

From: Jenn Grega <educationmatters2all@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2023 1:28 PM
To: lakecountynaacp@aim.com
Subject: Board of Education questionnaire

First thank you so much for the opportunity to address educational issues in Lake County schools today. Second, I am unable to make the banquet for I have promised my children (7,7 and 5) that we would pass out candy and decorate our car this year for the school's trunk or treat and it is the 26th as well. Third, it would not be in my budget honestly as a single income household with zero campaign donations or really supporters as I differ with many views here, I would not be able to afford it with the salary for a year's term being \$600-800 a year.

Your mission is one I fully support but cannot do so monetarily at this time, I hope you can understand.

Below are my answers - I typed them out on my lunch today so the questions may have been truncated but the answers are complete.

I have placed in BOLD the answer I placed the X on as well as photos of the actual answers I wrote and now have typed below.

1. Students should be allowed to have cell phones during school hours – **Agree**

The reality of 2023 is that the concerns of safety and resource access both sometimes need the ability to have outside technology. While I do understand they can be a distraction I feel that the possibility of need for access to emergency personnel or research from the internet both outweigh the inconvenience of setting proper rules and restrictions. Students must uphold that agreement as well with a contract of sorts to realize it is a privilege.

2. American history be taught accurately and completely, including events we are not proud of. – **Strongly agree**

Backing away or hiding from morally incorrect history or events does not lessen the power those horrible decisions, actions or times were. I argue that hiding it or worse denying it increases the trauma, lessens the respect for those whose lives were affected and prohibits our ability to learn and grow FORWARD.

3. It is important to help students understand current day implications of historic events and behaviors: **Strongly Agree**

We are living in unprecedented times in so many ways and experiences all converging and crossing over our personal beliefs, our childrens' childhood and for many parenting while watching our world turn against itself, the economy crush many of us and division in our communities at time so strong neighbors do not speak over political beliefs. All of this is incredibly difficult to travel as an adult the younger groups need our help to weather the storm as they fundamentally grow into adulthood.

4. Primary concern address academic achievement gap – **Strongly Agree**

As a society we can only become stronger together, that does not end at district lines, in specific neighborhoods or only in “big cities” – all children, adolescents, young adults should be granted access to an education – bettering our communities for generations to come.

5. The amount and emphasis and funds devoted to extra curricular is about right. – **Agree**

As someone who personally was interested in the arts and sports in middle school and then arts over sports in high school I know and understand the discussion points raised with the interest, focus and monetary investment into sports. Over my years I have seen this as a multifaceted issue – the community can rally behind a team, a big game, a bonfire in such a way that it becomes an event – a reminder of their youth, their teammates, their memories – with that comes boosters and fundraising to support the program. Many of the same type of programs in the arts do not have the support of boosters or fundraising as they don’t have a community like appeal being more solitary or more intellectual activity not in a room, court or stadium to which spectators can be present and contribute.

6. It is important that there be racial diversity among the staff of a school. **Strongly Agree.**

Our schools should when possible reflect society as a whole, the American melting pot and the community we live and educate in.

7. Schools should operate with the funds they have rather than continually seeking more funds from taxes – **Neutral/Disagree.**

This one I am torn on between neutral and disagree – the community should be able to determine the funding level they would like to contribute to the success of their own community however it is necessary because of lack luster funding from the state for education. The importance of education should match the states contributions and funding for it – which it does not.

8. It is well documented that students of color receive more and harsher discipline than white students. However this is typically justified and not a result of unconscious bias. **Strongly Disagree.**

1000% disagree – punishments for the same offense should be equal and fairly distributed. For fair and equal justice must stay blind, especially color blind and aware in the position held if the individual has carried with themselves internal biases and correct them.

9. History, DEI and SEI is too racially divisive the way it is taught – **Strongly disagree.**

When taught correctly linking into the history an attitude based in DEI and SEI principles even charged topics which can be emotional or traumatic to address or think about can be done respectfully in age appropriate content thru a safe learning environment for all.

DEI – Diversity Equality and Inclusion – creating learning objectives and inclusive teaching methods brings the student body together in a more authentic, community centered attitude in which differences

are supported and the entire student body is enriched thru discussions and experiences being shared. Addressed in the Perry Peeps program as well as the student groups and student created clubs.

SEI – Social and emotional learning has been a main focus here in Perry with the PEEPS program that all students participate in starting in kindergarten.

10. In general too many school boards have ceded too much authority and influence to super., admin, rather than making decisions for themselves. – **Neutral.**

This has a varied effect as not all communities fit this generalization with their board and who or what has the decision making power for what at the moment. The belief I hold is that all positions in the school have and do make a difference and therefore should do it together. The superintendent and administrative personnel have vital information to the day to day workings of the school and its student body, the school board is an interface to them, support to them and also a sounding board for the local community – all of those folks deserve a seat at the table in decision to affect the everyday working of their school and the long term changes that will effect the community.

11. Each school district has some level of systemic racism, though it may be unintentional. – **Neutral**

All levels of human interaction including school districts that could have individuals or policies that do show systemic racism – most I feel within the last five years have had this brought up as a concern and taken concerted effort to eliminate therefore I do not want to speculate beyond neutral as I know our local school district dedicates itself to overall betterment of all Perry students socially and emotionally.

12. While there may be some barriers for students to attain high achievement, these barriers are not unique to students of color, they apply to all students. – **Neutral/Agree**

While I do recognize the specific barriers which are unique to generational barriers I do also understand that those barriers are no longer strictly due to color as in the past. Numerous factors are now barriers in regards to education – race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, societal position, family education levels, lack of generational wealth or position.

13. Banning or restricting books from schools is an appropriate means of protecting our children from being exposed to immoral content. – **Disagree**

While many views as of late are to ban books, publications, websites, companies etc that we personally disagree with they do not make them immoral. Many of the books banned from school districts are those that have content of which people wish to ban because they do not fit their belief system (be that personal, religious or political) however the main reason this country was founded was for religious freedom and then freedom of speech. An informed parent should have the ability to know what their child is reading but if they think banning something from the local library is going to stop their child from getting ahold of that publication they are living in 1990. The vast majority of publications, books or materials can be sourced completely online and even thru library apps on a phone or kindle/ipad. If there is content that can be construed as too adult or dangerous having this listing be published at the local library or thru a PTA would suffice and inform those to make their own personal decision.

14. Parents must take the initiative to get involved in the schools and in the education of their children, it is not up to the schools to spend time and energy trying to get parents involved. – **Disagree**

For success we really need BOTH. We need parents who can be involved (which I understand is not possible for all) – due to work, financial or health constraints. The district spending time and energy to gain partners in family members, parents or guardians is never a loss – it shows the dedication to the child as a whole and the family – making them comfortable and wanted is a much better way to partner than adversarial in nature.

15. Bullying has existed for generations- it is up to parents to address it when it occurs, the schools cannot fix it. - **Strongly disagree**

Again with this I would say both the home and the school have a joint responsibility. As a team the school and the family have to establish rules, ideals and respectful values of self and others. Locally we have a program for PEEPS – which combines those ideals along with a social and emotional component for a safe environment for everyone in Perry. Instead of choosing to say this large societal problem (bullying) which has only been made increasingly worse thru social media, years of divisive politically driven chaos and continued focus on what separates us versus what makes us alike tackling this together is key. A solution of sorts is a moving goal as every situation is different but that does not mean we throw our hands up and stop trying to better ourselves – had we done that not all citizens would have the right to vote, man would not have taken flight let alone stepped foot on the moon and cars (now electric cars) would not have been created.

Anything I can do to be of assistance please reach out here or to my website.

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Respectfully,

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