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, 3022, to Ellie Mitchell at emitchell@mostnetwork.org

- Thank you in advance -

Question 1: Maryland has consistently struggled to improve <u>access to afterschool and summer programs</u> 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]
- Investing in afterschool is smart. For every public dollar invested in afterschool programs, Maryland sees an estimated return on investment of $3.36.[4]

> The importance of providing structured and educational out of school time for Maryland's students cannot be overstated. These programs have consistently demonstrated their ability to improve outcomes for students, keep them engaged in health and safe activities, and build more vibrant communities. As Maryland's next governor, I will continue to support these programs and ensure we are expanding opportunities for out of school time. The need could not be greater

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

as we continue addressing learning disruptions from the pandemic, and the ongoing social and emotional needs of our students. Maryland has made tremendous progress investing in education and wraparound supports for students through the adoption and ongoing implementation of the Blueprint, including funding for afterschool and summer learning programs. Unfortunately, the unmet need and barriers to participation remain high. In addition to fully funding and implementing the Blueprint for Maryland's future, which includes resources for tutoring and summer learning programs, I will build strong community partnerships, as well as public-private partnerships, to expand access to these critical programs.

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]

As governor, working together with localities and education stakeholders to ensure our students are set up for a successful career in the workforce will be one of my top priorities. In addition to supporting local school districts and ensuring that each has the resources they need to address learning disruptions, such as afterschool and summer programs, I believe that Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs have the potential to provide our students with the skills and experience they need to secure a good-paying job in the workforce. A 2019 report on CTE programs in Baltimore found that two-thirds of students participating in the program were making less than $12,140 per year. The current administration's proposed budget included $1 million in cuts to the CTE Committee and Skills Board who is in charge of creating a successful framework for these programs. In this moment, we should not be making cuts to CTE, we should be expanding and improving it. Our administration will ensure CTE programs are fully funded and will support expanded options for students that may not be interested in pursuing a pathway to a career through higher education by significantly increasing the number of apprenticeships, and implement a Service Year Option that allows

[5] Manyika, James, and Kevin Sneader. "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

students to get compensatory tuition at a Maryland college or university in exchange for serving a year in a public service role. This not only gives students a year to explore their options and but also provides them with a variety of pathways while serving.

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 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]

STEM industries and jobs have grown significantly over the past decade and that growth is only expected to continue. In addition to driving innovation across sectors, STEM jobs can also offer more than twice the median wages of non-STEM jobs. In order to meet the demands of Maryland's existing industries and attract new ones that will grow our economy and create new opportunities for Marylanders, we must accelerate our ability to produce STEM graduates. We must also improve diversity so that historically underrepresented women and students of color are able to access the same opportunities. That means engaging students of all backgrounds early in their educational careers and encouraging them to consider STEM pathways. As governor, I am committed to expanding Maryland's successful P-Tech program to additional public schools, which leverages partnerships between school districts, the business community, and our institutions of higher education so that students can obtain a cost-free associate's degree in key STEM fields. Our administration will also set clear benchmarks for institutions of higher education and community colleges to produce 40,000 new STEM graduates each year and utilize incentives like tuition assistance and loan forgiveness to drive students into STEM programs and reward institutions for achieving their benchmarks. Additionally, I will develop public-private partnerships with industry leaders to fund STEM apprenticeships to ensure students can earn while they learn.

[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.

Question 4: ***<u>The Blueprint for Maryland's Future</u> 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 budget[12] and rejected the initial list nominees for the Accountability and Implementation board appointed by the state legislature.[13]

I am proud to have earned the endorsement of the Maryland State Education Association, because they know I am committed to providing a world-class public education to every Maryland student. As governor, my number one priority will be fully funding and implementing the Blueprint. The Kirwan Commission and the resulting legislation creating the Blueprint for Maryland's Future have been transformative for our state's public education system and are serving as a model for other states around the nation. I have been a tremendous advocate of the Commission and Blueprint, having testified in support of both during their creation. The Blueprint lays out clear funding goals for the future and will address long-standing inequities in our system to ensure educators have the tools they need and families receive the education they deserve. With the framework clearly laid out, it is now the responsibility of Maryland's next governor to work together with local school districts to ensure the Blueprint receives full funding and is implemented appropriately statewide. As governor, I am committed to doing just that. I will ensure the Blueprint's Accountability and Implementation Board receives dedicated funding to assess progress and provide technical support to localities, something Maryland's current governor has refused to do. I will also ensure Maryland's State Department of Education (MSDE) is resourced and equipped to support the Board's work, along with the work of localities, while also ensuring educators and parents have a voice throughout implementation. As governor, I will not allow our progress to slow or stop.

