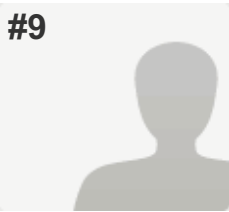


#9



**COMPLETE**

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**Q1: Contact Information:**

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**Q2: Office sought:** Assembly

**Q3: District:** 15

**Q4: A. With this situation in mind, what would you do to support and financially prioritize the public employee pension systems to restore full funding to the pension systems?**

A. Bringing fiscal stability to the public workers pension fund is one of the most pressing issue we face as legislators. It is imperative that we keep our commitment to public employees, who have been making contributions uninterrupted and who have planned for retirement based upon a contractually negotiated pension plan. We must meet these obligations. I am committed to working with my colleagues to find a solution to the current crisis and will consider all options and proposals brought before me.

**Q5: B. Would you vote to support a law ( or an amendment to the New Jersey State Constitution) to require the State to make quarterly pension payments, not end-of-fiscal year payments, to facilitate the State's practice of making pension payments?**

Yes

**Q6: C. Would you support legislation to raise additional revenue, if necessary, to make public employee pension payments? Would you vote to override the Governor if he vetoes such legislation?**

C. I do not think we are in a position to eliminate any possible answers to the pension funding crisis, including the possibility of raising additional revenues. If I were to support such legislation with my vote, and the legislation was later vetoed by the Governor, I would vote to override the veto.

**Q7: D. Would you vote in support of a constitutional amendment to our State Constitution to require the State to make its actuarially required contributions to public employee pensions?**

Yes

**Q8: A. What is your position on New Jersey's commitment to the Common Core State Standards?**

A. One of the reasons New Jersey's public education system is consistently ranked among the best in the nation is our commitment to developing standard curricula that allow students to achieve their full learning potential. These standards are essential to ensuring that the lessons in the classroom remain current and are appropriate to prepare our students to thrive in a world of fast paced technological advancements. Any review of Common Core Standards must be done with an understanding of the advancement and continued educational excellence that has been realized by adhering to a system of continuously vetted and improved standards.

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**Q9: B. In what areas, if any, do you see a need for change and how would you address those issues in the Legislature?**

B. We must be vigilant regarding what educational standards can best prepare our students for the future and understand that standards are expected to change and adjust. This would include not only what we teach our students, but also how we teach them. New technologies in education and creative approaches to improve the outcomes for all of our students should be reviewed and considered. This is especially true regarding new approaches to some of our most challenging student populations. I will work toward providing the tools and resources necessary to provide our students with an excellent education.

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**Q10: A. What is your view on the role of standardized testing requirements, like the PARCC assessment, in student achievement?**

A. Standardized testing remains an important tool for measuring student achievement and identifying areas of learning which need improvement.

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**Q11: B. Would you support or oppose legislation such as A-4165, which creates a state level opt out policy for parents to choose to have their children not participate in federally-mandated annual tests?**

B. Due to the many legitimate concerns regarding the implementation of the PARCC testing, I supported A-4165. Going forward, I believe we must work to ensure that a proper, well organized and appropriately supported testing system be implemented throughout the state. While there were always be some parents who choose to opt-out of testing, we should work to ensure that the Department of Education administers an effective testing program that earns the confidence of teachers, parents and students, and therefore results in minimal parental opt-outs.

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**Q12: C. What is your view of using annual test scores, such as PARCC test results evaluated over time to show student growth, as one possible measure in teacher and/or principal evaluation as set forth in the TEACH NJ Act?**

C. There is an inherent concern in applying a standard test result to measure the effectiveness of members of a professional, such as education, that is filled with variables. Each classroom in every school presents its own set of challenges and circumstances. PARCC testing is just one measurement of a teacher or principal and should always be considered within the entire context of the teaching staff member's impact on student development and achievement.

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**Q13: D. What will you do as a state leader to provide leadership and stability to the school community on this issue this school year?**

D. It is important that we listen to all concerns regarding use of standardized testing to measure student achievement and teacher performance. I will continue to support initiatives that ensure all tests are administered in the best possible environment for our educators and students. I will also continue to listen to all stakeholders regarding the appropriate and fair use of the data produced by such testing.

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**Q14: A. With this law scheduled to sunset in the next legislative session and as the cost of health care as a percentage of income continues to grow, what are your thoughts on the issue cost containment and health care reform?**

A. We can all agree that the cost of healthcare in New Jersey is too high and has become an economic burden to employers and employees. The increased percentage of health insurance premiums which public employees now contribute can do little to offset the double digit increases to the cost of delivering health care services from providers throughout the state. It is important that we work to address the cost of healthcare at the point of delivery. This effort can start with increased transparency of services from hospitals and physicians regarding information about provider networks and estimated costs to the patient for all services and procedures.

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**Q15: A. How would you address this growing funding problem in our schools and how would you prioritize school funding in the context of other budgetary challenges?**

A. It is unfortunate that our state's poor recovery from the recession caused by the 2008 financial crisis has not allowed us to allocate the available resources needed to fully fund the school formula. There is an estimated \$1.5 billion gap between the funding levels dictated by the formula and the actual funding provided by the state. We must do everything we can to find ways to narrow that gap and deliver to our schools the funding necessary to meet our education mandates. This will be difficult, but must remain a priority.

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**Q16: A. Would you support the establishment and funding of a permanent New Jersey School Safety Specialist Academy under the aegis of the DOE, as a central repository for best practices, training standards, and compliance oversight in all matters regarding school safety and security?**

Yes

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**Q17: B. Would you support and fund the designation of school safety personnel - including the placement of specially trained police officers, more commonly known as School Resource Officers, in all buildings as the report recommends?**

Yes

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**Q18: A. Due to our current low levels of administrative spending and the real need for flexibility within the school budget, particularly in light of new evaluation requirements at every school, would you support legislative efforts to eliminate the double cap on administrative costs within the school budget while maintaining the 2% tax levy cap in the law?**

A. As long as the tax burden to local taxpayers is not increased in the aggregate, I would support giving schools more flexibility regarding how they utilize school funding.

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**Q19: A. Would you support a moratorium on the imposition of additional mandates through a requirement that all legislation impacting schools include a fiscal note detailing the expense to the state and localities of the mandate?**

Yes

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**Q20: 9. YOUR INITIATIVE**If elected, what would be your most compelling initiative in the field of public education?

There are two areas of public education which I will focus on if elected.

First, I will continue to work on bringing accountability to the Department of Education's process of approving charter schools. Earlier this year I submitted the following charter school accountability bills: A4597, which requires charter schools to apply for a new charter to open a new school building or satellite campus; A4598, which requires charter schools to disclose on websites and recruitment materials, information regarding staff certifications; and A4599, which in order to improve the accuracy of student attendance projections, requires the State to make charter school payments for the initial year of a charter school's operation.

Second, I believe that additional resources need to be allocated to schools in certain districts to improve 3rd grade literacy levels. Too many of our students are falling behind at an early age, and as we know, students who read below proficiency levels are less likely to finish high school. I will work with all stakeholders to look for creative solutions to support programs within our public schools to improve student outcomes regarding literacy.

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