

2022



Gubernatorial Candidate Questionnaire

Learning happens everywhere – in classrooms, and beyond the school day.

Greetings Gubernatorial Candidates,

As a broad-based coalition working to expand the quantity and quality of afterschool and summer opportunities available to Maryland's K-12 youth, the Maryland Out of School Time (MOST) Network invites you to answer the attached eight questions about important education policy issues.

We will publish your responses on the MOST Network website, www.mostnetwork.org, and in our e-newsletter, which reaches about 4,000 subscribers statewide. The MOST Network is one of 50 State Afterschool Networks supported by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and serves as the Maryland affiliate of the National Afterschool Association.

Please return your responses by Friday, June 3, 2022, to Ellie Mitchell at emitchell@mostnetwork.org

- Thank you in advance -

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?*

Background information

- Youth who regularly participate in quality afterschool programs demonstrate gains in reading and math and improve their school attendance, work habits and school performance.¹
- 85% of working parents overwhelmingly support public funding for afterschool programs. They support working families, keep youth safe and help youth learn and grow.²
- The waiting list is long. In Maryland, more than 150,000 youth are enrolled in afterschool programs, but another 280,000 are waiting for an available program.³

¹ Auger, A., Pierce, K. M. and Vandell, D. L. (April, 2013). Participation in Out-of-School Settings and Student Academic and Behavioral Outcomes.

² Kataoka, Sabrina and Deborah L. Vandell. "Quality of Afterschool Activities and Relative Change in Adolescent Functioning Over Two Years." Journal of Applied Developmental Science. VOL 17, ISS 3 (2013): 1-12. Print.

³ Pierce, K. M., Auger, A. and Vandell, D. L. (April, 2013). Narrowing the Achievement Gap: Consistency and Intensity of Structured Activities During Elementary School.

- Investing in afterschool is smart. For every public dollar invested in afterschool programs, Maryland sees an estimated return on investment of \$3.36.⁴

Youth afterschool programs are vital, which is why I started [Charm City Lacrosse](#), a youth lacrosse league that provides mentorship to kids in Baltimore. There is strong evidence connecting afterschool programs with lower violent crime rates, and public safety is our most pressing issue. My Safe Maryland plan, which you can read at [safemaryland.com](#), will fast track funding for community infrastructure like youth recreation centers to high-crime areas.

Question 2: Current trends in labor and technology raise serious questions about Maryland’s approach to workforce development and skills training.⁵ How would your administration support college and career readiness initiatives and prepare students for life after high school?

Background Information:

- The appropriate student to counselor ratio of 250 to 1 according to the American School Counselor Association. Maryland has a ratio of 369 to 1 statewide, while Baltimore City has a ratio is 900 to 1. This disparity continues to grow, leaving fewer students with the supports necessary to make informed career decisions.⁶
- Afterschool and summer programs improve students’ college and career readiness by offering college visits, teaching marketable skills, assisting them in the education process, and making them more attractive to university admissions offices.⁷

We have a lot of Yale minds in Baltimore but not a lot of Yale opportunities. The city clearly needs and deserves an increased investment in college counseling and preparedness. We need every kid in the state to believe that they can go on to college or find a career that pays well and suits them. I will work hard to institute the Blueprint plan to expand college readiness, and ensure that every child in Maryland regardless of zip code is ready to meet the world upon graduation.

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?

Background Information:

- STEM fields have been an engine for economic growth in the state for decades. Today, jobs in

⁴ http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/policyStateFacts.cfm?state_abbr=MD]

⁵ Manyika, James, and Kevin Sneider. “Ai, Automation, and the Future of Work: Ten Things to Solve For.” *McKinsey & Company*, McKinsey & Company, 9 Sept. 2021, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/ai-automation-and-the-future-of-work-ten-things-to-solve-for>.

⁶ Richman, Talia. “Baltimore sees declines in school counselor positions.” *Baltimore Sun*, March 2, 2018. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/education/bs-md-ci-sun-investigates-school-counselors-20180301-story.html>. Accessed online Nov. 21, 2020.

