSEA supports legislation establishing and funding air quality and climatization assurance programs within the school construction and renovation programs, and legislation requiring the construction and maintenance of secure facilities to protect the health and safety of education employees in the performance of their duties.
- Under the O'Malley administration over \$2.876 billion of state funding has been provided for school construction including \$360 million for fiscal year 2014.
- In 2004, the Public School Facilities Act was passed which included the recommendation of the Kopp Commission establishing the intent of the state to contribute \$2 billion for school construction over the next eight years, averaging an expenditure of \$250 million per year. Every year the O'Malley/Brown administration exceeded the \$250 million recommendation and the Kopp Plan was met ahead of schedule.
- In 2005 the statewide average age of school building was 24 years old with eleven school systems averaging older than the state average; in 2012 the statewide average age of building was 27 years old with seven school systems averaging older than the state average. In 2002 there were 2,619 portable classrooms; in 2010 there are 3,124 portable classrooms, resulting in 9.5% of all students statewide being taught at least part of their school day in a portable classroom. Annually, each local education agency (LEA) submits a capital improvement program detailing its public school construction project needs for the budget year and the next five years to the Board of Public Works (BPW) – Interagency Committee on School Construction (IAC). The existing capital improvement plans submitted by each local school system, indicates a need of state funding for school construction of over \$3 billion for the next five years.

7. Do you support or oppose increasing the school construction floor in the capital budget from \$250 million to \$500 million?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

In addition to raising the floor on our Public School Construction Program, Maryland should consider new and innovative approaches to school construction funding. Our backlog in school construction needs statewide has reached a staggering \$15 billion. We cannot afford that price tag through our current approach alone.

For the last three years, I have advanced several policy options that enable the state to tackle this problem. Through innovative public-private partnerships, we could leverage private resources for school construction. If we encourage the private sector and labor unions to invest in our school rebuilding needs, we can expand access to capital and create jobs for Maryland workers. Early involvement from labor unions and requiring Project Labor Agreements (PLA) will help ensure

local, union workers are rebuilding our classrooms. Several states have also seen success with a local sales tax option approved by voters in individual counties to fund school improvement and construction. Whether through these approaches or other options, we have the capacity to rapidly and significantly transform our schools. In the process, we improve educational outcomes, create new neighborhood anchors in our improved learning centers and schools, and lift up our communities.

It is important to note that none of these policy options will lead to a reduction in total annual funding for public school construction. Any new approach will be designed to increase our ability to expand capital projects, and will include strong language preserving our current funding levels.

For more information about my vision for school construction, see my 2011 Baltimore Sun op-ed: <http://bit.ly/wCxrR2>

Funding for Nonpublic Schools

Background Points

- MSEA 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 FY14 state budget included new and record levels of funding for nonpublic schools. The nonpublic school textbook/technology program received \$6 million and a brand new school construction fund for nonpublic schools was created with \$3.5 million in public funds in the capital budget.
- Voucher and neo-voucher schemes like BOAST and other funding for programs in the budget for nonpublic schools such as textbooks, technology, and school construction reduce the state's General Fund revenue while subsidizing the cost of private education for a few students.
- The BOAST bill has been before the General Assembly in various forms since 2006. The legislation would create a new tax credit program and allow corporations to allocate a portion of their owed state taxes to organizations that collect and bundle tax dollars and then divert them into private school tax credit vouchers.
 - MSEA opposes this tax credit because it is a backdoor approach to providing vouchers to parents of children in private schools by subsidizing tuition at private schools with public tax dollars.
 - BOAST tax credit vouchers provide no restrictions regarding the use of public tax dollars.
 - Since private schools are independent, and the tax credit voucher program creates inefficient, complex scholarship organizations, there would be many barriers to instituting even the basic accountability measures required of other state programs.
- 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 Common Core State Standards, implementation of new teacher/principal evaluation systems, student retention rates, graduation rates, demographics, or discipline or suspension policies. Without these measures, it is impossible to ascertain the standards to evaluate any voucher or neo-voucher scheme.

8. Do you support or oppose draining funds from public schools by providing vouchers for private or religious schools, including through the neo-voucher tax credit program known as BOAST?

Support

Oppose

Additional Comments:

9. How will you address state aid for private and religious schools through the nonpublic school textbook, technology, and school constructions programs?

