

## Responses of School Board Candidate Pat O'Neill to Progressive Neighbors Questionnaire

### Board of Elections Progressive Neighbors Questions.

1. Do you support the use of high stakes testing (such as the Maryland MSA and HSA tests) as a way to improve the quality of education in MCPS? What would you propose as alternative methods of holding schools accountable?
2. Do you support providing enriched and innovative instruction with a rigorous curriculum to all students as a way to address the achievement gap? What changes to the current MCPS policies regarding gifted and talented instruction would you make?
3. In this period of limited resources, do you support maximizing the resources devoted directly to the classroom and reducing administrative expenses? What specific changes to the current budget would you propose?
4. Do you support initiatives to give schools and teachers greater flexibility in meeting the needs of their populations? What specific changes in current policy would you propose?
5. As a BOE member, will you support the integrity of collective bargaining and negotiated contracts with MCPS employees' unions?
6. What qualities would you look for when selecting a new superintendent for MCPS next year?
7. Do you support the Piney Branch Elementary School's PTA Young Activist Club's fully funded proposal to pilot a dishwasher and reusable trays? If you are an incumbent candidate, please comment on why the Board of Education has so far refused to consider this proposal on an official basis during a Board of Education meeting.

1. High stakes testing are a limited snapshot on student achievement. I have always advocated against the over use of assessments. I have testified in Annapolis and written letters to the editor of my concerns about the HSAs. Too much use of high stakes testing has taken the joy out of teaching and learning. That said I believe that 'what gets measured must get done". We need to explore other ways to measure student growth.
2. All students should have access to enriched curriculum and instruction. We have a no label pilot. Our old programs created segregated schools.
3. We have tried to maximize resources to the classroom. 89% of the budget is in salaries and benefits, so after the cuts of the last few years there is not much left to cut. We increase average class size by 1 this year. Our employees gave up their COLAs and steps.
4. Every child is "snowflake" and their educational program should be designed to meet their unique needs. The GT Policy is on hold until we have the SIPI presentation before the full board this fall.
5. I support the collective bargaining process, and I have for 12 years. I have been endorsed by MCEA, SEIU, and MCAAP. Working together with our unions is the only way to get through these

tough fiscal times.

6. An educator with a businessman's mind. Someone who is willing to work with our unions collaboratively.

7. I support a pilot that can lead to a comprehensive program to eliminate styrofoam on a countywide basis. I regret that I cannot support the proposal from the Young Activists due to strong objections of our professional facilities staff. The number one concern is the use of a used dishwasher. Number 2 outside feasibility study and number three the use of either volunteer labor or labor paid for by the community. Our policy on improvements paid for by a community group or PTA requires approval by our staff. I have concerns as this has been proposed. I would support a pilot of cardboard trays.