⁷ Brand, Betsy, Valiant Andrew. “The Potential of Career and College Readiness Exploration in Afterschool Programs.” *Expanded Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success*, 2013, https://www.expandinglearning.org/sites/default/files/em_articles/1_potentialofcareerandcollege.pdf. Accessed online on Nov 21, 2020

engineering, computer science, IT, and medicine are set to grow dramatically across the mid-Atlantic region. These jobs typically require formal education and training but provide high salaries and benefits to those who obtain them.⁸

- Equity problems persist in STEM disciplines. Women, as well as black and Hispanic graduates have historically been underrepresented in science and technology-related professions.⁹ Engaging these students through expanded learning opportunities at an early age is an effective way to bridge this gap.
- Maryland's longstanding deficit in afterschool and summer programs has been a hinderance to STEM learning. While fundamental concepts in science and math are taught in Maryland public schools. Students learning more complex trades like coding and robotics benefit from the hands-on experiences and peer relationships that expanded learning programs provide.¹⁰

Students in Maryland need to be provided with education in math and science that includes computer science and engineering, with more opportunities to see their skills connected to the real world. In particular, women, Black and Latino graduates need to be part of the pipeline that gets hired post-college. But we also must ensure that the STEM leaders of the future have deep ethical compasses as well as technical skills.

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?

Background Information:

- The Blueprint is designed to target students with the greatest need by using the number of students receiving Free and Reduced Meals at a given school as a metric for determining grant funding allocations. It also provides support for other worthwhile education initiatives including community schools, career and college readiness programs, expanded pre-K access, and the recruitment of high-quality teachers.¹¹
- The Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which passed the General Assembly through a veto override, was delayed in its implementation when the Hogan administration shortchanged the state's annual education budget¹² and rejected the initial list nominees for the Accountability and Implementation board appointed by the state legislature.¹³

Yes, I would, and unlike Comptroller Franchot, my position in support of the Blueprint has been

⁸ Eichensehr, Morgan. "Baltimore Ranks in Top 10 for 'STEM Friendly' Metro Areas." *Bizjournals.com*, Baltimore Business Journal, 10 Jan. 2018, <https://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/news/2018/01/10/baltimore-ranks-in-top-10-for-stem-friendly-metro.html>.

⁹ Kennedy, Brian, et al. "6 Facts about America's STEM Workforce and Those Training for It." *Pew Research Center*, Pew Research Center, 14 Apr. 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/14/6-facts-about-americas-stem-workforce-and-those-training-for-it/>.

¹⁰ "OST STEM Professional Development." *Click2Science*, The Noyce Foundation, <http://www.click2sciencepd.org/ost-stem-pd>.

¹¹ "Overview: The Blueprint for Maryland's Future." *Maryland State Department of Education*, <https://marylandpublicschools.org/Blueprint/Pages/Overview.aspx>.

¹² Shwe February 18, Elizabeth. "Mandate Debate: Prince George's, Baltimore Lawmakers Press for Education Funding Hogan Left out of Budget." *Maryland Matters*, 18 Feb. 2022, <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2022/02/18/mandate-debate-prince-georges-baltimore-lawmakers-press-for-education-funding-hogan-left-out-of-budget/>.

¹³ Shwe, Elizabeth. "Hogan Makes Deadline for Naming Members to Education Reform Oversight Panel." *Maryland Matters*, 1 Oct. 2021, <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2021/10/01/hogan-makes-deadline-for-naming-members-to-education-reform-oversight-panel/>.

consistent. One of the major reasons we need a Democratic governor in this state is so that we implement the Blueprint expeditiously, in the hands of people who care about educating students across Maryland. Our administration will ensure that it is fully funded and that the board is stood up immediately, but we must make sure a Democrat wins this election. According to a recent Goucher poll, the number one issue general election voters care about is crime. I am the only candidate in this race with a scintilla of experience in criminal justice, and the best-positioned to defeat Kelly Schulz in November.

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

Background Information:

- Community schools help alleviate the effects of concentrated poverty in the state’s communities by providing food and sanitation services to students, and by fostering partnerships with local organizations to establish free and low-cost afterschool and summer programs.¹⁴
- Community schools are particularly effective in low-income neighborhoods in cities and rural where social services and basic amenities can be few and far between.¹⁵ These institutions become community hubs that cater not only to the needs of students, but their families as well.
- The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future created pathways for schools across the state to access funding to implement the community school strategy. Nearly 300 community schools currently exist in Maryland, with dozens more poised to adopt the strategy over the next ten years.