Increase funding for nonpublic schools

Maintain funding at current levels for nonpublic schools

Decrease funding for nonpublic schools

Eliminate funding for nonpublic schools

Additional Comments:

Public money is for public schools. Despite our successes, we face immense challenges to protect the jobs of educators, reduce class sizes, and close achievement gaps. Steering public funds to private schools will only harm our ability to help us solve these challenges.

Private schools do not link tuition subsidies to need, income, or quality of education and they are not accountable to the state on student achievement, attendance, graduation, or dropout rates. Sending public money to support private schools is neither fiscally responsible nor sound public policy.

RETIREMENT SECURITY

Background Points

- MSEA believes that guaranteeing adequate income upon retirement, which is best accomplished through defined benefit plans, serves the interests of public education and all education employees by enhancing recruitment efforts, improving retention rates, and creating a high quality public education system. MSEA also believes that the state and local employers are obligated to fund the pension system sufficiently to provide a guaranteed adequate income at retirement.
- The Teachers' Retirement and Pension System currently serves approximately 106,000 active members. The Teacher System currently pays benefits to about 63,000 retirees. Retirees of the Teacher System receive an average monthly benefit of approximately \$2,100.
- Expenditures made by retirees of state and local government provide a steady economic stimulus to the state economy and Maryland communities. In 2009, 152,357 Maryland residents received a total of \$3.2 billion in pension benefits from state and local pension plans. Retirees' expenditures from these benefits supported a total of \$4.4 billion in total economic output in the state. Retiree spending from state and local pension benefits supported 32,000 jobs in the state and total income to state residents supported by pension benefit expenditures was \$1.5 billion.
- In 2011, the legislature reformed pension benefits for teachers and education employees, including an increase in the contribution rate of all employees from 5% to 7% and a reduction of the COLA calculation on all future years of service. Additionally, it made several changes for new employees that created a bifurcated benefit structure. New employees have a reduced benefit with a lower multiplier, longer vesting period, and changes in retirement age and benefit calculation. Consequently, the pension benefit for new employees is among the worst in the nation.
- In 2013, MSEA supported the General Assembly action that phased out the corridor funding method, established in 2002 to mitigate fluctuations in the annual contribution. The long-term phase out requires the state to incrementally reach the actuarially determined annual contribution over ten years, and includes a change in the amortization of all pension liabilities.
- As a result of the reform actions taken by the legislature over the past three years, the state retirement and pension systems are on a path to reach an 80% funded status in approximately 10 years, putting the system back on solid financial ground.

10. Do you support or oppose efforts to restore a unified benefit structure for all school employees in the pension system rather than the bifurcated benefit created by the 2011 reforms for new employees. ?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

No educator will ever get rich because they choose to educate our children, but they deserve to know their livelihood will be protected. Promises made must be promises kept. That is why I supported the 2011 pension reforms – they were the best option put on the table by Governor O’Malley and the legislative leadership to ensure the long-term solvency of the pension system. I am open and willing to explore returning to a unified structure and ending bifurcation as long as we preserve long-term stability and do not threaten the promised retirement security of our current and future educators.

11. Do you support or oppose any action to diminish or threaten pension benefits such as further reductions in the retirement multiplier, further increases in employee contributions, or converting to a defined-contribution or hybrid-type pension plan for education employees?

Support
 Oppose

If you support further benefit changes, what types of reforms do you propose?

I oppose any action to diminish or threaten pension benefits for our educators, and I point to my vote on the teacher pension shift in 2012 as proof of my record.

Our constitutional mandate to support public education starts with supporting our educators. Shifting teacher pension costs to the county governments was a violation of that mandate in my opinion, and that is why I voted against it in the Appropriations Committee and on the House floor. Shifting these costs to counties with less ability to fund them will inevitably lead to one of several outcomes: position cuts, increased class sizes, or cuts to other core county services. Any of these would have direct impacts on our communities.

It is not enough as legislators to say that we support our educators. The true test is how one votes on policy that directly impacts the livelihood of fellow Marylanders. I was proud to stand with you then and will continue to do so as your Governor.

MARYLAND WORKING FAMILIES

Collective Bargaining

Background Points

- MSEA supports efforts to protect and enhance the state’s collective bargaining laws.
- 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.
- MSEA opposes “right to work” laws. Such laws restrict freedom of association and weaken organized labor in Maryland. The strength of organized labor is critical to protecting workers, ensuring quality, and maintaining fairness, safety, and competitive wages in the workplace.

