



Fairfax County Special Education PTA School Board Election Questionnaire

About us:

Our Mission:

Empowering and connecting families, students and educators to ensure students with disabilities develop their full potential as individuals and community members.

- Fairfax County SEPTA is a county-wide PTA that covers all special education, special needs and disabled students in Fairfax County. We are made up of parents, caregivers, educators and professionals dedicated to advocating for the needs of students with disabilities.
- Fairfax County SEPTA offers the following branches of service to our Special Needs Community: Advocacy, Community & Support, improved Access to Information, Programming, and Awards & Recognition.
- Fairfax County SEPTA is dedicated to positive collaboration with FCPS and other disability advocacy groups as we work to achieve our mission.
- Fairfax County SEPTA is a member of the Fairfax County Council of PTAs as well as the VA State PTA and National PTA

About this Questionnaire:

We thank you for completing this short survey regarding your view on ways the FCPS School Board can ensure that Special Education students in FCPS receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

All candidates are receiving this questionnaire on August 1, 2017. We kindly request that you submit your responses to info@FairfaxCountySEPTA.org no later than August 11, 2017. We will publish all received responses on April 18, 2017. If you decline to respond, we will note that on our website and communications. We will also be encouraging Fairfax County SEPTA membership to vote in the special election on August 29, 2017.

Sandra Allen's Responses

1. What is your view of how the budget process should be undertaken this year in terms of transparency to stakeholder group members while various options are developed, analyzed, and selected? In light of the fact that Fairfax County has the greatest shortage of special education teachers in the Commonwealth, will there be a focused consideration of chronic teacher shortages in Special Education and will you include parent groups in this discussion?

As a parent, I see the need to improve feedback and have great transparency towards all stakeholders having them provide feedback throughout the process. As decision makers, we must have the right information from people that work with all groups to adequately implement policies. We must ask for feedback from customers to know how to improve processes to create sustainable solutions. A School System is better able to respond to changes when parents are empowered. What I found out decision makers often don't know issues afflicting schools. Addressing issues before they take root in the school system is of much importance i.e. bullying The right teaching technic with adequate support to better student overall education should be a number one goal for any school system. This would mean



adequate student to teacher ratio. As a candidate, I would seek to be better informed from advocate groups. Find out why shortage exists and what can be done to better this current situation. Any decision maker should be supportive of feedback from advocacy groups and parents. My position would be to give parents choices. If schools are not meeting students' needs.

2. Given the complexity of serving an extremely diverse population of students with disabilities who require special services, will you be an at large board member with a special concern for these needs?

We need to put the focus on improving experience and success for all students. Special services have as much importance in achieving student success. Though, I would not have the final decision, you can count that I will strongly advocate for positive changes and improvements in this area. I believe in finding right educators for students, only then can we see changes in overall student achievement. "Parents may not have the answers, but they are as close to the problem as anyone will ever get. Nobody else has more reason to care. They should be empowered as consumers to achieve excellence for their children."

3. What personal experiences do you have with educational accommodations, whether 504 Plans, ADA provisions or Individual Educational Plans required under IDEA? Are you familiar with the Supreme Court's Endrew F. decision? How should the school board assess its impact in terms of the amount and quality of Special Services that FCPS will provide next year?

I don't have personal experience with educational accommodations, but what you have in me is the heart and the steadfast believe that we can provide excellence to our student body with the right decisions. Current issues have been neglected or not properly prioritize. I believe, I can bring a citizen's perfective and common sense decision making. As you have seen in my Facebook page my advocacy grew out of the need to help change trend of Latino Student dropping out (900+) in Fairfax Public School System. This advocacy took me to the UN Youth and Women empowerment and saw the benefits for all students. That is what I bring in my candidacy.

4. What else should we know about you before voting?

I am a strong supporter of student success. A mother, a citizen, and an advocate for giving children opportunity to excel regardless of economic conditions or ethnicity. Currently our social structure is being challenged and strongly believe that schools should function independently of outside influences. Those influences should not affect the education of any student. Schools should be number one advocates for all students. Children should continue with their education. Adult issues i.e. politics should not affect the quality of education. We have the power to change the current circumstance for the future generation by setting right the path. Creating a positive atmosphere and right advocacy is necessary. We have allowed politics to guide the decision making of our schools. This should not be part for a position that entails education and student success. We must have leaders with compassion and heart to do what is right for the success of students. Today's children are tomorrows leaders. We decide to invest now, create intellectuals or continue with the social brake of haves and have-nots. School systems should provide the right environment for learning and remove those that detract from students. Must create schools of excellence, intellectual institutions of independent thinkers. "hubs of multiculturalism" "lack of access to information will perpetuate the division between the haves and have-nots" by Oxford Dictionaries.