Community schools are vital to our state. Particularly given how many students from impoverished neighborhoods have needs beyond schooling and how many are affected by violence in their neighborhoods, wrap around services with schooling is vital. Our administration will invest heavily in community schools and ensure all students receive a world class education.

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?

Background Information:

- Building strong partnerships between community organizations and school districts can be challenging, often due to weak lines of communication between the two parties and low levels of system-wide organization.¹⁶ A Director of Expanded Learning can alleviate this by promoting a comprehensive state-level strategy for OST programs, building personal relationships with relevant stakeholders, and guiding the utilization of federal funding.

¹⁴ Partnership for the Future of Learning, *The Community Schools Playbook*, 2017

¹⁵ Williams, Doris Terry. Center for American Progress, *The Rural Solution: How Community Schools Can Reinvigorate Rural Education*. September 2010

¹⁶ Anthony, Kenneth and Morra, Joseph, “Creating Holistic Partnerships Between School and Afterschool,” *Institute of Education Sciences*, Fall 2016

- Expanded Learning coordinators have proven to be effective both at the local level and in other states in the US. In Maryland, the Director of Community Schools has been an effective model for the implementation of statewide education initiatives. Offices like these act as intermediaries between schools, education officials, and program providers to expand the quantity and quality of OST programming in communities across the country.¹⁷

I would consider creating a Director of Expanded Learning position in the executive branch. We need to do a comprehensive evaluation of the executive branch and find roles that need filling to better coordinate services throughout the state.

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?

Background Information:

- State governments in Florida, Texas, and elsewhere have imposed limitations on content related to race, gender, and sexual orientation in school curricula in recent months, sparking controversy over the role of government and families in moderating classroom discussions on these subjects.¹⁸ At times, these laws have seen specific books and authors banned from lesson plans altogether.
- There is strong evidence to suggest that a diverse teaching workforce improves student performance and satisfaction, particularly when students share aspects of their identity with their teachers.¹⁹

It is vital that all students receive an education that reflects the diversity and range of experience of our students themselves. The actions taken in Florida, Texas, and elsewhere are anathema to the idea of supporting kids. There is no tension between a world-class education and a curriculum that facilitates discussions of race, gender, sexual orientation, and equity.

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?

Background Information:

¹⁷ "About Expanded Learning in California." *California AfterSchool Network*, 8 Nov. 2011, <https://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/splash-feature/about-expanded-learning-california-0>.

¹⁸ Greene, Peter. "Not Just Florida. How 'Don't Say Gay' Legislation Compares in Other States." *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 18 Apr. 2022, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/petergreene/2022/04/14/not-just-florida-how-dont-say-gay-legislation-compares-in-other-states/?sh=52b3381d7678>.

¹⁹ Redding, Christopher. "A Teacher like Me: A Review of the Effect of Student–Teacher Racial/Ethnic Matching on Teacher Perceptions of Students and Student Academic and Behavioral Outcomes." *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 89, no. 4, 2019, pp. 499–535., <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654319853545>.

- With a mentor, opportunity youth are 52% less likely than their peers to skip a day of school, 55% more likely to be enrolled in college, 46% less likely than their peers to start using drugs and 78% more likely to volunteer regularly in their communities.²⁰
- Mentoring particularly skills-based mentoring and apprenticeship programs, prepares our future workforce by exposing young people the world and developing their life skills and vocational skills which are critical to success in today's economy.²¹

I deeply believe in the value of mentorship, which is why the youth lacrosse league I founded has been such an important part of my life. We need to expand mentorship opportunities across the state and work to pair students with mentors. On a personal level, I am proud to have mentored many youth on their educational journeys, including talented young men like [Afi Blackshear](#) and [Michael Robinson](#).

²⁰ MENTORING: A CRITICAL SUPPORT STRATEGY FOR YOUTH CAREER ENGAGEMENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: <https://www.mentoring.org/new-site/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Career.pdf>

²¹ Ibid