Question 5: ***How will you support the expansion of the <u>Community School Strategy</u> in the state of Maryland?***

Background Information:
- Community schools help alleviate the effects of concentrated poverty in the state's communities

[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/.

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.

During my time as CEO of one of the nation's largest poverty fighting organizations, our investments included funding for 74 new community schools because I know that when children come to school hungry, after experiencing trauma, or when they're dealing with a treatable health condition, their ability to participate and learn in schools is negatively impacted. Community schools allow local school districts to engage with educators, parents, and students, and partner with community organizations to conduct a needs assessment and then provide access to necessary resources and services at the school, whether that be nutrition programs, trauma-informed care, dental services, workforce training, or something else. This provides a central location for students and their families where children are already spending a majority of their days. Maryland currently has 260 operational community schools and these models have demonstrated success, which is why the Blueprint seeks to convert 30% of Maryland's schools to community schools over the next decade. However, these efforts are only as successful as the support from the state and community partnerships that support them. I strongly believe that the reinstituted Office of Children can be a key partner with the MSDE in supporting community schools and building local relationships. I will also ensure the Blueprint is fully funded and implemented so more communities can benefit from these models.

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.
- 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

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[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

As Maryland works to address disparities for children, improve access to education, health and well-being, it is essential that the Governor's Office for Children be fully reinstated as an independent office. In 2020, Governor Hogan eliminated the office and transferred its duties to the newly renamed Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victims Services, limiting its scope and focusing more narrowly on criminal-justice-related issues. We know that keeping children safe and setting them up for a lifetime of success requires a holistic approach and collaboration across numerous federal, state, and local government agencies, as well as with community partners. As governor, I will broaden the scope of this office to focus on social/emotional well-being, addressing food insecurity, combating youth homelessness, and expanding access to essential behavioral health services. I will also bring a renewed focus to its importance in the governor's office and ensure strong cross-departmental collaboration by ensuring all relevant state agencies have a seat at the table along with key community partners. I will focus on building a robust system to collect and share data, as well as track longitudinal data to understand how Maryland's children are faring and opportunities to improve services.

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]

Our classrooms need spaces for our students to develop into critical thinkers. And as the only candidate in this race that has had one of their books banned and who has trained on military bases named after confederate generals, I understand that we cannot cover up or hide from our history. I fully trust our educators ability to teach our children and believe they are best equipped to teach our students. They have dedicated their lives and trained to ensure our students are successful. I also recognize that parents want to be engaged in their children's education. But

[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.

there has to be partnership. Parents and teachers need to collaborate to ensure our students develop into critical thinkers and our teachers need autonomy in the classroom to ensure our students receive the best education possible and are prepared for lifelong success.

We also know that the diversity of our educator workforce is not at all reflective of our student population and research is clear that having educators of color in the classroom improves student outcomes and breaks down inequities, especially for students of color. As the founder of a small business focused on breaking down barriers to higher education, I have personally seen the strategies that Maryland can implement to ensure that diverse educators make it to the workforce. My administration will improve diversity by engaging students early about becoming teachers, breaking down barriers to entering the profession through an expanded Student Loan Debt Relief Tax Credit Program and partnerships with our HBCUs. I will also expand access to essential wraparound supports through mentorship and educator development programs.

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

Background Information:

- 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 recognize that approaching high school graduation without a definitive plan on next steps can be daunting for some students, especially those who are not ready to enroll in higher education, may not have the skills they need to step into the workforce or are unsure of what career is right for them. These students need additional support and experience that will set them on a path to success. That is why I will implement a Service Year Option program that will be integrated into the implementation of the Blueprint, enabling Maryland high school graduates to serve for a year in a public service role in exchange for job training, mentorship, and other support, including compensatory tuition at a Maryland college or university. This program will build a stronger sense of community and service across the state and create new opportunities for students to access good jobs.

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[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