



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, and the Maryland Classified Employees Association. Together, with the Baltimore County Federation of Public Employees, AFT-Maryland has thousands of members who are citizens of Baltimore City, as well as thousands of members who work to make Baltimore City a better place for its citizens and children.

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 February 2016. 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. It may be returned to

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Please return this completed questionnaire no later than February 5th, 2016, at 5pm. If you have any questions, please contact Todd Reynolds, AFT-Maryland Political Coordinator, at 410-764-3030.

2016 Candidate Questionnaire—BALTIMORE CITY RACES
AFT-Maryland

Candidate for: Mayor of Baltimore City

Candidate's name: Calvin A. Young III.

Address _____

Phone _____

Email:

Occupation _____ Who is your employer? _____

May we make your answers to our questionnaire public? _____

Party affiliation (circle one):

Democrat Republican Independent Other (please specify) _____

Have you received an endorsement from a labor union? If so, which ones?

Have you ever held elected office? When? _____

General

1. The AFT-Maryland is a federation of numerous employee unions, including Baltimore City teachers and paraprofessional and school-related personnel (BTU); Baltimore City employees (CUB); as well county and state employees; public health professionals; and higher education workers. Why should we support your campaign?

ANSWER: While I have never been a member of a labor union, I am the direct beneficiary of labor unions. My grandmother was a union member with AFL- CIO global 1923 and the American Federation of Government Employees. I come from a union family, and have benefited from the protections of the labor movement. I am pro-union because I recognize that workers need to be secure in their jobs in order to provide for their families. Job security, worker safety and wages can only be guaranteed when workers are allowed to organize and unionize. As Mayor, I will continue to be a proponent of organized labor.

AFT-Maryland should support my campaign because like you I understand that issues of social justice in Baltimore City have been ignored for far too long. This mayoral election is a turning point from old leadership to new. My candidacy is about bringing bold fresh leadership to fight issues of injustice, inequality and poverty in our city. As mayor I will rely on the collective membership and leadership of AFT-Maryland and other unions to help my administration in combating some of the challenges facing our great city.

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

ANSWER: No, I have never been a member of a union.

Worker Rights

3. Should Baltimore City librarians be granted the right to engage in collective bargaining? Should employees of the Baltimore Convention Center? If you are elected to office, will you work to expand collective bargaining rights to public employees who currently do not have that right?

ANSWER: Yes, Baltimore City librarians should be granted the right to engage in collective bargaining, as should employees of the Baltimore Convention Center. If elected to office, I will work to expand collective bargaining rights to public employees who currently do not have that right.

4. Many cities nationwide have passed ordinances that raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour. Would you be in favor of Baltimore raising its minimum wage to \$15 per hour? Why or why not?

Answer: I fully support the Fight for \$15.00. More importantly, I will fight for a living wage and the expansion of job quality standards, which would include increasing healthcare options and paid sick leave for workers.

5. Retirement for city workers: defined benefit versus defined contribution. The city of Baltimore has been discussing moving from a defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan (401K) for its employees' retirement. Do you support such a plan? Why or why not?

ANSWER: Retired city workers depend on a guaranteed fixed income. As Mayor I will support a defined benefit plan. I support this plan because workers' retirement should not depend on how much an employer will contribute, but rather on the responsibility of employers to guarantee a fixed income for their workers based on salary and years of service, among other factors. Lastly, there is overwhelming evidence that defined benefit plans give retired workers a higher standard of living than defined contribution plans and are more cost effective for taxpayers than defined contribution plans.

The Role of Public Education in Baltimore City

6. What do you think are some of the biggest problems facing Baltimore City public schools today? If elected, how would you help solve these problems?

Answer: Funding equity continues to be the biggest impediment facing Baltimore City public schools. While many policymakers are quick to point out that per-pupil funding in Baltimore City is on average higher than other surrounding communities, these policymakers ignore the fact that the poverty rate in Baltimore city is twice as high than surrounding communities. As Mayor, I will work to solve this problem by being Baltimore City schools' number one advocate for increasing education funding from Annapolis. If this means fighting for more autonomy so that city policymakers have more control of school funding, then that is what I will fight for as Mayor.

