

Candidate Information:

Name: Karim D. Marshall, Esq. Position Sought: At-Large Councilmember

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Are you using the public financing option? (**bold and underline** one) Yes No

Have you ever and would you ever accept endorsement from Democrats for Education Reform or any of its affiliated organizations? (**bold and underline** one) Yes No, However, I strongly distinguish between the interests of the students, parents, and teachers in the charter system and the shareholders and investors who own public charter school corporations. I believe that all of these students are our children and deserve to be adequately resourced in a transparent education system.

Important Note on completion of the questionnaire: The best way to complete this questionnaire is to fill it out in Microsoft Word/Google Docs, type your responses into the boxes below the question (the space will expand as you proceed) and then save it as a PDF.

Please call or text COPE Chair Laura Fuchs at (202) 683-7981 if you have any questions or concerns.

Your questionnaire, in its entirety, will be published on the WTU website and we reserve the right to use responses to any answer in its entirety in campaign materials.

Any statement made in this questionnaire that is later contradicted through action or association with “education reform” groups or groups that seek to privatize education such as Democrats for Education Reform, Deform Now, and DC Charter School Alliance, will cause the WTU to revisit any endorsement offered and may result in the rescinding of our endorsement.

In your own words...

How have you interacted with public schools? Please include any experiences you have advocating for DC public schools, parents or students. *(limit to 1000 characters)*

I am a product of Anne Beers Elementary, Francis Middle, and Benjamin Banneker (Model Academic Senior) High School. Thanks to the foundation and investment provided by public school teachers, I was prepared to attend and succeed at an Ivy League college (Dartmouth) and later American law school. I believe that **all** our students deserve to attend schools that have enough resources to prepare them to succeed in the world, but I have a special place in my heart for our public school system. I remember

the pivotal role that my elementary school teachers (and librarians) had in fostering my love of reading and learning. I remember being able to walk to elementary school because my parents had enough faith in our local school to send me. I remember the thrill of working through a problem in high school and knowing that I would be prepared to do the same at college. I want those experiences for my daughter. And I believe that all students in the District deserve to have those same experiences available to them without having to commute across town, pray for a good lottery placement, or buy into a private school. My engagement with students over the last twenty years has primarily been around assisting high school juniors and seniors with college admissions.

What is the top priority facing public education in the District of Columbia, and how will you address it if you are elected? *(limit to 1000 characters)*

I believe the top priority is ensuring that the District is able to retain experienced and qualified teachers. This issue has been framed as a teacher shortage, but I personally know several highly effective educators at various stages in their career who have left the profession because of frustration due to inadequate resources, respect, or an ability to afford to stay in the District or the profession.

I would address this by starting with addressing the baseline of working conditions. Our teachers deserve a new contract. No bargaining unit should be expected to continue three years beyond expiration of an agreement, but unfortunately this is the reality for most of DC's unions, including the WTU. As Councilmember I would work proactively with the Executive and the OLRCB to ensure they are negotiating in good faith and doing so efficiently to prevent the multi-year backlog of bargaining agreements. I would also advocate for ensuring that teacher evaluations are protected from any potential arbitrary input. No teacher should have to feel like their employment is subject to the personal whims of school leadership.

If you receive the WTU endorsement and support, how will you work with WTU in the future? *(limit to 1000 characters)*

I believe that one of the most important roles of a Councilmember is to ensure that all voices have a chance to provide input in the development of policy, operations, and the identification of budget priorities. As in-classroom experts, I believe that the membership of the WTU can serve a unique and vital role in providing information about actual operations and in-classroom experiences. As Councilmember, I will hold to regular listening sessions for educators on evenings and weekends in addition to the oversight and budget hearings to provide broadly accessible opportunities to be involved.

Fund Our Schools

Do you support an increase in the per-student funding minimum, specifically the amount recommended in the 2013 Adequacy Study? Yes / No

I support the methodology and the conclusion. This study is partially based on 2008 data and was published in 2013/2014, I would like to have the numbers updated to reflect current expenses, the 2% projected annual increase would not have accounted for today's higher inflation.

