

# Winder - Dist. 4

## AFT-Maryland Candidate Questionnaire for Baltimore City Races

The AFT-Maryland is a federation of local unions of the AFT within the state, including the Baltimore Teachers Union and the City Union of Baltimore—whose members work for the city—as well as state employee members of the Maryland Professional Employees Council, AFT Healthcare—Maryland, the Maryland Classified Employees Association, and Maryland School for the Deaf. Together, with the Baltimore County Federation of Public Employees and the Baltimore County Federation of Public Health Nurses, AFT-Maryland has thousands of members who are citizens of the city of Baltimore, as well as thousands of members who work to make Baltimore a better place for its residents.

The AFT-Maryland has prepared the following questionnaire for candidates running for office in Baltimore City as a means to familiarize the candidates with issues that our members care about most. It also allows us the chance to see where the candidates stand on these issues.

AFT-Maryland locals participate fully in the endorsement process of the Metropolitan Baltimore AFL-CIO Council; the council will announce its final endorsements sometime in Late February 2020. However, because we are a large contingency within the Baltimore AFL-CIO, the unions of the AFT-Maryland have a heavy influence on who Labor chooses as its candidates for endorsement.

Please take the time to complete this candidate questionnaire by no later than January 17th, 2020, at 5:00 p.m.

If you have any questions, please contact Todd Reynolds, AFT-Maryland Political Coordinator, at 410-764-3030 or [treynolds@aftmd.org](mailto:treynolds@aftmd.org).

Email address \*



Candidate Information

Name

Angie Winder

Candidate for:

Baltimore City Council, District 4

Home address

City, ZIP code

Phone

Email address

Present occupation

Sr. Engineer Designer/Checker

Employer

Pritchard Brown, LLC

Party affiliation

Democrat

Have you ever been endorsed by a labor union? If so, which one(s) and when?

No

Have you ever held elected office? If so, when?

Baltimore City Democratic State Central Committee, District 43

### Candidate Questionnaire

Please note the AFT-Maryland plans to make these questionnaires public. Only candidates agreeing to this provision are eligible to be invited to any future AFT-Maryland Candidate forum for the 2020 Election.

## General Questions

1. The AFT-Maryland is a federation of numerous public employee unions, including Baltimore city educators (Baltimore Teachers Union, or BTU, Local 340) and municipal employees (City Union of Baltimore, or CUB, Local 800). Why should we support your campaign?

I have been an avid supporter of the Baltimore Teachers Union. In fact, I have been very active in the school system. I was the former PTSA President at MERVO High School and am the current Student Family Council Co-Chair at Yorkwood Elementary School. I have been a strong advocate for our youth, teachers and support staff members in the Baltimore City Public Schools. The last I've checked, I was the only candidate running in my district who had their child(ren) in Baltimore City Public Schools. Lastly, my family has a strong background in Education with many of them currently teaching in City Schools.

2. Have you ever been a member of a labor union? If yes, please give the name and date.

No

## Questions on Worker Rights

3. Collective bargaining for city employees: Should Baltimore City librarians and those who work for the Enoch Pratt Public Library System be granted the right to engage in collective bargaining? Should employees of the Baltimore Convention Center be granted the right to collective bargaining? If you are elected to office, will you work to expand collective bargaining rights to municipal employees who currently do not have that right?

Yes. I believe that all city employees should have the right to collective bargaining.

4. Minimum wage: In the 2019 Legislative session, the state passed a minimum wage law that excluded tipped workers and did not link the minimum wage to inflation. In addition, the state's minimum wage won't reach \$15 per hour until 2025. Would you be in favor of Baltimore City linking the minimum wage to inflation, and removing the exclusion for tipped workers? Would you be in favor of removing the delay and closing these loopholes in raising the minimum wage?

Yes. My office would work with the House of Delegates in support of legislation to accomplish this end. Minimum wage should definitely be linked to inflation, and removing the exclusion for tipped workers. Rising prices, known as inflation, impact the cost of living, the cost of doing business, borrowing money, mortgages, corporate and government bond yields, and every other facet of the economy. Everything is rising but one's paycheck. We must link the two and help families with making a living wage.

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5. Retirement for city workers - Defined Benefit versus Defined Contribution: The City of Baltimore has in the past discussed moving from a defined benefit to a defined contribution plan (401k) for its employees' retirement. Do you support such a move? Why or why not?

