



2018 GENERAL ASSEMBLY CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

CANDIDATE: Peter E. Perini, Sr.

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

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE:

DATE SUBMITTED: May 22, 2018

Candidates: In order to be considered for a recommendation, you must indicate your response to each of the questions. Clarifications, explanations, and other information may be attached, but please be certain to indicate clearly the question(s) to which you refer. Please return your completed and signed questionnaire to your MSEA local affiliate.

*Local Affiliates: Return **ALL** completed questionnaires and your interview team worksheets to The MSEA Fund for Children and Public Education.*

EDUCATION FUNDING

Adequate Funding Formula – State and Local 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.
- The cost of educating students continues to increase. Over the last 10 years, Maryland has seen an increase in our Title I student population of 129% and limited English proficiency students of 88%. With year-to-year increases in special education needs, it is clear that the changing student population is a significant driver of costs.
- Maryland had the best schools in the nation for five years in a row from 2009 to 2013, according to *Education Week*. In 2016, *Ed Week* ranked Maryland fifth in the nation. Maryland now ranks 2nd in AP performance (2017)—after leading the nation for ten consecutive years—with 30.4 percent of Maryland graduates scoring a 3 or better on AP assessments. And Maryland's graduation rate is at 87 percent—the highest ever in the state and 3.8 percent higher than the national graduation rate.
- There is a critical need for improvement in closing education gaps, expanding programs and services, community schools, and improving student achievement.
- The governor will have a significant impact on the future funding and success of Maryland schools. Maryland's median incomes are the highest in the nation, but school spending is the 10th highest among the states and 16th highest when adjusted for regional cost differences. According to consultants hired by MSDE, Maryland schools are now underfunded by nearly \$3 billion annually. That means each of our schools, on average, is underfunded by more than \$2 million every year.
- MSEA supports legislation to update our school funding formula and policies to ensure adequate and equitable state and local education funding. Our priorities include elevating the respect and support for Maryland's educators with higher salaries and greater career opportunities, and addressing Maryland's economic inequality in our schools with programs to target concentrated poverty.

1. Please provide your general and specific thoughts on how the state can address the nearly \$3 billion in unmet needs facing our schools. In your answer, please specify whether you believe additional revenue is needed to address our public education needs, and if so, how you will generate that additional revenue.

We know from numerous studies that Maryland needs to do more to support our public schools. The work that needs to be done will have to occur over time, for example supporting the recommendations of the Kirwan Commission. To accomplish that the Legislature will have to make some tough decisions on the budget and find new resources.

2. There is considerable room for improvement in addressing educator recruitment and retention. Salaries have been relatively flat for the last eight years. Pension benefits have been reduced but employee contributions have increased. Class sizes have increased as a result of cost-cutting measures and/or due to hiring freezes, layoffs, and retirements. Support personnel positions have been eliminated. How will you work in the General Assembly to address critical concerns with educator recruitment and retention?

Recruitment and retention are affected by a combination of the work environment and wages. In the case of Maryland's public schools, both of these influencing conditions must be improved. The Legislature should work with the local public school teachers associations and education agencies to find the right solutions for each jurisdiction. What may be appropriate for Washington County, for example, may not be appropriate for Baltimore City and vice versa. It is up to the Legislature to determine the funding formula to increase teacher and support personnel wages. The local education bargaining units know better about the wage schedule, class size and other work issues for their jurisdiction than the Legislature. However, I believe that Maryland can do better at providing the resources for individual professional development support across the State.