Do you support an increase in the funding dedicated to support Special Education and English Language Learner students?

Yes / No

What is your role and how will you ensure that students with special needs are receiving the services they need to succeed academically and socially in school? *(limit to 1000 characters)*

I am the only candidate in this race that has multiple years of experience in budget formulation from the Executive branch. I have the unique experience necessary to fully evaluate government programs, contractors, and grantees to ensure that the students are receiving the in-school and out-of-school services to make sure they are succeeding in school and in life.

A Councilmember's role is to provide affirmative oversight and advocate to advance education as a budget priority. As the next At-Large Councilmember, I would do oversight differently. I would monitor performance throughout the year, not just during Performance and Budget oversight season. I would closely examine prior year expenditures against the allocated budget and to ensure that that the funds are properly used. I think a vastly underutilized tool is the feedback of the parents and teachers of the student, as Councilmember, I would invite the feedback of parents and teachers to ensure we have a more complete understanding of the lived experiences of our students.

What is your role and how will you ensure that ELL students receive more robust, flexible resources and support? *(limit to 1000 characters)*

Literacy is the gateway to participating in our society. As Councilmember, I will fight to ensure that every child has access to literacy without barriers. Youth who speak another language at home, must receive robust instruction without regard to zip code. Over the last six years, there's been a 43.4% increase in English Learner student enrollment. Despite this increase, OSSE reported that graduation rates for English Learners dropped by 9%, which suggests that resources are not being adequately deployed to support these learners. I would also advocate for investments which ensuring our schools are compliant with the District's Language Access Act. Learners and families who may not yet be proficient in English should be able to fully participate in the educational system including access to interpreters and translated documents. We should also explore thorough use of native language resources to ensure broader literacy.

Will you support guaranteeing that heritage language speakers be given priority for dual language programs by expanding funding and options district-wide? Yes / No

What is your role in ensuring that specialty funds (i.e., Special Education, English

Language Learner, At-Risk, etc.) are not used to supplant local school budgets ensuring our schools and students get the level of funding they are required to receive under the law?
(limit to 1000 characters)

As I mentioned above, oversight is a constant responsibility. To protect the allocations for specialty funds, I would start with making sure the funds are properly allocated and identified in the budget. Over the course of the fiscal year, I and my staff would closely watch any reprogramming requests to ensure that the funds allocated for this purpose are not used for purposes other than they were intended.

Do you support the recommendations of the DC Auditor report on at-risk funds published on June 25, 2019 ([DC Schools Shortchange At-Risk Students](#))?

All / None / Some

Are there any specific recommendations that you disagree with? Please support your answer *(limit to 1000 characters)*

I would heavily emphasize the responsibility of the Council to conduct rigorous oversight.

Should LEAs be funded based on the quarterly count of students enrolled in their schools or on a singular annual count day? Quarterly / Single
Quarterly would be an improvement over a single count day. It would also encourage students to keep students for the entire year.

Many DC Public Schools receive an inflow of students throughout the school year. Do you support providing additional resources for these schools?

Yes / No

DC Public Schools has announced a multi-year effort to overhaul the funding of our schools, possibly moving from the Comprehensive Staffing Model which guarantees schools a baseline level of staffing to a Student -Based Budget Model. Do you support this effort? Yes / No

Briefly explain your answer *(limit to 1000 characters)*

I fully support a revision to the funding formula. However, I support a hybrid approach. There is a baseline staffing amount that is required to operate a school and no school should fall below this number. Irrespective of the number of students, we cannot starve a school of resources. As a Councilmember, I will fight to ensure that each school is able to effectively operate and entice parents to enroll their children.

I am concerned that a fully student-based budget model will not afford schools the resources necessary to attract and retain families as these schools are still trying to rebuild community trust. Structural staffing shortages that affect the ability of a school to function, can very quickly create a negative spiral that cannot be overcome.