I do not support such a move. We should stay with the defined benefit plan. A small fraction of American workers receive their benefits from a contribution plan. Very few. The vast majority receive their benefits from a defined plan. A defined benefit plan is likely to be more favored by employees because employers typically fund this type of retirement account.

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6. Retirement benefits for educators and city workers: Over the past few years, retired educators and employees of Baltimore City have had concerns that, just as the state did to its public workers, the city will discontinue the retiree prescription drug benefit and move all retirees to Medicare Part D for prescriptions. If elected to office, do you pledge to never vote to move retired educators and city employees to Medicare Part D for their prescription benefits?

I believe if there's a strong push back from retired educators and employees of Baltimore City to not move to Medicare Part D, I would certainly do my part to not move their benefits.

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7. Safe working conditions for city employees: This past year, a number of city employees have been severely injured—and in at least one case, killed—on the job. Whether it be Transportation Safety Officers merely directing traffic, DPW workers inspecting our water reclamation systems, or Department of Transportation officers needing to repair damaged roads—all employees deserve the right to work in safe conditions. Far too often, city workers feel the leadership of various city departments are either unaware of or completely ignore workplace safety protocols. If you are elected to office in Baltimore City, will you support a law requiring the various city departments to partner with Maryland Occupational Safety and Health to do a no-cost, wall-to-wall inspection of all city workplace facilities to help identify potential employee safety hazards?

Yes, if elected, I would support a law requiring the various city departments to partner with Maryland Occupational Safety and Health. Safety is a #1 priority and we should all work together to ensure the safety of all city employees.

### Public Education in Baltimore City

8. General: What do you think are the three biggest problems facing Baltimore City public schools? If elected, how will you solve these problems?

1) Quality Education - Teachers and Students are not provided with 21st Century learning environments and supplies. We need to fully fund our schools, provide adequate resources to help our students excel on all levels.

2) Safety - Our schools should be in a safe and comfortable learning environment. Over the past school year, we've seen a rise in trespassing involving attacks on our students. In addition, there's been studies on the link of lead in our schools; we should address this epidemic and stop ignoring this crisis.

3) Retention for Teachers - According to the National Education Association, approximately 50 percent of new teachers will leave the profession within their first five years of teaching. This high turnover rate is forcing several school districts to spend substantial amounts of time and money on recruiting new teachers, ultimately hindering the district's success and bottom line. Fortunately, schools can overcome this expensive and frustrating roadblock by increasing teacher retention rates. We need to "Support, Collaborate, Retain" our teachers!

9. Appointments to the City School Board: Just recently, a law was passed that gave the mayor (but not the city council) more authority in choosing the members of the city's school board. What role do you think the city council should play in this process? What should be the qualities Baltimore should prioritize in choosing a member of the city's school board? Would you commit to only support a candidate for local school board with at least 3 years of classroom experience (as a teacher, or a teacher's aide, for example) working in a public school system?

I believe the City Council should have a role in the process. However, that is not the case. So, I believe the role that the Council can play is perhaps, assisting to recruit members of the city's school board. There should be a collaborative process where the Mayor will work with his/her Council for recommendations. I believe that some of the qualities of the city's school board are as follows: 1) Reside in the City, 2) City School or classroom experience to include a teacher's aide or parent.

10. Baltimore City School Board: In 2022, Baltimore City will finally be allowed to vote two additional members to the school board. Baltimore City is currently the only jurisdiction in the state whose entire School Board of Commissioners is appointed. In 2022 the board will expand from 10 to 12 seats, with the two additional seats being elected rather than appointed. Of the 23 other Maryland County School Boards, 19 are fully elected, and four are an appointed/elected hybrid, with only Wicomico County having more appointed than elected positions. If elected, would you support legislation transitioning Baltimore City to a fully elected or hybrid board with the majority of seats being elected? What is the optimal structure for Baltimore City's School Board and why?

If elected, I would support a fully elected or hybrid board with the majority of seats being elected. Often times, we see the appointed process not being a fair process. I believe having a fully elected or hybrid board would make it a more accountable school board.

11. Student and staff safety: A number of recent, high-profile incidents of violence in our schools have drawn attention to questions of student discipline. Additionally, in surveys to families about reservations on enrolling their children in a BCPSS school, student safety is cited as their #1 concern. Generally, employees of the school system have questioned the current code of conduct as ineffective, whereby students are suspended from school only to return when the suspension is over with the same underlying issues. Are there any revisions to the code of conduct for student behavior that you feel should be considered?

