



2016 Board of Education Candidate Questionnaire

Please return the completed questionnaire to Nick List, nlist@mceanea.org by 5:00 pm on Monday, February 22, 2016.

Name: Michael Ibanez

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Website:

Children	Age	School
Josh	13	Gaithersburg MS
Ali	7	Laytonsville ES

Education and Training (list degrees, licenses, etc.):

Loyola Marymount University	School Administration
University of Maryland	Education
MD Teaching Credential	K-8, Social Studies

Occupation: Retirement Operations, Specialist

Employer: Office of Personnel Management

Address: 1900 E Street, NW, Washington, DC

General Responsibilities: Federal Government Employee and Retiree Services

Union Membership (past or present): MCEA

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

Candidate Signature: **Michael Ibanez**

Date: **2/22/16**

Part I

1. Why are you running for this position? What personal attributes, characteristics, and experiences make you the right candidate for this position?

The reason why I am running is to give voters the opportunity to vote against the current at large member of the BoE. Mr. Kauffman supported teacher cuts, cuts in spending, position cuts, reduction in per pupil spending, and property tax increases. He voted in favor of hiring the previous superintendent, and then changed his mind and voted to fire the same superintendent he just hired. During Mr. Kauffman's 8 years on the Board of Education, he has sat back and watched the achievement gap get worse, and school suspensions of African American and Latino students go up. Several BoE members have said that MCPS is "cracking" and MCPS is "at a breaking point" and the future of MCPS is at risk of failing. If elected I will lead the BoE in eliminating, not just reducing, but eliminating the achievement gap that one board member recently said has existed since 1969. Mr. Kauffman, and any school board member who cannot promise and believe and work for the elimination of the achievement gap within the next five years, needs to seek public service elsewhere.

2. What is your view of personal and institutional change? Incremental or transformational? What change, if any, do you believe MCPS needs to undertake?

The Achievement Gap needs to be eliminated within the next five years. Any current BoE member and any candidate for the BoE who does not believe that the gap can be eliminated in 5 years needs to seek public service elsewhere.

3. In your opinion, what are the purpose and value of student assessments at the county, state and national levels? Given the current landscape what are the ramifications for students and educators?

I support the following testing:

PARCC - Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

PSAT - Preliminary SAT

SAT – Scholastic Aptitude Test

ACT – American College Test

ACCUPLACER Test – College Placement Test

ASVAB - Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery

AP Tests – Advanced Placement Tests

MCPS Math final exams without affecting course grades.

4. Specifically, what programs and initiatives are currently being implemented successfully by MCPS to close the achievement gap? What is still needed? What is not working?

The achievement gap has widened for FARM, Special Education, Hispanic and African American students. Programs that have shown to be ineffective in closing the gap need to be reviewed and possibly eliminated. Given the cuts in the previous budgets and the proposed 2017 budget, the priority is to fund and expand programs that have proven to be effective in closing the achievement gap. I support expanding the alternative education programs, office of technology initiatives, cultural proficiency training, and the office of superintendent's strategic goal to establish partnerships with business, non-profits, universities, government, and philanthropic organizations.

But addressing the achievement gap will not be eliminated though programs and initiatives if the biggest problem is not solved. That problem affecting my three children, my two grandchildren, and every parent, grandparent, and citizen living in Montgomery county is paying our teachers, keeping our teachers, and hiring more teachers. In fact, MCPS is losing teachers, cutting positions, and is not hiring enough teachers to teach all students. This problem has and still is getting worse each year my opponent, Mr. Kauffman, fails to stop the cuts while he sits on the school board. Not only did Mr. Kauffman fail to stop the cuts, he voted to hire the last superintendent and then changed his mind and voted to fire the superintendent he just hired. This is poor leadership. Not only did Mr. Kauffman fail to stop the cuts and hire more teachers, he supported raising your property taxes. He raised your taxes and still failed to stop the cuts and failed to hire enough teachers. This is poor leadership. Not only did Mr. Kauffman fail to stop the cuts and hire more teachers, he sits on the board and watches thousands and thousands of our children fall further behind in math and reading. This is terrible leadership.

As a school board member, I will lead the school board in stopping the cuts, restoring teaching positions, and hiring more teachers. This will not be easy. But it can be done. We need a school board and a superintendent who will partner with business, corporations, philanthropic nonprofits, and government agencies. Not easy but this must be done. We need a board and superintendent who will give us a performing arts high school, an aviation high school, a computer and technology high school, a high school that graduates students with a college associates degree. Impossible? It's been done all over the country.

But most of all we need a board and superintendent that will identify, recognize, and reward teachers who are extremely good at turning around failing students into students who excel in math and reading. One school board member suggested that the achievement gap will always exist and will never be eliminated. Board members who do not work to eliminate the gap in five (5) years need to step down from the school board. New school board members need to be elected who believe the achievement gap can be eliminated in the next five years. And if

elected I will be the board member in front leading the way to eliminating the achievement gap.

5. As a Board member, what metrics would you use to determine if MCPS policies and programs are closing the achievement gap?