What is your role and what will you do to ensure that any changes made to the budget system will result in increased equity across our city's public schools and avoid school closures? *(limit to 1000 characters)*

Resources make the difference between a good and a great school. More abundantly resourced neighborhoods can pull on additional financial resources to supplement the baseline resources. As Councilmember, I would advocate for an equitable funding model which takes into account the additional access to resources available to some learning communities and provides supplemental resources to meet that gap such as providing additional access to STE(A)M education with specialized coordinators. At a baseline, I would advocate to ensure that all schools had access to the resources necessary to operate successfully. I would also facilitate and advocate for under-resourced schools to get additional resources through a more equitable funding formula and add partnerships to provide extraordinary opportunities and supplement local funding.

Do you support, within DC Public Schools, giving the Local School Advisory Team increased autonomy and authority?

Yes / No

Briefly explain your answer *(limit to 1000 characters)*

As Councilmember, I would support implementing a model for the LSAT that emphasizes collaboration between the team and school leadership.

Unfunded mandates often disrupt the local school environment and place increased burdens on school-based staff. If you become elected, what would you do to ensure that local school budgets are adequately staffed and resourced to meet any new mandates adopted by the Council or implemented by the Mayor and/or DCPS? *(limit to 1000 characters)*

As Councilmember, I would work to ensure that every additional responsibility is accompanied by sufficient budget authority, available time in a day, and an FTE count necessary to meet the responsibility.

Do you support and will you fully fund legislation for a DCPS Technology Plan. Yes / No

Technology access is a racial equity issue. Remote learning during COVID laid bare the inequitable access to reliable and affordable broadband, Wi-Fi, or dedicated computers in underserved neighborhoods. This lack of access amplified learning losses and made a difficult situation much worse for students who desperately needed a proactive solution.

What is your role in ensuring that DCPS is supporting our local schools and using the security contract to improve trauma informed and restorative practices in our buildings? *(limit to 1000 characters)*

I do not believe in militarizing school security, particularly internal building safety. It is not a healthy environment for children to be consistently exposed to the presence of firearms while in the learning environment.

I believe that peaceful dispute resolution and modeling a restorative justice framework for our learners is a healthier long-term approach. However, we must have a plan for the transition to ensure that we do not create an unsafe learning environment. I would eagerly work with the executive to develop a clear plan with evaluation points to ensure success as we safely transition away from

District Educators

Educator turnover is a problem that the District needs to proactively address. If elected, how will you address this problem? *(limit to 1000 characters)*

I believe turnover is a consequence of educators being fed up with a lack of respect and frustration over working conditions. As I discuss above, I believe that predictable working conditions and respect for the craft contribute to the morale of a profession. It is critically important that teachers have a contract in place. The absence of a contract communicates that the government does not value the contributions of our educators.

Affordability is also an issue. In addition to fighting for better compensation, I would enhance the programs that provide loan forgiveness, facilitate the purchase of a home, and generally encourage teachers and paraprofessionals to be able to afford to stay in the District.

If elected, what incentives would you support to encourage experienced educators to stay teaching in the District (i.e., support with student loans and childcare)? *(limit to 1000 characters)*

I believe the existing program for employee mental health support should be expanded to reflect the unique challenges that teachers and social workers face when carrying the burden of serving trauma-affected youth. I also believe that teachers should be allowed to use their professional experience to bring creative solutions into the classroom and should be rewarded for that creativity.

As far as direct incentive programs, the District has a wealth of programs that could make retaining our teachers more likely, however, the programs are poorly coordinated. I would begin with consolidating programs to reach the target audience instead of focusing on placement of programs in various agencies. A suite of incentives can be offered to our educators to give them the opportunity to access all the incentives available instead of requiring them to apply to multiple agencies. Finally, I believe any locally funded program should consider an allowance for non-dischargeable debt, particularly student loans when determining applicability.