I would agree with employees of the school system that the current code of conduct has been ineffective. One part that I'd like to highlight is: "Imminent Threat of Serious Harm: A likely or immediate danger of negative and significant impact on physical, emotional, or psychological well being." -- There was a recent incident at MERVU in which a student made a school threat and all agencies were involved including the FBI. The incident received national media attention, however, I believe it was not properly handled. In fact, the student who made the threat returned back to school without being suspended. And, students were very uncomfortable with returning back to school. Another thing I'd like to mention is the fact that students who missed school out of fear, received an unexcused absence and there were no support groups there to help students. We should brush serious matters such as a school threat underneath the rug and we certainly should have stiffer punishment for students who make school threats.

12. Baltimore's population loss has contributed to enrollment declines in City Schools. Lower enrollment has also been caused by under-investment fueled by systemic racism that's lowered the quality of City Schools' programming. As part of the 21st Century Schools initiative, Baltimore was required to close a number of schools in order to qualify for renovation funds. School closures have also been triggered by low achievement, as part of the district's portfolio approach to schools. These policies have resulted in a disproportionate number of vacant schools in black neighborhoods that are already under-resourced. If elected, what is your plan to utilize these potential community resources?

I would love to see them as Community Resource Centers, committed to strengthening the neighborhoods. A good example is that in which Mr. George Mitchell did with Langston Hughes. We could use those vacant schools to offer educational and social programs. In addition, we could also provide a one-stop shop where we offer information on energy assistance programs, job training, etc.



13. In Baltimore, as across the nation, school zones and neighborhood boundaries have historically served to limit access to high quality public schools. While Baltimore City Public Schools students in middle and high school are assigned to schools through a complicated “school choice” process, students in elementary schools are still largely assigned to schools based on enrollment zones. These zones were created over a generation ago, and in the years since, population shifts (notably large growth southeast Baltimore of the English Language Learner population, which required additional services and support) have resulted in several schools being overcrowded, while others are under-enrolled. Additionally, the school district’s Equity Policy requires it to examine its plans and practices to determine and address the ways they exacerbate racial and economic inequity. In order to meet the needs of Baltimore families, and move towards a more just and equitable school system, a comprehensive redistricting plan should be completed, involving the coordination of the Baltimore City Planning Department and Baltimore City Public Schools. However, changing neighborhood boundaries causes significant public backlash. If elected, would you support school redistricting and would you direct the Baltimore City Planning Department to partner with City Schools to create a comprehensive plan?

I would support school redistricting in Baltimore City with community members also at the table that have a say in a comprehensive plan. We need to this in a way that is fair to the people impacted and in a way in which they have input too.

14. Public Charter Schools: There are 50 public charter schools in the state of Maryland, the vast majority of which are in Baltimore City. Some charter school operators would like to weaken state law to make the teachers and staff at the charter employees of the charter non-profit board, not the school system. This would remove all protections that the teachers and staff have under the BTU collective bargaining agreement. Should charter school teachers and staff be considered employees of the charter school board or the city’s public school board?

On one hand, I believe charter school teachers and staff should be considered employees of the charter school board. And, I do understand that this would remove all protections that the teachers and staff have under the BTU collective bargaining agreement. In addition, charter schools are independent public schools, and generally would fall under the charter non-profit board. On the other hand, I believe charter schools are hurting enrollment in public schools in which we lose funding at an alarming rate. With that being said, it may be helpful to keep teachers and staff under the BTU collective bargaining agreement, as they are still teachers who are employed in Baltimore City.

15. Should there be a cap on the number of charter schools in Baltimore City? Why or why not?

Absolutely! It generally affects the school funding due to low enrollment in city schools. 50 public charter schools is a lot.

16. BOOST/School Vouchers: Should government give vouchers (either as a tax credit or even a tax rebate) to parents who want to send their children to a private school?

I believe it's a good opportunity for low-income families who can not afford to send their child to private schools. There are families who for many reasons fall in this bracket and they should have options and opportunities for their child's education.

17. Education funding: Some in Annapolis have argued that Baltimore City should be contributing more to its public school system than is currently budgeted. The city ranks among the worst in Maryland when it comes to the local contribution to its public school system; while on average a county in Maryland contributes roughly 36% of its annual operating budget to its local school system, in Baltimore, the city contributes only 14% of its budget to its schools. The Kirwan Commission is recommending the city increase its contribution by \$300 million, more than doubling its current contribution.

