

JON BARON NATALIE WILLIAMS

FOR  MARYLAND

Question 1: Maryland has consistently struggled to improve access to afterschool and summer programs despite high demand for such programs among the state's student population. How will your administration improve program availability for those who want to participate?

I agree that effective afterschool and summer programs can have a major impact on student achievement, attendance, and other important educational outcomes. But to achieve such success, it really matters which afterschool and summer programs government decides to invest in, because not all programs are effective, as we've seen too often when the results are measured. Our administration will expand funding for afterschool and summer programs that have actually been tested in the real world and shown to improve student outcomes. Examples of programs with highly promising results include Higher Achievement, which pairs after school mentoring with tutoring and ongoing enrichment; and the Building Educational Leaders for Life (BELL) summer learning program. We will also test other innovative programs and, if found effective, provide funding to deliver them on a larger scale.

Question 2: Current trends in labor and technology raise serious questions about Maryland's approach to workforce development and skills training. How would your administration support college and career readiness initiatives and prepare students for life after high school?

To ensure Maryland has a highly-trained workforce to fill well-paying jobs and power the state's economic success, my administration will expand Career Academy programs in high schools across the state. Career Academies are small learning communities within high schools that provide hands-on technical and career training to participating students, and summer or afterschool work experience with local employers. When carefully tested, Career Academies have been shown to increase participants' long-term earnings by an average of \$3,000 per year. Today, students in places like Howard County have access to such programs, allowing them to gain college credit and/or industry certification and earn higher wages long after they graduate. By expanding Career Academy programs to high schools across the state, we will ensure students from all backgrounds have the skills to succeed in the workforce and contribute to a thriving Maryland economy.

We'll also work to ensure that young adults have access to the training they need to succeed in a 21st century economy. My administration will partner with Maryland businesses to provide effective job training to every adult in our state who wants to advance. If done right, job training can be extremely effective — it's been shown to increase earnings by as much as 40 percent (or \$8,000 per person) each year. The key is to focus the training on fast-growing industries, like IT and healthcare, and to work closely with local employers who provide paid internships to the trainees. Under my plan, the state will pay for the training, employers pay for the internships, the economy gets skilled workers — everyone benefits.

Question 3: STEM fields represent a significant proportion of the state's economic growth potential. How would your administration prioritize science and technology related education programs in

Maryland?

Our administration will expand funding for STEM programs that are tested and proven to improve math and science outcomes for children. As one illustrative example, Saga Education's intensive math tutoring program for 9th and 10th graders in low-income high schools has been tested and shown to substantially increase math achievement scores and GPA through at least 11th grade. In addition to expanding such proven programs, we will fund the testing of other innovative programs and, if found effective, seek to expand them to schools across the state.

Question 4: The Blueprint for Maryland's Future was the state's most significant investment in education in over a decade, yet its full implementation has remained a contentious issue between the General Assembly and the Hogan administration. As governor, would you see the Blueprint fully implemented? How would you like to see the program expanded in your first term?

Education is one of the main reasons I got into this race. More than 1/4 of middle schoolers in our state can't read at a basic level, and more than 1/3 can't do basic math. Those numbers are no different than they were 20 years ago.

I believe the Blueprint could be a major turning point for our state, and strongly support it. But as governor — and unlike other candidates — I would focus its implementation on programs that aren't just well-meaning, but have actually been tested in the real world and proven to improve student outcomes, like providing tutoring to every struggling first and second grader in the state (shown to significantly improve reading and math scores and prevent serious learning problems later on) and expanding high school Career Academies (shown to increase long-term wages by \$3,000 per year).

Question 5: How will you support the expansion of the Community School Strategy in the state of Maryland?

I agree that the Community School Strategy is a promising model for improving student outcomes and supporting families and the wider community through our schools. To ensure this approach realizes its full promise, we would test different Community School approaches (e.g., afterschool curricula, nutrition services, health services) to determine which are most effective, and expand those that demonstrate the greatest benefit.

Question 6: Our partners have long advocated for the creation of a statewide office to coordinate and direct Expanded Learning initiatives in Maryland. Would your administration approve of an "Director (or assistant superintendent) of Expanded Learning" role and provide them with the resources necessary to promote and expand learning experiences outside of traditional school hours?

I agree that coordination of effort, along with a focus on identifying and expanding proven-effective Expanded Learning programs, is needed in state government. I would look seriously at creation of a statewide office to advance this important goal.

Question 7: Parents and educators are currently grappling with shifting cultural attitudes towards social justice and identity. In recent months, these debates have spilled into school board meetings across the country. What role, if any, would your administration play in shaping policy around discussions of race, gender, sexual orientation, and equity in the classroom?

I believe strongly in teaching the truth about our country and our society. School curriculums should reflect the truth about our history — both the good and the bad — and school policies should respect and celebrate the

diversity that makes our country great. Our schools should be welcoming, nurturing places of learning for all students — no matter where they come from, their race, gender or sexual orientation. Under a Baron-Williams administration, students and parents can rest assured that their rights will be protected, their identities will be celebrated, their history will be taught, and that they'll always belong — in our schools and in our state.

Question 8: What are your thoughts regarding the utilization of community and school-based mentoring programs to provide much-needed support to Maryland Public School students?

I strongly support the expansion of high-quality mentoring programs that have been tested and shown to improve youth outcomes. One leading example is Bottom Line – a comprehensive, one-on-one advising program for low-income students. Bottom Line provides students with personalized advising on the college application and selection process during high school, and continued advising in college on such items as course selection and financial aid. Rigorous testing shows that Bottom Line increases bachelor's degree completion by a remarkable 8 percentage points. Another highly-promising, widely-implemented program in this area is Big Brother Big Sisters, which has been found to reduce youth drug and alcohol use and prevent violent behavior. Our administration will also test other innovative mentoring programs and, if found effective, provide funding to deliver them on a larger scale.