Funding for Nonpublic Schools

Background Points

- MSEA believes any education dollars spent outside of improving public schools makes it harder to achieve the progress necessary to provide a world-class education for every student.
- The FY18 state budget included new and record levels of funding for nonpublic schools. The nonpublic school textbook/technology program received \$6 million and a school construction fund for nonpublic schools received \$3.5 million in public funds in the capital budget. The BOOST voucher program now receives \$5.5 million and continues to reward private schools that have questionable and controversial discriminatory practices.
- Nonpublic school funding for programs in the budget such as textbooks, technology, school construction, and vouchers reduce the state's General Fund revenue while subsidizing the cost of private education for a few students. Data from the first two years of the BOOST program indicate that more than 70% of voucher recipients already attended and paid for private school before receiving the voucher.
- 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 College and Career State Standards, student retention rates, graduation rates, demographics, or discipline or suspension policies. Without these measures, it is impossible to ascertain the standards to evaluate any of the funded programs funneling public tax dollars to private schools.

3. Do you support or oppose draining funds from public schools by providing vouchers for private or religious schools, including through the BOOST voucher program?

Support

Oppose

Additional Comments:

4. How will you address state aid for private and religious schools through the nonpublic school textbook, technology, school construction, and voucher 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:

5. Do you support requiring nonpublic schools that receive public funding to adhere to similar state policies required of public schools regarding antidiscrimination, student achievement standards, safety standards, certified teachers, employee protections, and student assessments?

- 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 and 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.
- In 2005 the statewide average age of school buildings was 24 years old with 11 school systems averaging older than that; in 2016 the statewide average age of building was 29 years old with seven school systems averaging older than the state average. In 2002 there were 2,619 portable classrooms; in 2015 there were 2,814 portable classrooms, resulting in 9.4 percent 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 \$4 billion for the next five years. The current level of capital funding averaging \$350 million per year is less than half of the documented need.

6. Do you support or oppose increasing the school construction floor in the capital budget from \$350 million to \$700 million?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

The school construction capital budget floor should be increased over time and with a plan. I would work with my colleagues and the leadership in the House to increase the school construction capital budget without jeopardizing Maryland's AAA bond rating.

7. Do you support or oppose protecting Maryland's existing prevailing wage requirements for school construction projects?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

...school construction projects that are paid for with Maryland budget funds.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA)

Background Points

- The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) gives states greater authority for academic standards, school accountability, and education policy. ESSA prohibits the U.S. Department of Education, through regulatory or waiver processes, from setting national academic standards. ESSA prohibits the U.S. Department of Education from tying teacher evaluations to standardized test scores. ESSA reinforces collective bargaining protections and removes adequate yearly progress as a benchmark for school progress.
- Instead, each state must decide on its own state academic standards and assessments, as well as develop its own accountability system for school success. Each school will receive a rating as determined by this accountability system, and based on these ratings, low-performing schools will be identified for a support and improvement process. Maryland's ESSA plan commits to the continued use of Common Core State Standards and the NEXT Generation Science Standards, as well as the PARCC assessment as its statewide math and English assessment.
- In 2017, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB 978, the Protect Our Schools Act, and overrode Governor Hogan's veto to guide Maryland's implementation of ESSA. The Protect Our Schools Act protects local school board authority from an overreaching State Board of Education as the state plan is implemented. It ensures school ratings will rely on 65% academic indicators (based on state test scores, graduation rates, and English-language learner proficiency) and 35% school quality indicators, such as school climate, student attendance, and access to a well-rounded curriculum. This is the most balanced split between test and non-testing indicators in the country. It also prohibits the State Board of Education from privatizing schools during the support and improvement process for low-performing schools.
- The Maryland plan assigns a percentile ranking to each school, as required by the Protect Our School Act, but also ranks each school on a 1-5 star scale. MSEA opposes this move because it is incredibly damaging to schools and school communities to label their schools as failing.

8. MSEA supports a state plan as envisioned by the Protect Our Schools Act, that uses all required school quality indicators, limits the over-reliance on standardized testing, takes a holistic approach to evaluating schools rather than a labeling system, and prioritizes local autonomy in creating and implementing any interventions for low-performing schools. Do you support or oppose MSEA's priorities regarding ESSA implementation?

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 allow 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 currently has 49 charter schools in four counties and Baltimore City, with the vast majority (34) located in Baltimore City serving 20,385 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 highly-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.