7. Community Schools: Beginning in August 2015, Baltimore City will have 51 of its public schools serving as designated community schools. A community school is a public school that partners with some entity (UM-Baltimore or the Baltimore YMCA, just to name a few examples) to provide either after-school academic or social services to both students and members of the community. Would you be in favor of expanding the Community School Strategy in Baltimore by working to make more Baltimore City public schools community schools? If so, why? If not, why not?

Answer: As Mayor I would work to make more public schools community schools. The more connected a school is to resources that promote student health and overall community well-being the fewer barriers there are to student achievement.

8. Public Charter Schools: There are just over 40 public charter schools in the state of Maryland, and the vast majority of them reside in Baltimore City. The large, out-of-state charter operators would like to weaken state law to make teachers and staff employees of the charter board, rather than employees of Baltimore City Public Schools. This would remove all protections that teachers and staff have under the collective bargaining agreement between the teachers union and the school board. This would also limit oversight of these privately run public schools by taking them out from under the purview of BCPS, as well as giving these charters a "blank check waiver" from any local school board policy. Should charter school teachers and staff be considered employees of the charter school or of the local school board? Should oversight of these schools be weakened?

Answer: Teachers in Baltimore's Public Charter Schools should be considered employees of the local school board. Maryland Charter School Laws are unique in that charter school teachers are considered public school employees and are thus represented under district-wide collective bargaining agreements. Few states have adopted this model, and as a result only 7 percent of all charter school teachers

nationwide are unionized. This is not the case for charter school teachers in Maryland. As Mayor of the City with the most charter schools in the State of Maryland, I would use my influence and leadership to ensure that teachers in Baltimore's Public Charter Schools continue to have collective bargaining rights and that oversight remain with BCPS.

9. Charter School funding. There has been a long-running dispute between certain charter school operators and Baltimore Public Schools over appropriate funding. As a feature of being a public charter school in Baltimore, the charters are largely given cash—calculated on a per-pupil basis—from the district, in lieu of the services that the central administration provides neighborhood schools. Most recently, the system presented a per pupil funding formula that mandated funds intended for students living in poverty or who are English language learners actually receive those funds. Some charter operators have countered with a lawsuit, arguing that those special funds for high-poverty students or ESOL be distributed to every student equally, regardless of need. How do you think BCPS should calculate its charter school per pupil funding model?

Answer: I am a proponent of funding equity when it comes to education. Equity means that every student should receive sufficient resources to have the same chance to succeed, rather than that every child gets the same level of funding. Giving kids in high-poverty areas an equal opportunity to succeed requires spending more money on those students. When calculating per pupil funding models, BCPS should consider: 1. Whether total funding is sufficient as a whole? And 2. Is the funding equitable (not equal) across Baltimore City schools? I am a product of the Baltimore City Public School System and understand that student achievement not only depends one's effort but also on the resources available to level the playing field.

10. School vouchers: should government give out vouchers (either a tax credit, or even a tax rebate) to parents who want to send their children to a private school? Please explain your answer.

Answer: I am ardent support of public schools and the public school system. I do not support government giving out vouchers in any form to parents who want to send their children to private school. As Mayor, my priority will be on improving and strengthening existing public schools by focusing on funding equity and on accountability. These goals can only be achieved through a publicly run educational system, not a voucher or market-based system.

11. Education funding: This past year, lawmakers in Annapolis severely cut education to Baltimore City schools. Some in Annapolis have argued that the city should be contributing more to public schools, as property values (especially in and around the Inner Harbor area) have rapidly increased. Do you agree with this assessment?

Answer: The State of Maryland is the primary source of revenue for Baltimore City schools and should therefore not cut education. As Mayor, I will do what I can to make sure that the City is doing its part in strengthening school funding. While I agree that the City should be contributing more to public schools, I do not agree that it should be done at the expense of less funding from Annapolis.

