

VOTER GUIDE QUESTIONNAIRE

Friends of Marc Korman; Delegate - District 16; Marc Korman, marc@marckorman.com, 240-447-1175

 Name of Finance Committee
 Elective Office Sought
 POC Email/Telephone

1. State Funding & Policies

Answers

Background

In June 2016, the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, otherwise known as the "Kirwan Commission," was established in order to review education financing formulas/measures and determine how best to prepare students to compete in the workforce and global economy

1.1 FORMULAS. How should the Montgomery County delegation to the General Assembly respond if the Commission recommends legislation that reduces State contributions to Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) even as it accounts for 40% of Maryland's school enrollment growth?

1.1 Such legislation would be dead on arrival. The leadership of both chambers is aware of this and such a bill would not be brought to a vote. If it were to happen for some reason, Montgomery County legislators should vote no. But at this point we are working collaboratively to prevent any such bill.

1.2 CASINO REVENUE. Should surging revenue from State-sanctioned casinos be used to supplement-- and not supplant-- school funding in the Education Trust Fund? How should this be addressed?

1.2 Yes, but there needs to be a transition to absorb the changes in the budget that this switch would require. Returning to the deal the voters thought they were getting is the right thing to do and good for our schools.

1.3 PRE-K. Do you support making early childhood education accessible to all Montgomery County residents? How should it be funded? Is this strictly a State issue? A County issue?

Yes. It should be a state/county partnership, as K-12 education currently is. Moreover, there is a role for private providers. But the state should certainly contribute to the cost.

1.4 LOCAL AUTONOMY. What is your position on local school board autonomy? If supportive, what measures would you take to ensure State wide office holders cannot infringe on key decisions, such as school start- and end- dates?

I would support legislation to give local school boards firmer control of their calendars. However, there is a role for state oversight and input into our schools more generally.

2. Capital Improvements

2. Answers

Background

Concerned over the County's debt, the Council voted in October to reduce General Obligation bonds over six years by \$180 million. According to MCPS Superintendent Jack Smith, the County's lower spending affordability guidelines will harm MCPS capital project possibilities.

2.1 SPENDING AFFORDABILITY GUIDELINES. Do you support this move? What measures should be taken to finance MCPS' growing capital improvement needs-- both upgrades to aging infrastructure and capacity expansion? Should school construction take a backseat to other County infrastructure priorities?

2.1

2.2 STATE CAPITAL FUNDING. The Montgomery County Public School System accounts for approximately 18 percent of Maryland's school population, but only receives about 12 percent of state capital funding. Should this be remedied? How?

2.2 We have made great progress in remedying this disparity by creating the enrollment growth capital program. We need to continue that steady progress by increasing that grant. We can also look at alternative funding mechanisms similar to Baltimore City's approach allowing for increased bonding.

2.3 NEW CIP APPROACHES. The Maryland 21st Century School Facilities Commission recommends trying new ideas or approaches to school construction to provide more State funds for key project costs or procedural flexibility. Would you support incentives to drive State/local collaboration to allow for such opportunities?

Yes. First, Montgomery County already has a robust school construction program that makes many state functions duplicative and costly. Second, as mentioned above, I would like to see a Baltimore City like funding approach.

2.3

3. Communication and Addressing Equity

3. Answers

3.1 ACHIEVING EQUITY. What measures should be put in place to ensure every child (regardless of disability, geography, socio-economic conditions, ethnicity, or other factors) receives high quality instruction to meet his/her potential?

3.1 This is a significant issue. We need adequate funding and, particularly in high poverty schools, significant wraparound services. In general, the state needs to do more for high poverty schools rather than school districts.

3.2 OUTREACH. What should MCPS's priorities be in improving communication with students and families?

3.2 One issue I have tried to work on--thus far without much success--is helping our schools diversify their staff and faculty to better reflect the student population. That will help families feel more connected to MCPS.

4. Health and School Climate

4. Answers

4.1 DIVERSITY & INCLUSION. Describe your commitment to fostering a climate of cultural sensitivity and tolerance. Beyond condemning hate speech, please discuss the need to ensure every student feels safe, respected, and valued for being exactly who he/she is.

4.1 As mentioned above, one way to do this would be to diversify our staff and faculty. Montgomery and Howard have some programs in this regard but these need to be brought to scale. Cultural competency training would also be appropriate.

4.2 STANDARDS. How should regulations be used to advance school standards in areas ranging from physical and mental health & wellness to digital safety and WiFi exposure?

4.2 In general, I would defer to local school board decisions on these issues based on broader healthy and safety guidance from appropriate state or federal agencies.

4.3 HEALTH/NUTRITION. Should health and nutrition education be better integrated into MCPS curricula? How might this impact MCPS' Food and Nutrition Division practices and policies?

4.3

4.4 MENTAL HEALTH. Please describe your commitment to ensuring adequate mental health and counseling services for MCPS students.

4.4

This is a significant issue. There have been several suicides in my district in recent months. We need to adequately fund and staff counselors and ramp up partnership efforts with private groups, such as NAM's Sources of Strength Program.

5. Safety

Answers

5.1 POLICE/MCPS. What is your perception of cooperation between MCPS and the Montgomery County Police Department to advance school security? What incentives should be considered to recruit the best officers for Security Resource Officer assignments?

5.1

5.2 WITNESS OF ABUSE. Should Maryland join 48 other States in enacting Failure to Report laws? Why/why not?

5.2

In general, I am skeptical of any status quo that does not follow the lead of 48 other states.

6. Growth

Answers

6.1 ENROLLMENT. With MCPS enrollment growing at 2,000 to 3,000 students per year, what is your commitment to ensuing capacity keeps pace with growth, and class sizes remain small?	6.1 Perhaps the number one issue I have worked on in Annapolis is school construction and growing both the overall amount of funding and Montgomery County's share of it. As described above, increasing the enrollment growth grant and innovative financing are two approaches we can take to the issue.
6.2 PLANNING. The Council recently boke with convention, requiring key development plans to consider impacts on MCPS growth and for Planning staff to review all parcels for new school construction. Should school land be a top public amenity in such plans?	6.2
6.3 SUBDIVISION. In the next Subdivision Staging Policy revision, would you support a dedicated fund fo school land acquisition, financed in part by land developers?	6.3

Instructions: Please fill out this form by March 13, 2018 for inclusion in the 2018 MCCPTA Guide for Voters. E-mail completed documents to Questionnaire2018@mccpta.org

*** Candidates for State office, fill out 1.1-1.4; 2.2-2.3; 3.1-3.2; 4.1-4.2; 4.4; 5.2; 6.1**

*** Candidates for County Executive & Council, fill out 1.3; 2.1; 2.3; 3.1-.3.2; 4.1-4.4; 5.1; 6.1-6.3**

*** Candidates for Board of Education, fill out 2.1; 2.3; 3.1-3.2; 4.1-4.4; 5.1; 6.1**