

ABCPOA Candidate Questionnaire 2020
Board of Education
District 2
Sherrill Jolly

Please complete the following questionnaire and return it not later than September 25, 2020
Please limit responses to 200 words

Question 1.

Please define the one clear change that you wish to accomplish and how you intend to build support for this change during your tenure in office if elected”?

Response 1.

One change I would like to see would be for people to feel they are being listened to by the board. People get tired of filling out surveys and never hearing what the actual results are. While the board may not be able to move forward in the direction a person would like, he/she should never feel that they are not being heard. I would like to see well constructed surveys with the results posted on the school webpage. If the board must go against the majority, people deserve a clear explanation of why that is. I would also like for people to be able to register to speak at a meeting on the school website. There should be a time limit and a limit on how many can speak for each side. The rule should be clear and followed.

Question 2.

Brunswick County public schools rank in the bottom 50 percentile of districts in NC in both math and reading proficiency. Our spending per student and student/teacher ratios are higher than the average in N.C. What specific steps do you recommend to improve our testing results?

Response 2.

The first step is to make sure that all students have access to a Smart Start program. This program allows students to begin Kindergarten with the skills they need to be proficient in these areas. We also need to understand that proficiency is an arbitrary number set by someone or a group that has little to do with the day to day activities in a classroom. I would advocate the state to limit End of Course testing to three times in a student’s educational experience. Having taught high school, I know that students enter high school “tested out”. They no longer take it seriously. I have seen 3rd graders stressed about testing. If we can get the state to streamline testing, I believe we would get more accurate results and could design a program that would give assistant to those students who need it.

Question3

The only vocational school in our area is located in Castle-Hayne and serves only grade 9. Do you believe that we should have expanded vocational opportunities? If so, do we need a more local facility and how would it be funded?

Response 3.

Our schools offer many vocational opportunities. We have programs in health services, auto mechanics, web design, marketing, carpentry, etc. Students who complete a program can graduate with certifications such as CNA, Electrical trades I certification, Microsoft certification, etc. Brunswick County Schools also partners with BCC to offer welding and cosmetology to seniors which allows them to either graduate with Welding I certification or have only one more year to study in the cosmetology program before they can get their state certification. All of our schools are vocational schools. If it would work for students, perhaps the Coast School near BCC in Bolivia could become a vocational school. It already has the facility to teach a cohort of students. Perhaps we could have students apply much like the Early College, and commit to a program after their freshman year. We could transfer teachers that already teach vocational courses to this school and offer the basic courses needed for graduation. Buses could run on the same route as Early College. I believe this could happen with a limited need for new financial resources. However, I wonder if it would actually lessen the amount of students who can take advantage of these courses.

Question 4.

Even with the recent salary increases, the N.C. teachers' salary averages are still in the bottom 50 percentile compared with the national average. Further, Horry County has a much more attractive salary structure than Brunswick County. What additional incentives can we offer to attract and retain the best teachers?

Response 4

I was looking at what is offered to teachers in New Hanover and Horry Counties as these are the counties to which we are most likely to lose teachers. As a board, we need to petition the General Assembly to raise teacher salaries. We can't compete with Horry County as long as South Carolina pays teachers more and pays them additionally for a Master's Degree which NC no longer does. Those two issues need to be corrected by our legislators. New Hanover County, however, gives incentive to teachers by paying a stipend for extra work. If a person is a prom chairman, coaches a Science Olympiad team, sponsors a club that requires after school time, teachers are compensated. Brunswick County needs to look at this incentive and move toward paying teachers who give extra time to our students.

Question 5

Student success is directly linked to positive expectations by students, parents, educational professionals and a vision for a better future. How would you, as a member of the Board of Education build such values in the decisions that you make?

Response 5.

The first question the board must always ask is, "Is this decision in the best interest of students." That must be the guiding force for any decision. The board recognizes student achievement at each meeting and that needs to continue. Students need to know that their success is important to the board. In addition, it would be good for students to see board members in the schools. If an important event is happening at the school that reflects student success, perhaps a board member could attend, if only

briefly.