12. Do you support or oppose public education employees’ rights to bargain collectively?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

I grew up in a small rural town, where my father spent his career as a UAW welder. When I was 9 years old, my father and his union went on strike to fight for fair wages. For six months, my family lived on \$45 a week in strike pay.

My dad and his co-workers were never willing to settle for less than a fair wage, less than decent benefits for their families, or less than they deserved for their hard work. I often joined them on the picket line and watched them stand up for themselves and each other.

I carried these early lessons with me to the General Assembly and I will carry them with me to the Governor’s office. Every time a collective bargaining issue has come before the House Appropriations Committee in Annapolis, I have stood shoulder to shoulder with labor. I have stood with law enforcement, health care workers, campus employees, educators, and correctional officers.

I understand at a core level the bargain that workers in organized labor sign up for: you give your job your all knowing you will never get rich, and in return you deserve to know your livelihood will be protected.

Public School Labor Relations Board

Background Points

- The Public School Labor Relations Board (PSLRB) was created by the General Assembly in 2010 by the Fairness in Negotiations Act. However, the Board was not appointed and constituted until spring 2011 and has only been operating for two years.
- The legislation included a sunset provision in the summer of 2015 that, if not removed, will dissolve the PSLRB.
- Over the last two years, the PSLRB has rendered decisions in the following matters:
 - Impasse Determinations – 4 requests
 - Duty of Fair Representation Cases – 15 cases
 - Scope of Bargaining – 1 case
 - Statutory Violations – 3 cases
- There have been no negotiations that have required arbitration by the PSLRB as all of them have been resolved in mediation.
- The existence of the PSLRB, as well as its decisions, have had the practical effect of bringing reasonableness to the bargaining table resulting in more productive conversations in most instances.
- MSEA opposes any attempt to eliminate or limit the PSLRB.

13. Do you support or oppose MSEA's efforts to remove the sunset for the Public School Labor Relations Board?

Support
 Oppose

If you support, and the 2014 General Assembly fails to act on this issue, will you include this legislation as an administration bill in 2015?

Yes, I will include legislation to remove the sunset for the Public School Labor Relations Board as an administration bill in 2015.

Tax Policy

Background Points

- MSEA supports a revenue structure that will provide a predictable, reliable, and stable source of sustained funding for education.
- MSEA supports an equitable means of maintaining and restoring revenue or of raising and obtaining a fair share of additional revenues that directly or indirectly benefit public education at all levels. Further, MSEA opposes any taxing or spending limitations that directly or indirectly have an adverse effect on public education.
- MSEA is a partner in a broad coalition of advocates that support a balanced approach toward solving budget problems by meeting the needs and services of the public with adequate resources. MSEA supported updating and revising the state income tax structure, the state sales tax, the transportation infrastructure package, and continues to support corporate tax reform to close loopholes and tax avoidance schemes.
- MSEA supports a proposal referred to as “combined reporting” which requires the combined income of all corporate entities functioning as a single business to become the starting point for tax calculations; then the income is apportioned to Maryland using the combined apportionment factors of all the members of the group. Combined reporting is necessary to ensure multi-state mega-sized corporations pay their fair share of corporate taxes instead of using creative bookkeeping to shift finances among multiple states and avoid paying taxes. Estimates indicate the passage of combined reporting would increase State revenues by \$50 million per year.

14. Do you support or oppose closing corporate tax loopholes, including the passage of Combined Reporting legislation that ensures multi-state companies cannot hide their Maryland profits in the tax returns from other states?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

I strongly support closing the Combined Reporting corporate tax loophole. Last year, I introduced and championed the Main Street Employer Tax Rebate Act, which would close the combined reporting loophole and use the additional revenue to fund small business tax cuts. This approach levels the playing field for all businesses and puts money back in the hands of small businesses, which are our proven job creators.

Increasing the Minimum Wage

Background Points

- MSEA supports increasing Maryland’s minimum wage as a policy that both aids working families and stimulates the economy through increased consumer spending.
- Maryland’s minimum wage is currently \$7.25 per hour (\$15,000 per year for a full-time worker). Tipped workers earn a minimum wage of 50 percent of the full minimum wage, or \$3.63 per hour.
- 19 states, and the District of Columbia, have minimum wages that are higher than \$7.25.
- Ten states have adopted provisions to “index” their minimum wage so that it keeps pace with the rising cost of living and so that the wage does not fall in real value each year.
- Estimates from the Economic Policy Institute reflect that an increase in the minimum wage will raise pay for 536,000 working Marylanders. This raise will inject approximately \$492 million into Maryland’s economy and create an estimated 4,280 jobs.

