**C4DC Candidates Forum on Education**

**Thurgood Marshall Center, 1816 12th St., NW, June 5, 2018**

**Sponsored by C4DC, Coalition for DC Public Schools and Communities**

**www.c4dcpublicschools.org**

Candidates for Council Chair: Phil Mendelson and Ed Lazere

Candidates for Council Member At-Large: Anita Bonds, Jeremiah Lowrey, Marcus Goodwin

*Moderator: Sarah Stodder*

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| **Written Audience Questions; Limited time allowed only a few** | **General Subject** |
| 1. Adult Literacy - What will you Do to support basic adult literacy in DC? Many of those organizations struggle to provide services to those who were failed by the school system. DC budget is only $500,000for this area. Note that The Washington Literacy Center is in the basement level of this building. | Adult Literacy |
| 1. How would you support academically at-risk students identified in early childhood education and elementary school? | At-Risk |
| 1. When considering problems with attendance in our city, especially in areas like Ward 7 and Ward 8, what structural solutions can you propose? For families with issues of housing, low access to childcare, and irregular work schedules, it is very challenging to get especially young kids to school. How about a BUS? (Kindergarteners can’t ride alone.) | Attendance, Transportation, Ward 7 & 8 |
| 1. For the incumbents, please identify what you have done on the Council to improve education. | Candidates’ Record |
| 1. Please explain how you have been involved in DC party politics and what you have accomplished. | Candidates' Record |
| 1. How do you plan to ensure that capital funds are used to serve schools and students directly? ***(Question e-mailed)***   Recently in Ward 1 $1.5 million was dedicated for the purchase of a dog park. There are additional funds being requested, so this is closer to $2M.    The $2M dollars being asked for the purchase of this property for a dog park is not responsible considering the other budgetary needs in Ward 1 alone. This same amount of money would represent:  -48% of the FY18 budget for Cleveland ES with 328 students;  -32% of the FY18 budget for Marie Reed ES with 398 students;  -31% of the FY18 budget for HD Cooke ES with 440 students;  -30% of the FY18 budget for Bruce Monroe ES with 484 students;  -28% of the FY18 budget for Tubman with 523 students;  -14% of the FY18 budget for Cardozo Ed. Campus with 882 students;  -13% of the FY18 budget for Columbia Heights Ed. Campus with 1400 students;  -49% of the FY18 budget for Garrison ES, with 255 students (nearby in Ward 2);  -28% of the FY18 budget for Powell ES, with 537 students (nearby in Ward 4);  $2M, if allocated at even the most basic level of the Uniform per Student Funding Formula ($9972) represents a total of 211 students’ basic educational needs per year.  Just a few months ago DCPS parents were told that we might need to cover the costs of the last two weeks of aftercare for our children. At roughly a cost of $10k for 1 school alone; if that low rate were applied to all 54 schools covered by the Out of School Time Programming office that would come to $540,000 for only two weeks.  There was also the possibility that we would also need to cover aftercare costs until OSTP could begin aftercare in October next school year. Using the rough formula of $10k for two weeks; applied to the six weeks of coverage needed for an October start date; that means that these 54 schools need to raise roughly $1.62M to cover that lapse in aftercare coverage so that parents can go to work and children can be supervised while receiving educational support.  I wish the schools needs ended with aftercare but each of the schools I mentioned needs more funding to fully support their students and staff. Each of these schools is looking at their school budgets and likely needing to cut staff or raise money for simple supplies, like Cleveland Elementary did two cycles ago.    If the District has roughly $2M of disposable funding available; I believe it should be used to help support our young scholars rather than a dog park. | Budget priorities |
| 1. DC will soon begin the process of selecting a new chancellor? The DC law clearly defines the process by which a chancellor is to be selected. However, the last time around, the process was not followed to the letter of the law. What will you do this time around to ensure that the chancellor selection process is followed from start to finish? | Chancellor |
| 1. What will you do to move the search for a new school chancellor forward? There is no time to waste, although the mayor is delaying this process, and possibly missing qualified candidates in this delay. | Chancellor |
| 1. What do you think about making Amanda Alexander the permanent Chancellor, without a lot of travel, strangers to the city, or people with no record as [a school chancellor]. | Chancellor selection |
| 1. Do you support legislation to make it more difficult to start a charter school, for example, by adding curriculum requirements? | Charter proliferation |
| 1. How many charter schools are there is Ward 3? | Charter proliferation |
| 1. The city has limited resources that are being spread across an ever-growing number of schools. We now have 36 high schools, for example. Yet there are thousands of unfilled seats. But charters are adding more and more seats each year. How would you address this issue? | Charter proliferation |
| 1. Many other jurisdictions have an annual cap on the number of new charter schools. Do you support such a cap in DC? | Charter proliferation |
| 1. How will you demand that charter schools be held accountable for their discipline policies and for children of color? What are you doing about this discipline issue? | Charters, Transparency |
| 1. What is the Council Chair’s responsibility for 1) appointing an education committee that will do its job and 2) Making sure that the committee - - and the Council - - make education and the DCPS a priority? (Adequate funding and proper use of resources?) | Council Ed. Committee |
| 1. How will you ensure this new education research consortium remains politically independent? | Data Transparency |