Do you believe that all educators should be certified and licensed in their current position?

Yes / No

Should teachers in the public charter sector have the right to organize and form a Union?

Yes / No

Should a union have the ability to negotiate terms of the evaluation system?

Yes / No

Would you support funding and programming for paraprofessionals to become certified as educators?

Yes / No

Do you support improving the process for international professionals to enter the US on work visas in DCPS?

Yes / No

Would you support funding for a mentoring program for new educators?

Yes / No

Would you support additional funding for educators to advance their practice in professional development, tuition, and conferences?

Yes / No

Do you support all of the employees in DC Public Schools and Public Charter Schools (educators, paraprofessionals, substitutes, clerks, secretaries, cafeteria, and janitors) receiving a fair and livable wage?

Yes / No

Will you support increasing tax credits for teachers who spend funds on school supplies?

Yes / No

However, I believe the school system should fund school supplies. I do not believe that teachers should have to spend money out of pocket to create acceptable classroom learning conditions.

Will you support an increase in workforce housing and / or tax incentives for educators to purchase housing in the District? Yes / No

Two central parts of my housing platform are to 1) build much more workforce housing and 2) to revise the eligibility criteria for any locally funded housing programs to make an allowance for student loan debt when determining the income of an applicant. Teachers in the District of Columbia make about 11% less than comparable professionals. As Councilmember, I would create the necessary incentives to encourage our teachers to live in the neighborhoods they serve.

If you would like to expand and explain your reasoning on any of the questions above please do so here.
(limit to 1000 characters)

Learning Conditions

Do you support an increase in funding for school modernization? Yes / No

Should there be priority given to the modernization of schools that serve a high percentage of at-risk populations? Yes / No

How will you oversee contracting with DCPS and DGS to ensure quality and longevity? *(limit to 1000 characters)*

I believe the most problematic aspect of school readiness is that our government uses the August tours as publicity stunts. Readiness tours should be routinized and unremarkable, but instead they have become an expose of incomplete work. Maintenance has to be a constant activity, not an instance where work orders pile up over the course of a year. As Councilmember, I would work with the Committee overseeing DGS to ensure that there was transparency and accountability on the companies that contract with DGS to perform maintenance of DCPS facilities. Companies that repeatedly exceed the contracted amount for work orders or fail to timely address work orders should be held responsible and if necessary, excluded from future opportunities to service work orders.

What is your role in ensuring that work orders are completed in a satisfactory and timely manner so that our students and educators are healthy and safe? *(limit to 1000 characters)*

As the next At-Large Councilmember, I would work with DGS and the Executive to ensure that DGS was adequately resourced to close work orders as they are entered instead of addressing them all at once. Additionally, periodic and regular oversight over the course of the school year would

Will you support the expansion of specially designed metro bus routes for neighborhood schools (like the one that is already provided for Deal MS)? Yes / No

However, I have serious concerns about WMATA's ability to provide safe and reliable transportation. Several articles have reported instances where buses have gone missing, or drivers have skipped a route. I believe this service is critical, but it must be done in a safe and reliable manner.

Will you support funding for a full-time dedicated school nurse in every school throughout the school day? Yes / No

Will you support funding for dyslexia screenings and supports for students? Yes / No

Will you support increased mental health screening and support for every student in the District?
Yes / No

Governance

Do you agree with DC's current system of Mayoral Control of DCPS? Yes / No, not as it stands.

Please Explain: *(limit to 1000 characters)*

I would not discard centralized control, but it must be improved. This could be done by retaining the single point of accountability for both public and public charter schools. This person should also have the professional and experiential qualifications to create a Superintendent-style chief executive. I would reform our education system so it is headed by a professionalized Superintendent/Chancellor with substantial classroom and education administration experience. This accountable person would be expected to engage with thought partners and stakeholders in the system and would be a technocrat that could only be terminated for cause or malfeasance like the current Chief Financial Officer. Further, our education system cannot succeed when there is no meaningful oversight and current system lacks sufficient oversight by the Council. The parental and teacher input mechanism does not encourage meaningful stakeholder input. I believe that a single point of accountability is an improvement over the prior system, but I do not believe the input of teachers and parents is meaningfully incorporated into the decisions made by DCPS leadership.