9. MSEA supports public charter schools that are under the control of local school boards, require making enrollment open to all students, require the hiring of certificated teachers, 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:

The Barbara Ingram School for the Arts in Washington County is a fine example of a very successful public Charter school.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS AND GREATER SUPPORT FOR LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS

Background Points

- Poverty dramatically and negatively affects the wellbeing of children, particularly in the areas of physical health, mental health, safe housing, access to technology, parental support, family planning services and education, youth employment, and nutrition. Each of these factors play a large role in whether students are able to learn and do well in school—making it imperative that these opportunity gaps be closed if we want to provide equitable education in our communities. According to the data collected by MSDE, 44% of Maryland public school students were enrolled for free and reduced price meals this school year (at or below 185% of poverty). Locally, that number includes: 86% of students in Baltimore City (highest), 85% in Somerset County, 66% in Dorchester County, 62% in Prince George’s County, 61% in Wicomico County, 45% in Baltimore County, 33% in Montgomery County and 20% in Carroll County (lowest).
- MSEA supports the establishment of community schools which are designed to close these opportunity gaps by making the school a hub for essential services that students in disadvantaged communities lack.
- Community schools generally have the following four components: (1) they serve a high concentration of students in poverty; (2) they employ a full-time coordinator to lead community school-related services; (3) they conduct a needs assessment to identify key obstacles to learning and the services needed to close the opportunity gaps; and (4) they work with community partners to bring those needed services into the school building or nearby locations to make them accessible to students and community members.
- MSEA supports equitable and adequate resources to provide every student with an opportunity to learn in a safe and non-disruptive environment. Establishing and funding community schools is a research based strategy for closing opportunity gaps and building strong communities.

10. Do you support or oppose legislation dedicating a component of the revised school funding formula for the significant expansion of community schools in areas of concentrated poverty?

- Support
- Oppose

Additional Comments:

The concept of ‘community schools’ is new to me, having just learned about it in this questionnaire. I am not able to respond until I have the opportunity as a Delegate to learn more about the concept and understand the consequences, both intended and unintended.

In general, I support the notion of finding new and innovative ways of improving the schools in areas of highly concentrated poverty.

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 105,000 active members. The teacher system currently pays benefits to about 73,000 retirees. Retirees of the teacher system receive an average monthly benefit of \$2,278.
- 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.
- As a result of the reform actions taken by the legislature over the past few years, the state retirement and pension systems are on a path to reach a 100% funded status by 2039, putting the system back on solid financial ground.
- Some have proposed dumping employee defined benefit pension systems as a quick-fix to reducing state expenditures; however, studies indicate that alternative plans such as a defined contribution plan or a hybrid combination of plans result in severe cuts to employee accrued benefits and have a long term negative impact on state costs.

11. Do you support or oppose any action to diminish or threaten pension benefits such as alternative plans 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?

12. Do you support or oppose efforts to restore the employee contribution rate from the current level of 7% to the previous level of 5% as the system moves towards 100% funded status?

Support

Oppose

Additional Comments:

I would support the effort to reduce the employee contribution rate when the pension system gets to the 100% funded status.

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 any effort to interfere with organizational efforts to collect fees from all employees in a bargaining unit who benefit from the negotiated agreement but self-select to be nonmembers of the employee representative organization.
- 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.

13. Do you support or oppose public education employees' rights to bargain collectively?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

Tax Policy

Background Points

- MSEA supports a revenue structure that will provide a predictable, reliable, progressive, 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 supports updating and revising the state income tax structure, broadening the state sales tax to online sales, and targeting corporate tax reform by closing loopholes and tax avoidance schemes.

