

Stockton

SUPPORT SCHOOLS NOW
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR JAMES CITY COUNTY BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS CANDIDATES

Please answer each question below and EXPLAIN your answers in a DETAILED manner:

1. Will fully funding WJC Schools' operating and capital budgets as proposed by the WJC School Board be your top priority? If not, why not?

I believe we have no greater responsibility as a community than that of educating our children. Assuming the School Board and Board of Supervisors have worked together to come up with a budget that is reasonable given all of the various needs of County citizens, then yes, I would be committed to fully funding the school budget.

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2. Are you committed to providing funding to WJC Schools so that teachers' salaries (as well as salaries of other support staff such as teacher assistants, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, etc.) are highly competitive with divisions in our region of the state as well as divisions across the state in areas with financial resources similar to our own (as measured by the state's "composite index")?

RESPONSE: We have problems within our school system now related to pay, such as difficulty recruiting bus drivers. I believe that staff of WJC schools should be paid a reasonable wage based on the cost of living in this county and similar divisions in the region and state. I am also dedicated to working to increase the affordable and workforce housing in our area. Bus drivers, teaching assistants and cafeteria workers are all vital to our education system but housing in this area is increasingly becoming out of reach for them. I believe this is a problem we need to solve in an overall effort to control growth and the quality of life we enjoy in James City County.

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3. Are you committed to providing funding to WJC Schools so that schools are fully staffed and space is available (primarily in permanent buildings, not trailers) to keep class sizes down?

RESPONSE: We know the successful formula for educational excellence and we must maintain the standards that allow us to achieve it. The key, I believe, is long term planning. Although we are currently building and planning a number of schools, James City County allowed growth to get ahead of it, so we are now playing catch-up in some areas. We have the ability to fund top-notch schools in James City County if we manage our resources of dollars, time and people well. To that end, I would support a school management study that would assist us in our long-term planning and budgeting.

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4. How will you determine how much funding to provide to WJC Schools' operating and capital budgets? What factors will be part of your decision making process? Do you believe that the school division spends funds effectively and efficiently or do you believe there is significant wasteful spending?

RESPONSE: I believe a cooperative budget process where school system officials, school board members, county staff and members of the board of supervisors working together will produce the most successful outcome in terms of a reasonable budget. Although I do not have any knowledge of wasteful spending, I do believe that planning better for new schools and their maintenance would allow us to stretch our dollars further.

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5. What is your vision of the relationship that should exist between the Board of Supervisors and the School Board? What is your perception of the relationship that exists today? If elected, would you change this relationship that exists? If so, how?

RESPONSE: I believe the citizens of James City County have elected both members of the Board of Supervisors and School Board members to represent them. I think it is important that we allow each elected body to fulfill the role for which it was elected. In the case of the Board of Supervisors, that role is to provide funding for the needs of the school system. It is the job of the School Board, not the Board of Supervisors, to run the school system. This plays into the relationship the two bodies have together, since they are charged with different tasks. It is my opinion that the two bodies work together cooperatively, and that this type of relationship should be fostered and improved where possible.

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6. Under what conditions should the Board of Supervisors direct educational policy by placing conditions on funding?

RESPONSE: There are better ways to handle disagreements over educational policy than dealing with them by conditioning or with-holding funding. If we have the cooperative relationship with the school board as indicated above, these issues can be resolved before budgets are drafted. I believe the Board of Supervisors should carefully avoid using funding to direct policy. The School Board has been elected by our citizens to make decisions on their behalf and I do not believe the Board of Supervisors should overstep those boundaries via the budget process except in very unusual circumstances. By working together to create the budget, we can ensure these situations, which do not benefit any of us, are not created.

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7. Are you willing to acquire property for school sites using eminent domain if necessary? If so, under what conditions would you utilize eminent domain? If not, why not?

RESPONSE: This question goes back to the issues of growth management and good planning. First, do we have alternatives for school sites without using eminent domain? If we are doing our long-term planning properly and acquiring sites as they become available and well in advance of needing them, eminent domain should not be an issue. It is no small decision to say the good of the community outweighs a person's ability to utilize his or hand land. That debate is central to both eminent domain and the management of our growth. Before we utilize eminent domain, we must ask ourselves: Have all alternatives been exhausted? Have we arrived at this point through a careful process? If we had planned better, would we have reached this point at all? I would not utilize eminent domain as a result of the county's own mistakes in planning and resource management. I would utilize it as a very last resort when no other option truly existed.

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8. In the most recent budget cycle do you think the Board of Supervisors provided too little funding, too much funding or just the right amount of funding for the schools? In light of the recent \$2.8 million shortfall in the county budget, should the schools be held harmless or should the schools be made to return funds?

RESPONSE: It appears that in the most recent budget cycle the Board of Supervisors and the School Board came up with what they perceived to be an effective budget and the Board of Supervisors provided their share of the funding. The recent shortfall in the county budget comes

mainly from an incorrect estimate of the incoming revenue from property taxes, rather than from deficiencies in expenditures. In the future should this situation arise, I would expect all programs to contribute to the shortfall, with the school's portion given special consideration, but not held harmless. A development that should not be overlooked is the delay in construction of the two new schools planned for 2009 which will reduce expenditures somewhat in the short run. This situation clearly shows that the Board of Supervisors need to more accurately project revenues before deciding on budget expenditures in the future. Aligning the landbook with the budget process should improve the accuracy of our estimates.

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9. Do you support the school division's efforts to expand preschool opportunities for at-risk students? Would you support with additional county funds local efforts to expand preschool opportunities even further in collaboration with the school division, private preschools and the state?

RESPONSE: We have numerous studies and research to show us how effective these programs can be. I would consider additional funding if we can show programs are likely to increase the number of at-risk kids we can reach and that these programs have a high likelihood of success. It should be noted that Governor Kaine reduced funding for this program from \$300 million to \$75million so available resources from the state are limited.

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10. If recommended by the Alternative Education Task Force, would you support capital funds for a facility to house alternative education programs for students long-term suspended or expelled and those who learn better in an environment outside of regular schools?

RESPONSE: As a community, we can not afford to give up on these children, since the cost to us will be much greater down the road if we do. They are a group of children to be served by our education system and our tax dollars, just like any other. Currently, it is my understanding that there are four students in this program so we need be sure there is a critical mass before proceeding to construction of a facility.

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11. How familiar are you in general with the operation of the school division and how well do you think you understand the challenges it faces?

RESPONSE: Although I am not an expert in schools or school funding, I have been active in school programs for many years and my wife is a career educator. I believe I understand the issues we face in James City County well enough to offer insight and guidance in planning for school facilities, funding and our overall needs. As a member of the Board of Supervisors if elected, I would remain committed to continuously learning more about school-related issues.

I am a product of a public education and my grandfather was Principal of Henry County Training School in Martinsville, Virginia. My wife, Margaret, is also a retired educator. I am a Virginia native having grown up in Martinsville and a former businessman who retired from MCI in 1998. Active in many community groups, I served as President of Two Rivers Country Club [Governor's Land], currently on the Board of Directors at CASA [dealing with abused children] and as chair of the Nominating Committee for William and Mary's Muscarelle Museum of Art. In addition I serve on the vestry at Bruton Parish. I received my undergraduate degree from Saint Paul's College and Master's degrees from Clark Atlanta University and Harvard University.