15. Do you support or oppose a proposal to raise Maryland’s minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.00 per hour, in 3 steps over two years, while raising the minimum wage for tipped workers from 50% to 70% of the full minimum wage, and indexing both annually to keep pace with the cost of living?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

Today’s minimum wage is far too low – it is not a fair wage and it is not a living wage. No Maryland worker can support a family on \$7.25 an hour. I was a co-sponsor of the minimum wage bill this past session and strongly support increasing it.

Supporting the minimum wage increase is the easy part. The hard part is having the vision and strategic approach to see it through. We will pass a minimum wage increase and paid sick leave legislation when we have a governing approach that works for both workers and employers. Increasing the minimum wage and providing paid sick leave are not incompatible with a thriving small business economy. We need to shift the conversation to how the minimum wage improves our economy, putting more money in the hands of consumers, where it is then recycled back into business growth.

I will be a governor willing to have that conversation – willing to fundamentally change the way we do business and the way we govern. Where there are challenges, I see opportunities.

Privatization

Background Points

- MSEA opposes any effort to outsource or privatize education jobs that are part of a bargaining unit. MSEA maintains 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. Queen Anne’s County outsourced food service jobs before collective bargaining was extended to ESPs on the Eastern Shore in 2002.
- Prince George’s County contracted out driver education teachers back in 1985. The fights continue today, in places like Frederick County (privatizing custodial/maintenance services) and Kent County (privatizing custodial/maintenance services and teachers and assistants). Beyond those specific instances, efforts to privatize special education services are on a rise throughout the state.
- This practice of outsourcing public education jobs is illegal. A county board of education is statutorily obligated to carry out and maintain a uniform system of public schools “designed to provide quality education and equal educational opportunity for all children.” (Section 4-107 of the Education Article). In carrying out this obligation, a county board shall appoint and set the salaries of all principals, teachers, and other certificated and non-certificated personnel. (Section 4-103 of the Education Article). Moreover, the General Assembly has made it clear that a county board of education, and no other entity, is the employer for purposes of collective bargaining. (Section 6-401 of the Education Article). In sum, the General Assembly did not give a county board of education the power to abdicate its authority to carry out and perform educational functions to a private entity.
- When jobs are outsourced, quality control is diminished and safety is compromised. Public employees are subject to background checks that private employers often skip. After privatizing, local school boards lose control over the individuals working in schools and have little ability to provide input on job performance.
- Privateers often use “cost-savings” as a means of winning contracts. The amount is often misleading because they low-ball the first year operating costs. Ultimately, they reduced hours, health care coverage or just cut jobs. All of which leads to increased local unemployment and less overall money in the community.

16. Do you support or oppose contracting out to the private sector any services currently or traditionally provided by public school employees?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Background Points

- MSEA supports Maryland's current charter school law. It protects high standards, collective bargaining rights of employees, and the local autonomy and needs of a school system. The law also provides flexibility for charter providers and employees to reach agreements outside of a collective bargaining agreement that allows the school to meet the needs of its mission and students. This combination of protections and flexibility makes Maryland's charter school law the best in the nation.
- Maryland's law provides an opportunity for focused learning using innovative curricula and instructional methods with the goal of enhancing student achievement. Charter schools are important options with the potential to benefit the broader system by allowing it to explore innovative teaching and learning methods on a scalable, pilot basis. Maryland's law strikes the right balance between local control, accountability, and innovative instruction.
- Maryland currently has 55 charter schools in 6 counties and Baltimore City, with the vast majority (39) located in Baltimore City serving almost 20,000 students. Because of the strong oversight and assistance provided to charter schools and the vigilance in the review of the each proposed charter school, the success rate of those approved here is much higher than any other state.
- Studies have consistently shown that although some charter schools may do well, on average, most perform about the same as or worse than traditional public schools.
- In recent legislative sessions charter advocates have championed legislation that would undermine local control of schools, lower standards and accountability, and circumvent certification requirements and collective bargaining rights. Our top-ranked schools depend on keeping our standards high and our charter school law strong. MSEA believes it is necessary to continue to reject efforts to overhaul a law that works and meets the needs of students, parents, school employees, school districts, and our state.