14. Do you support or oppose a balanced approach toward solving budget problems and ensuring adequate resources for funding education such as updating and revising the state income tax structure, broadening the state sales tax, and closing corporate tax loopholes?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

15. Please identify whether you support or oppose the following revenue measures:

Gaming revenue in the Education Trust Fund to supplement (not supplant) General Fund dollars that support state aid for education	<input type="checkbox"/> Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
Increase income tax on earnings above \$500k	<input type="checkbox"/> Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
Increase corporate taxes	<input type="checkbox"/> Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
Apply the sales tax to online purchases	<input type="checkbox"/> Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
Increase tax on cigarettes	<input type="checkbox"/> Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
Increase the estate and inheritance tax on millionaires	<input type="checkbox"/> Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
Tax marijuana sales, if legalized	<input type="checkbox"/> Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Oppose
Create and levy a carbon tax	<input type="checkbox"/> Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Oppose

Additional Comments:

I support the work of the Legislature to fund the State's obligations, including the constitutionally required funding of public schools. I would work with my colleagues and the leadership in the House on tax reform to create the necessary revenues to fund those obligations.

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 \$9.25 per hour and is scheduled to increase July 1, 2018 to \$10.10 per hour.
- Many 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.
- According to estimates from the Economic Policy Institute, increasing the minimum wage to \$15 per hour will directly raise the pay of 390,000 working Marylanders and will indirectly increase the wages of 430,000 more working Marylanders. The raise will inject approximately \$456 million into Maryland's economy and create an estimated 1,600 jobs.
- Maryland also has a Living Wage standard established for workers from private businesses receiving contracts or subsidies from local governments. Currently the Living Wage rate of \$13.79 per hour applies to the Tier 1 jurisdictions of Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties; the Living Wage rate of \$10.36 applies to Tier 2 jurisdictions, which are all the remaining counties.

16. Do you support or oppose a proposal to raise Maryland's minimum wage to \$15 per hour and indexing it annually to keep pace with the cost of living?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

I am studying the minimum wage / living wage issue. I am not able to respond until I have the opportunity as a Delegate to learn more about the issue and understand the consequences, both intended and unintended.

I believe that we must rebuild the working middle class and that takes better jobs and jobs for families that pay a living wage.

17. Do you support or oppose a proposal to raise Maryland's Living Wage to \$18 per hour, indexing it annually to keep pace with the cost of living and applying it to hourly employees in Maryland public schools?

Support
 Oppose

Additional Comments:

See the response to # 16 above.

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. Just in the last three years, Anne Arundel County has attempted to outsource teaching services for deaf and blind students, Talbot County has discussed privatizing transportation services, and Kent County has attempted to privatize custodial services. There currently is a multi-county effort on the Eastern Shore to outsource the hiring of occupational therapists and physical therapists to work in the schools.
- 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 an argument of cost-savings as a means of winning contracts. The amount is often misleading because they low-ball the first year operating costs. Ultimately, they reduce hours, health care coverage, or just cut jobs. All of these steps lead to increased local unemployment and less overall money in the community.

18. 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:

ADDITIONAL ESSAY QUESTIONS

- A. Please share what you consider to be your most significant achievements.
My three children. They are grown now, however when in school, they all attended Washington County Public Schools. They all benefited from good teachers and other staff who worked hard to give them a good education. Each of our children participated in the International Baccalaureate Program in Washington County and went on to higher education.
- B. Please outline your top three public education priorities and how you would measure and achieve success on each.
- Fiscal Discipline and Responsibility
~ by working hard to increase the local share of funds provided to the WCPS
 - Supporting Teachers and Educational Support Personnel
~ by helping find additional funds to enhance their wages and benefits
 - Working with the Board of Education, WCPS Administration and the Washington Co. Teachers Association & other bargaining units
~ by understanding the issues and working as a State Legislator to find the necessary solutions
- C. Please explain how you would work with your state and local education association when faced with potential legislation relating to education issues (i.e. discipline, suspension, school safety, special education, teacher certification, curriculum development)

As a member of the House of Delegates, I will work closely with the Board of Education, WCPS Administration and the Washington Co. Teachers Association & other bargaining units on legislation relative to education. I am no stranger to the WCPS, having relationships with the Teachers Association, the Administration and most of the elected Board of Education. I look forward to building on those relationships and working closely with my colleagues and the leadership in the House on the very important public school education issues.