12. Some current members of the Baltimore City Council have proposed a city charter amendment that would guarantee 3% of the city's budget for youth programs in the city, like recreation programs, youth mentorship, and afterschool programs. Would you be in favor of such a charter amendment? Why or why not?

Answer: I generally do not agree with public funding mandates, it simply is not the best way to formulate a budget and creates too many constraints. I support additional funding for youth programs in our city, but simply allocating money among bids is not an effective way to lead. Any funding for youth programs should be tied to programmatic priorities that are proven to help students engage in healthy activities.

13. Due to the limited number of certified nurses in Baltimore City Public Schools, administrators and/or staff are forced to administer medication to students, share nurses between multiple school locations, and utilize part-time nurses. How would you help solve this issue?

Answer: Health coverage in schools must be provided by a school health service professional, not administrators or staff. Relying on the expertise and recommendations of the Baltimore City Health Department and needs of BCPS, I would work to ensure a baseline level of services in every school.

14. Currently, all seats on the Baltimore City School Board are appointed. Legislation is introduced almost every year to allow for at least a partially elected school board. Would you be in favor of such legislation?

Answer: I am absolutely in favor of legislation that would provide at least a partially elected school board.

15. Violence in the city schools. What do you think is the best strategy to assure that our school buildings are safe and welcoming environments for children, teachers, and other education professionals in Baltimore City?

Answer: Schools are unsafe when they are in communities that are unsafe. Too often, policymakers focus on law enforcement and policing to combat crime, but the reality is that we also need to focus on communities, families, schools and the surrounding job market to ensure all children, teachers, and other education professionals feel safe. An effective strategy would rely on a coalition of individuals, community members and institutions committed to crime prevention.

Vision for Baltimore City

16. The city has begun shutting the water off for accounts that are delinquent by more than \$250. It has started to turn off the water for both individual accounts and business accounts. Do you agree with this plan? Why or why not?

Answer: I am not in favor of completely shutting off water for any accounts. Water is a right and a minimum amount should always be available for households.

17. Privatization. Many rumors have been circulating that the city has been looking into privatizing water services. When, if ever, do you feel it is appropriate to privatize public services or to sell off or privatize city-owned resources?

Answer: It is not appropriate to privatize water services.

18. There are at least two competing strategies to help the city raise funds for recreation centers: one calls on the city to sell off a number of public parking garages downtown; another calls for the Downtown Hilton to be sold. Do you prefer one plan over the other? Or a different plan to raise revenues for more rec centers? Do you think raising more funds for recreation centers should be a priority for city leaders? Why or why not?

Answer: Prior to selling any land, a complete and credible audit of the entire city budget should be completed in order to determine what resources might already be available for recreation centers, among other priorities.

- 19. The City is entertaining proposals to build a trash incinerator near Curtis Bay, located less than one mile away from Benjamin Franklin High School and Curtis Bay Elementary school. Supporters claim this incinerator will create much-needed jobs for the community. Opponents argue that incinerators pollute even more than coal-burning power plants, and should not be constructed so close to public schools. What is your position on the construction of a trash incinerator in Curtis Bay?**

Answer: Air pollution can have real consequences on the development of students. I am against the development of any incinerators close to public schools.

20. According to some statistics, there are approximately 16,000 vacant buildings and 14,000 vacant lots in Baltimore. Combined they total 30,000 vacant properties within the city limits, and play a large role in contributing to crime and other problems facing the city. More than 75% of all vacant property in Baltimore city is privately owned. How can we fix this problem and make sure land is being used effectively and efficiently in Baltimore?

Answer: As Mayor, I will propose a significant increase in property tax hikes on neglected properties. The city will look to demolish blocks of vacant buildings in order to increase green space for parks and new development. I am eager to also identify locations where existing buildings can be converted into incubators and “21st century recreation centers” where our youth can participate in STEM activities like coding and 3D printing, and where they can develop entrepreneurial and innovative ideas and skills.