17. MSEA supports charter schools that are under the control of local school boards, require making enrollment open to all students, are held to the identical high standards as traditional schools, and protect collective bargaining rights of employees hired at the school. Do you support or oppose MSEA's policy statement with regards to charter schools?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

DIGITAL LEARNING

Background Points

- MSEA believes digital technologies create new opportunities for accelerating, expanding, and individualizing learning. Teaching and learning can now occur beyond traditional physical limitations and MSEA embraces this new environment and the tools to better prepare our students for college and 21st century careers.
- Digital learning initiatives should be viewed as opportunities to enhance and broaden instruction rather than simply a cost-cutting measure that eliminates professional education positions or diminishes teacher to student interaction.
- Digital learning programs must be aligned with the standards, curriculum, evaluations, and assessments.
- Educational programs and strategies designed to close the achievement and digital gaps must address equity issues related to broadband Internet access, software and technical support, and maintenance. Simply moving to a large scale use of technology in pre-k-12 will be more likely to widen achievement gaps among students than close them.
- All educators should have access to relevant, high-quality, and interactive professional development in the integration of digital learning and the use of technology into their instruction and practice.
- Educators and their local associations need support and assistance in vetting the quality of digital course materials and in developing or accessing trusted digital venues to share best practices and provide support.
- An environment that maximizes student learning will use a blended model of educator interaction and online learning. Every class will need a different blend, and professional educators are in the best position and must be directly involved in determining what blend works best in particular classes and with particular students.
- Assessment and accountability systems need to be carefully developed to ensure academic integrity and accurately measure the impact of digital learning on students. This includes developing strategies to ensure students are completing their own online assignments and taking the appropriate assessments.

18. MSEA believes in the collaborative development of digital learning plans that are living documents, changing as circumstances require. These plans should view technology as a tool to enhance and enrich student learning rather than a reform that usurps educators and the teaching profession. Expansion of digital learning requires equity for every student; support and enhanced professional development for all educators; and a blended approach of technology and traditional forms of delivering education for all students. Do you support or oppose MSEA's policy statement with regards to digital learning?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

I could not say it any better. This is exactly how we should approach the opportunities and challenges associated with introducing more technology into the classroom.

TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATIONS

Background Points

- MSEA believes that educator evaluation systems must be educator-informed, research-based, and collaboratively developed. Evaluation systems should be fair, transparent, timely, rigorous, valid, and designed to improve instruction by focusing on teaching and learning.
- In May of 2010, the General Assembly passed the Education Reform Act. In addition to providing early mentoring for teachers who may be at risk for failing to achieve tenure, the law mandated that student growth would be a “significant component” and “one of multiple measures” in a teacher’s evaluation. According to the law, no evaluation criterion could account for more than 35%. The law also mandated that evaluation systems must be mutually agreed upon at the local level.
- Each county has worked hard to ensure that their evaluation systems reflect provisions of the Education Reform Act. While revising the evaluation systems, educators are implementing the new Common Core State Standards, while the state is still waiting for new statewide assessments (PARCC) to be approved. In the meantime, students and educators will be evaluated based on MSA assessments that do not align with the new curriculum. PARCC assessments are not planned to be implemented until the 2014-15 school year.
- MSEA has serious concerns with the poorly planned timing, implementation, and misalignment between the evaluation system, Common Core, and PARCC assessments. As long as what our students learn is different from what they are tested on, teachers and principals are concerned that this misalignment can prove to be decisive in evaluations and some people could lose their jobs unfairly, based on useless data. This situation will also likely lead to confusion and frustration from students and parents.
- A key provision of the new evaluations was the requirement for local agreement between school boards, superintendents, and local associations. Such local development allows for the evaluation system to meet the unique needs of each district. But in the last 18 months, the U.S. Department of Education and Maryland State Department of Education have insisted on the uniform use of a more rigid state model.
- MSEA believes the continued push for high-stakes student assessments undermines educators’ creativity and their ability to respond to the needs of students. Instead of high-stakes assessments, MSEA supports high-quality assessments that support student learning from a rich curriculum and with room for educators’ voices in the development of curriculum and assessment.
- Additionally, MSEA supports rigorous and relevant professional development through the continued alignment of evaluation systems, Common Core, and PARCC assessments. Today, most teachers report that the necessary high-quality professional development has not been provided, yet the 2013-2014 school year is when implementation begins.