The superintendent, current board members, and research agree that the greatest factor in student achievement is a highly qualified teacher in the classroom. We need a board and superintendent that will identify, recognize, and reward teachers who are extremely good at turning around failing students into students who excel in math and reading. Students are evaluated by the products they produce. The same metric should be used to identify, recognize, and reward teachers. For the purpose of eliminating the achievement gap in five years, teachers need to be evaluated in the same way as students are evaluated, in the products they produce. The metric to determine if MCPS policies and programs are closing the achievement gap is the academic achievement of the students that teachers teach.

6. Given the dynamics of various relationships with administrators, parents, community members, the employee organizations and the county government, how can you work to build consensus within and between these groups?

The highest priority is to restore teacher/staff positions that were cut in previous budgets. The next priority is to hire new teachers and staff to meet growing student enrollment. Related to these two priorities is raising the salaries of teachers, cutting county taxes for teachers, providing housing incentives to teachers, and getting businesses and community organizations to recognize and reward teachers.

The BoE and the County County, as well as Superintendent and the County Executive, and state legislators need to work together to increase state funding, and to find additional sources of revenue beyond repeated property tax increases to fully fund current and future MCPS budgets, specifically to raise salaries to attract and recruit the best teachers across the country, and to retain and reward teachers who have demonstrated eliminating the achievement gap in the students they teach.

7. What are your views of the significant state wide policy issues that are impacting MCPS?

A state wide policy impacting MCPS is Maintenance of Effort Funding. The council needs to have flexibility in passing school budgets during recessions. Another policy is shifting funding of the pension program away from the state and to the school districts which in effect reduces state funding for schools in actual net dollars.

8. Describe an environment where students and educators succeed. What resources and human capital are needed?

The greatest factor in a successful classroom is a highly qualified teacher. To eliminate the achievement gap in five years, MCPS needs to restore positions, hire teachers to meet increased enrollment, and to recruit, retain, and reward teachers who have demonstrated eliminating the achievement gap in the students they teach. This requires finding additional resources of funding through partnerships with corporate, business, philanthropic non-profits, and government agencies. This requires alternative ways of educating students through online learning, blended learning, a performing arts high school, an aviation high school, a computer and technology high school, a high school that graduates students with a college associates degree. This requires providing parents with the choice of public charter schools that have demonstrated performance of reducing the achievement gap in these public charter schools i.e. KIPP public charter schools.

9. What do you believe needs to be done to increase public support for our schools, and what do you see as your role in accomplishing this goal?

This is a question of leadership and politics. The Board of Education must pass the resolution that the achievement gap will be eliminated in five years. The BoE must hire a superintendent who will support and work towards this goal. The BoE must obtain local state and national business, corporate, community, government backing and support to eliminate the achievement gap in five years. The council and county executive must support and back this goal. As a BoE member said, if the achievement gap can't be eliminated here in MCPS, then it can't be eliminated anywhere.

10. Do you support Paid Family Leave policies, similar to those provided by DCPS for their professional, supporting services, and administrative staffs?

I support Paid Family Leave similar to DCPS.

Part II

Please share your opinion on each of the following issues:

- A. Class size - restore cut positions and hire new teachers to address increased enrollment, class size needs to be reduced; however research shows reducing class size has limitations regarding student academic achievement.
- B. Universal pre-k – expand from existing programs and make available to all children throughout the county; see Blasio and New York City Schools
- C. Career and technology education - specialized curriculum and specialized high schools that provide IT career tracks and internships that lead to IT jobs in the private and government sector upon high school graduation; math and reading remediation intervention now for middle and high schools students, and not later when they are college students
- D. Music and the arts – create at least one county wide performing arts high school requiring auditions
- E. School start times – do not support earlier start times as implemented; different models for earlier start times for high school students could have been piloted; this one size fits the entire school district strategy is not effective as using varied strategies that are designed to meet the needs of individual schools and even individual students.
- F. Teacher retention – attract and recruit experienced teachers from large urban school districts across the country who have demonstrated results of turning around failing students to students excelling in math and reading; offer the highest teacher salaries, student loan forgiveness, housing incentives, and local tax incentives.
- G. Class discipline – discipline starts at home with the parent and the adults that students see and interact with on a daily basis; discipline often reflects student/family economic status and culture, and the levels of neighborhood crime and poverty. MCPS Teachers and Administrators not only need to be culturally proficient but MCPS needs to recruit

and hire teachers and administrators who lived in culturally and ethnically diverse neighborhoods with high levels of poverty and crime. The disparate suspension rates of African American and Latino students need to be eliminated.

- H. Grading policy/ final exams- support reinstating final exams without affecting final grade
- I. School calendar – continue to expand and increase the number of summer school courses for elementary, middle, and high school students
- J. Special Education burden of proof - needs to be less adversarial between MCPS and parents/students. Make use of mediation and agreements. Use binding arbitration during an impasse.
- K. School choice – public charter schools similar to public charter schools in NYCPublic, LAUSD, DCPS: performing arts high school, computer and technology high school, aviation high school, KIPP public charter middle school, language emersion high schools, associates degree high schools.