| 1. Why did it take a story from WAMU to expose the Ballou [graduation] fraud? Where was oversight from the Council? What can the council do differently going forward? | Data Transparency |
| 1. I hear a lot of discussion from candidates regarding charter school accountability and a frustration regarding lack of information/data. What information or data do you believe you do not have access to through the PCSB and what would you do with that information/data? | Data Transparency |
| 1. Demand for bilingual education in Ward 1 is huge - -especially for PreK. Waiting lists are in 100s and 1,000s. What is your plan to address this demand and what is your timeline for doing so? | Dual Language |
| 1. Given the huge demand for dual language programs in wards across the city, what specifically will you do if elected to support the expansion of these programs? | Dual Language |
| 1. Demand for immersion programs is enormous, especially for PreK, and especially in Ward 1. There are waitlists of 100s or 1000s. What is your plan to meet this demand, and what is your timeline for doing so? | Dual Language |
| 1. How do you believe displacement of families from their communities affects their educational outcomes? How can we address this? | Gentrification |
| 1. The Public Education Reform Act eliminated the school board, and with it we lost a public voice, transparency and much of the oversight of DCPS. Are you willing to restore a school board (all elected or the hybrid model of appointed and elected? | Governance, Board of Ed |
| 1. Do you support making OSSE independent of the mayor? If so, would you have oversight of OSSE and the State Superintendent rest with the Council? The State Board of Education? Elsewhere? | Governance, OSSE, State Bd. of Ed |
| 1. Isn’t public education in a sphere, as with public health, where the concern ought to be not only for the individual and that person’s choice, but also for the common good? (Charter schools focus only on the individual’s choice.) | Individual vs. Common Good |
| 1. There are 11,317 individual students on waitlists to attend a DC Public Charter School. What solutions do you propose to alleviate this educational issue? | Lottery |
| 1. What sort of relationship will you have with the Mayor? | Mayoral Control |
| 1. For the council chairman: why did you let spending on the Ellington modernization become so bloated? | Modernization Cost |
| 1. What more can we do to improve neighborhood and community public safety? What impact is violence having on our students’ mental, physical, and emotional well-being? | Public safety |
| 1. There was massive overreach by OSSE regarding the DC residency investigation. 220 families are being accused of fraud. Many, many of them are legitimate DC residents. 1) Will you ask OSSE to follow their own regulations to provide due process? 2) Will you ask OSSE to allow parents an opportunity to respond without going to a hearing? 3) Will you demand that OSSE provide families with the findings, so they can appropriately appeal as required by OSSE’s own regulations? | Residency fraud, OSSE |
| 1. There is massive over-reach occurring at OSSE with respect to DC residency. Duke Ellington is being targeted. 220 of 550 families have been accused of fraud. Will you speak publicly about this and assist affected families and Duke Ellington High School? | Residency fraud, OSSE |
| 1. When did school reform begin in DC? What is the goal? What is the plan to reach the goal? What is the Council’s role in the plan? | School reform |
| 1. Do you think that student and family rights are the same in charter and DCPS schools? | Sector Differences |
| 1. Funding for DCPS as opposed to charter schools for special needs students is inequitable. This, coupled with the disparities between the two sectors as it relates to the number of special needs students, leaves DCPS at a complete deficit. How do you plan to address this? | Special Needs, Sector Differences |
| 1. The DC municipal regulations give full control of teacher evaluations to DC Public Schools. The current teacher evaluation program has led to the highest turnover rate in the history of DCPS. Would you consider amending the DC legislation to give teachers the ability to develop -- in collaboration with the school district - - a teacher evaluation program that would support teachers rather than punish them? | Teacher Turnover, Evaluation |
| 1. How would you support teacher professional development and continuing education? | Teachers, Professional Development |
| 1. The PARCC and other tests have crippled Teachers’ ability to be creative in their practice and therefore, has made school far less enjoyable for our children. What will you do to reduce the amount of over-testing in our Public Schools? | Teachers, tests |
| 1. We know that academic disparity is not an element that can be remediated by itself. It is a systems issue, connected to housing, economics, health, community, well-being, etc. 1) While there is a lot touted about student performance, there appears to be a lack of transparency and accountability on the executive level for day-to-day operations at District and OSSE. 2) It is very difficult to get an interview or any consideration if you are highly qualified but not part of the “friends inner circle.” 3) What type of accountability measure would you advocate for by leveraging your power and authority? | Transparency |
| 1. DCPS determines how much money to send to local schools - - and it does so with little transparency and without regard to At-Risk requirements. What can the Council do about this that it hasn’t done already? Or does some aspect of PERRA have to be modified? | Transparency, At-Risk |
| 1. Can you define specifically, what transparency and oversight should be in both charter and traditional public schools? | Transparency, Oversight |
| 1. How do you intend to ensure Wards 7 & 8 don’t continue to be forgotten in economic plans? | Ward 7 & 8 |
| 1. What will you do to include YOUTH VOICES in the solutions? Their ideas for decreasing absenteeism, for example, have not been implemented. | Youth voices |