19. Do you support or oppose local autonomy to develop evaluation systems in compliance with statute and regulation?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

Education evaluations are best handled locally. I support a testing moratorium while the Common Core Standards and accompanying PARCC tests are implemented, and believe that, in conjunction with the county school board, local superintendents should have the authority to put such a moratorium in place. While my administration will seek to ensure all our school systems have policy approaches that prepare every student for a successful future, I believe local autonomy is crucial in making the best decisions for our children.

20. Do you support or oppose efforts to overturn school districts' mutually agreed upon, statutorily compliant evaluation models in pursuit of one-size-fits-all models developed by federal and state agencies rather than local education agencies?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

21. Do you support or oppose efforts to provide educators with sufficient professional development to ensure that they can deliver high-quality instruction aligned with the new Common Core State Standards, and ensure that any student assessments that influence an educator's evaluation are well aligned with the curriculum?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

I strongly support ensuring that educators have the professional development necessary to provide excellent instruction.

Educators in Maryland need vastly better access to updated lesson planning resources, teaching techniques, and classroom management strategies. While we implement these new standards and examinations, teachers deserve to have the resources necessary to align their instruction with the curriculum.

We are not preparing our educators well enough for the challenges ahead, and that is why I support a moratorium on testing until the new standards and PARCC assessment are fully implemented. Educators should not be evaluated on material they are just beginning to teach. Teacher evaluations should not include test results as a factor during the implementation period.

But my concerns go beyond the mismatch between curriculum and exams. I want to see Maryland take the lead in shifting away from the high-stakes testing culture requiring educators to "teach to the test." At its core, education is about fostering and empowering the creativity and problem-solving abilities in every child. If we reduce the heavy reliance on testing as our only means of measuring success, then we can give the power back to our teachers again, freeing them up to bring out the skills and talents of every student.

SCHOOL BOARD AUTONOMY

Background Points

- MSEA supports full school board autonomy, including the ability to select the superintendent and establish curriculum and develop policy around student achievement and parent and community engagement. Further, MSEA supports the right of the school system to negotiate contracts and carry out collective bargaining responsibilities in good faith. The local board's ability to fulfill these responsibilities should be free from interference or usurpation by agents of county governments and remain separate and apart from other competing political and budgetary priorities. A completely autonomous school board should be able to make decisions that are free from political considerations and in the best interests of the students and education employees
- Legislation passed in 2013 makes the Prince George's County School Board the only board in the state with absolutely no power or input in the selection of the local superintendent. This significantly restricts the authority of the board and is a troubling precedent that threatens the checks and balances of local boards and county governments across the state.
- The final version of the Prince George's bill gives the new superintendent, selected by the county executive, authority over the day-to-day operations of the schools system, including overall system administration, daily fiscal affairs including administration, instructional salaries, textbooks, special education, food service, transportation, capital planning and expenditures, development and implementation of curriculum, among other major responsibilities.
- This reorganization completely usurps the authority and responsibilities of the board, except in a few instances, and vest nearly all authority in a superintendent who serves at the pleasure of the executive.

22. Do you support or oppose efforts from county governments (County Executives or County Commissioners) to usurp the role of local school boards in the selection of local school superintendents or to infringe on their budget autonomy?

Support
 Oppose

ADDITIONAL ESSAY QUESTIONS

- A. Please share what you consider to be your most significant achievements.

I am most proud of my work to expand health care access to a range of vulnerable Marylanders. In my first year in Annapolis, I sponsored a successful bill allowing young adults to remain on family health plans up to age 25. The next year, my Kids First Act used an innovative policy approach to find and enroll thousands of eligible but uninsured children in Maryland – since its passage, we have covered an additional 50,000 children. In 2011, I worked with a Republican colleague to pass the bipartisan Family Planning Works Act, which extends free family planning to 35,000 low-income women, improves public health outcomes, and saves state Medicaid resources. Other successful bills include extending health coverage to former foster children; improving coverage for amputees; and easing access to preventive care. Each of these initiatives have helped us make tremendous progress towards ensuring every Marylander has access to affordable health care services. They are examples of the committed, policy-driven governing style that I bring to my work.

- B. Please outline your top three public education priorities and how you would measure and achieve success on each.

Closing the achievement gap

I am proud of Maryland's "first in the nation" public education ranking. That was earned through hard work from our educators and a renewed commitment to public education by our state government. However, that ranking does not apply to every child in every classroom in every community. Large achievement gaps exist among varying racial and socioeconomic backgrounds and bridging this gap will be among my first priorities as governor. I will tackle this problem from multiple angles: through a significant investment in early childhood education and after-school programs; a large-scale, innovative approach to rebuilding crumbling classrooms and school facilities; and ensuring that educators teaching in our toughest schools have the tools they need to succeed.