Do you believe that the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) should be independent of the Mayor and under the State Board of Education? Yes / No

If elected, what would your role be in overseeing the Chancellor of DC Public Schools? *(limit to 1000 characters)*

As the next At-Large Councilmember, I would ensure that the Chancellor of DCPS is a candidate that has the full support of the various communities that are stakeholders in the DCPS system. **I would not support the appointment of a candidate that was not able to secure the buy-in of the educators he or she is expected to lead.**

During oversight, I would be a strong supporter of achieving the mission of providing a high-quality education to all our learners. That would take the form of being actively involved and engaging with affected communities to ensure that every school has the resources necessary to succeed and the support/accountability necessary to deliver that success.

If elected, what would your role be in overseeing the public Charter School Board? *(limit to 1000 characters)*

Today, the Public Charter School Board lacks meaningful oversight from the DC Council. I would advocate for making the Public Charter School board and the various LEAs more open and transparent. Proactive disclosure of detailed budgets, spending plans, and student outcomes would go a long way towards increasing the faith of residents in the Public Charter School Board.

Do you support the re-establishment of a local board of education to oversee DC Public Schools?

Yes / No

Please Explain *(limit to 1000 characters)*

Because the DC Council has legislative authority, it is better positioned to provide meaningful oversight over the public school system.

Would you support changes regarding who appoints the members of the Public Charter School Board?

Yes / No

Please Explain *(limit to 1000 characters)*

I am open to any change in methodology that increases transparency and community ownership over the Public Charter School system. However, I would highly advocate for a Unified system with a single board that could provide expert advice to a publicly accountable chief executive who met minimum professional and experiential requirements.

Do you believe the city should establish a unified, city-wide educational plan that ensures cooperation and planning across sectors?

Yes / No

Please describe what the process would look like. *(limit to 1000 characters)*

I would like to consolidate all public education systems under a single qualified Executive with significant experience and expertise in education and education administration. This executive should also be advised by an elected School Board that is given a meaningful role in the development of policy and the oversight of public and public charter schools. Administrative overhead could be shared between systems to achieve economies of scale. This would have the additional benefit of allowing more of the per pupil formula to be spend on instruction instead of administrative infrastructure.

Should DC Public Schools close schools that are deemed “underperforming” by the State Agency or another body?

Yes / No

School closure should only be a solution of last resort.

Do you support a moratorium on Charter School openings and expansions?

Yes / No

I support the development of a robust Certificate of Need process to determine that a new school can be supported and substantially enhance the quality of education for the served area. I believe the ability to provide a meaningful “no” will be more effective to ensuring education quality than an arbitrary moratorium.

Do you believe that all Local Education Agencies (LEAs) should be subject to the same transparency and reporting requirements with regard to their academic, student data and school-level budgets?

Yes / No

Should all LEAs be Subject to FOIA? Yes / No

As an attorney for a DC Government Agency, I supervised the collection of documents in response to FOIA requests. It can be a time-consuming process and if it isn't managed properly, it can be very expensive. I believe that all educational entities would be able to meet the requirements of FOIA if we did not have two isolated systems of education records management. We would be able to save public resources if the infrastructure of the various charter schools met uniform storage and technology minimum standards. This would increase transparency and

In order to ensure accountability for our schools, will you support higher protections to include additional oversight and protections for whistleblowers who are then subjected to retaliation?

Yes / No

Will you support an update to the 2007 PERRA and 2010 Local Hatch Act that allows individuals employed by DC Public Schools to run for public office (including SBOE, DC Council, Mayor and Attorney General)?

Yes / No