17(a) How large of an increase, percentage wise, should Baltimore City commit in its budget to funding public schools?

I believe the recommendation of the Kirwan Commission is realistic as a start. I believe if we can pour money into the Police Department, we can certainly invest into our children education. If we invest more in education, it will help curb issues in other areas such as crime. I would love to see more than the recommendation. However, doubling its current contribution would be a huge help.

17(b) In order to meet Kirwan obligations, how would you propose raising that additional \$300 million?

It goes back to my previous comment. If we divert money that we pour into our police department into the schools, we could easily raise that additional \$300 million. In addition, with the state support/grant that we just received from the Governor, we could move the monies without hurting too much from this change. I am a firm believer that we can not police our way out of this, we must invest in our schools and education.

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18. In every school district in Maryland the head of the school system is the Superintendent of public schools. However, in the two majority minority school systems—Baltimore City and Prince George’s County—the head of the school system is instead titled the CEO of public schools. This title change, while subtle, has been significant: since the switch to a more corporate-based model with this title change, these two districts have seen a substantial portion of their schools become charters, and an overall explosion in the amount of standardized testing has followed. If elected to office, will you be in favor of returning the title of the head of our public school system to “Superintendent” so as to be identical with other school districts in Maryland? Why or why not?

Yes, I would be in favor of returning the title of the head of our public school system to "Superintendent" to be identical with other school district in Maryland. There should be more accountable all schools should be under one common goal. We should not be working in silos or independent. And, Baltimore City and Prince George's County should be receiving the same opportunities and model as the other jurisdictions.

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### Vision for Baltimore City

19. Privatization: Recently, CUB and AFT-Maryland worked with the City Council and Food and Water Watch to pass a city charter amendment that would prohibit our water from ever being privatized. Are there other resources that are owned by the city that you believe should never be privatized? When, if ever, do you feel it is appropriate to privatize public services or property?

It is not appropriate to privatize public services. Public services means it serves the people and must always be accountable to the people and for that they must be protected. Whenever public services are privatized, it is for the profit motive and is generally injurious to the public good.

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20. Development: In 2016, the city passed a multi-billion dollar re-development plan, supported by a \$535 million TIF request to develop Port Covington. Opponents worried development projects such as these, funded through public tax revenues, will be used not to the betterment of all in the city, but instead to the betterment of wealthy elites, widening the gap between the haves and have-nots in Baltimore. Do you have a vision for development in Baltimore City that...

20(a) ...assures neighborhoods will contain equitable amounts of low-income and affordable housing?

Yes, I am strong believer in promoting access and equity by supporting the expansion of affordable housing, home-ownership and economic inclusion. Often times, low-income families are overlooked and not afforded the support and opportunity.

20(b) ...will help the city improve its financial contribution to its public school system?

Yes, having a child currently in public schools, I will continue to be a strong advocate and voice to see that our city improve it financial contribution to its public school system.

20(c) ...will be completed by workers who live in and around the Baltimore region, and follow prevailing wage standards and project-labor agreements?

Yes

20(d) ...will contain businesses that must follow labor peace agreements?

Yes

21. Affordable housing: Recently, CUB worked with legislators in Annapolis to pass legislation that would allow the city to grant low-income city employees a property tax credit on their homes. Affordable housing is a priority for city educators as well, as there are more homeless students in Baltimore city than there are total students in some county districts. What is your plan to increase accessibility to quality, stable housing in Baltimore city?

I will continue to support the Affordable Housing Trust Fund that will promote and support fair and affordable housing throughout Baltimore for extremely low income families by providing financial assistance for production, maintenance, or expansion of affordable housing.

22. Crime: Do improved education and expanded city services play significant roles in your plan to reduce crime in Baltimore city? If so, how?

Yes, the crime that is plaguing the city is a result of various root causes. We must get people back to work, address our education system, mental health services and more! We must invest and support the people in Baltimore City. Many families in low-income communities are overlooked and that's where we will find the most crime-ridden areas.

Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this candidate questionnaire. If you have any questions, please contact Todd Reynolds, AFT-Maryland Political Coordinator, at (410) 764-3030, or [treynolds@aftmd.org](mailto:treynolds@aftmd.org).



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