Preparing students for their future

Maryland's economic competitiveness depends on how effectively we educate our children. I want a far greater commitment to ensuring our graduating high school seniors are prepared for what comes next, whether that be the workforce, college, or job training. At some of our higher education institutions, more than half of incoming freshmen require remedial coursework, making it more likely they will fail to graduate on time or with the necessary skills for sustainable careers. Ensuring that all Maryland students are prepared for college will be one of my top goals.

While every student ought to be given the option to attend college, not every student needs to choose such a path. By 2020, Maryland will have over 750,000 jobs to fill that do not require a college degree, and we need to make sure our high schools teach the specific skills needed for those jobs.

Empowering educators to teach

State governments truly are the laboratories of public policy. Our ability to advance and adopt innovative policy approaches, away from the gridlock plaguing our federal government, gives us immense freedom to change the conversation on a range of issues. I want to use that freedom to put the power back in the hands of our educators. The slow and steady march towards more testing, more standards, and more evaluation is sapping the creativity and imagination that makes education so rewarding to both educators and students. I want Maryland to take the lead in bringing that sense of creativity and imagination back to public education. Whether it is through a longer moratorium on testing; re-opening the conversation about evaluations; or even considering forgoing federal resources in return for greater freedom, I want to explore options that will put the power back in the hands of our teachers and educators. Educators are the ones who first and foremost make our public education system successful, not the policymakers. To measure success, I will seek input and guidance from educators and administrators, in consultation with MSEA, who will report directly to the Governor's office on our progress.

- C. The governor has tremendous input in education and labor issues by virtue of appointments made to the cabinet, and various boards and commissions. How will you work with MSEA in making appointments that impact these issue areas?

In my administration, educators will not just have a seat at the table – they will have an equal voice in how our public education system can be successful, and their voice will be backed by their governor.

Our schools are the hearts of our communities. They provide opportunities for community partnerships to strengthen health services, public safety, and other efforts to reduce poverty and increase quality of life. Because our educators lead many of these community-based partnerships, they also deserve a voice in appointment decisions regarding non-education boards and commissions. I intend to partner closely with MSEA on all issues affecting our students, families and communities.

- D. Please explain how you would work with MSEA when faced with education issues not immediately a part of your platform and/or priority agenda (i.e. discipline, suspension, school safety, special education, teacher certification)?

Maryland is an amazing state, with incredibly talented thinkers and doers. On each issue we address, my administration will call upon the experts, the implementers, and the people on the ground that know what does and does not work. I fully expect MSEA to play an active partnering role on any issue they consider a priority.

- E. Please explain how, as Governor, you would build respect for the education profession in order to help attract and retain the highest quality educators in pre-k through secondary education.

From a policy perspective, I have outlined a number of priorities designed to recruit and retain the best educators, including: increasing educator salaries; lessening the impact of education costs on new teachers; supporting and strengthening a secure retirement; empowering teachers to teach in the classroom; and reducing class sizes. We will also take a deeper look at how we reduce teacher

attrition through input directly from educators, because they are the only ones who know why they leave and what would make them stay. Our policies should be shaped by this knowledge.

At a larger level, I want to transform how we view educators and teachers in this state. If you look around the world, the countries with the best education systems and the best outcomes all have one thing in common: teaching is a respected profession. Few people in our lives will have a greater impact on our futures than those who educate us in our formative years.

For me, that person was my junior and senior year English teacher, Mrs. Bugg. She taught me how to embrace thinking outside the box and harness it as a skill. She taught me about conviction and loyalty. She demanded excellence from her students, but repaid it with respect. She so well prepared me for my future careers that I can scarcely imagine my life without Mrs. Bugg's influence. But I often wonder whether a Mrs. Bugg could exist in today's teaching world. She had the freedom and support to design a curriculum that fit the needs of her students. When educators lose the freedom to structure their teaching to fit the needs of their students, we all lose.

Until we stop treating educators as just another interest group fighting for its needs and take a step back to recognize the impact they have on the future of our children, our economy, and our communities, we will never build the kind of respect for public education that we truly need.

I am ready to change the conversation about public education, and commit to you that through both my values and my policy actions, we can build the respect for educating our children that you deserve. I ask that you join me.