

To Candidates for Fairfax County School Board:

I apologize in advance for sending you one more questionnaire during this busy time.

Your answers to this questionnaire will be used in a number of ways. We will post your complete questionnaire (without your home address, phone number or cell number) on our Web site. We will print excerpts of your answers. Reporters will refer to your answers as they write stories about your race. The editorial board (which does not include reporters) will refer to the questionnaire in making endorsement decisions. For those who are elected to office, we will keep the questionnaires on file to compare your views before the election to your actions after the election.

Please try to keep your answers to under 100 words per question. Please return the completed questionnaire via email to ConnectionElection@hotmail.com by Oct. 10, 2007. We ask that you attach your answers to the email in a Word (.doc), text (.txt) or Rich Text Format (.rtf), and that you also paste your answers in the body of the email.

If you have any questions, concerns or comments, please feel free to contact me via email at julieattheconnection@gmail.com or mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com; at my office phone at 703-917-6416 or by cell at 301-996-5084. Please submit your answers to thecountyline@hotmail.com and julieattheconnection@gmail.com.

Thank you for helping us to provide our readers with a broad base of information about the coming election and candidates.

Sincerely,

Mary Kimm
Publisher and Editor
Connection Newspapers

CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

Name: Steve Hunt

Age: 49

Office sought: Fairfax County School Board, At-large

Party Affiliation: Independent, Republican endorsed

Family: Wife

Do/did your children go to Fairfax County Public Schools? If yes, which one(s)? All 164,000 of them and they go to every school – we have not been blessed with children of our own.

Home Address (will not be printed): 6429 Colchester Rd, Fairfax Station, VA 22039

Campaign mailing address: 5622-G Ox Road, PMB 100, Fairfax Station, VA, 22039

Home phone (will not be printed): 703-502-0633

Cell phone (will not be printed): 571-215-4333

Work phone:

Campaign phone: 703-502-0633

Fax: 703-502-0633

E-mail: Steve@stevhunt.org

Web site: www.SteveHunt.org

Occupation: Senior Systems Analyst

Current Employer (please include name and address): SAIC / 1525 Wilson BLVD, Suite 800, Arlington, VA 22209

Previous Employers/Occupation: United States Navy, Naval Flight Officer

Education: Duke University – BSE civil engineering

Community Organizations/Affiliations:

- Medical Care for Children Partnership Advisory Committee
- Care Connection for Children Advisory Committee
- Occoquan Watershed Coalition at-large member
- Vice Commander American Legion Post 1995
 - Sponsor Representative, Boy Scout Troop 1995 and Cub Scout Pack 321
- Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8469
- The Joshua Foundation board
- Clifton Lions Club
- Chantilly Bible Church
- Past President Assist Pregnancy Center Board of Directors
- Chairman of School Health Advisory Committee
- Fairfax County Republican Committee

Home town/state: Upper Marlboro, MD

How long have you been a Virginia resident?: 12 years

How long have you been a resident of your district? 12 years

Previous offices held (with dates): Fairfax County School Board, At-large

When elected to this position (if incumbent): 2003

Current endorsements you are most proud of: Fairfax Education Association

Political Mentor/Inspiration: John Quincy Adams

Where will you be on Election Day and as results come in? Please provide a phone number where you can be reached: No idea / 571-215-4333

Please list the best time to contact you and the best way for a reporter to reach you during the campaign (cell phone/work phone, staff member/directly): cel – 571-215-4333

SHORT ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think is the largest issue in education facing your district (or the county if you are an At-large member)? How would you tackle this issue as a member of the board?
 - The greatest challenge is to recognize the changing demographics in Fairfax County and adjust the instruction to ensure that all children have a solid foundation of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics prior to being moved through the system while addressing the academic needs across the spectrum of academic capabilities. There needs to be a strategic approach to

- accelerate foreign students that enter the system after first grade to get them to grade level. This should be driven by improved assessments and true measures of success to determine how well the school system is achieving the Board's goals.
2. Name the three issues that you would focus on most as a member of the school board.
 - Improved accountability throughout the school system as a result of true measures of success across the spectrum of academic services in each school. This includes assessments of the gifted and talented programs, IEP implementation and general education instruction.
 - Ensure that there is a mechanism in place to direct the implementation of special education Individualized Education Plans and to measure the progress of the plan
 - Re-engineering of the transportation system to include the adjustment of high school and middle school start times
 3. Do you think the school system should change the way it makes school boundary changes? If so, how?
 - I believe that there should be some minor adjustments to the existing policy. The efforts in the breakout sessions should be more directed toward a boundary solution instead of just the pros and cons of the staff recommendation. There may be some benefit in a townhall meeting and public hearing associated with the determination of the boundary areas to be included in the study. However, there is no way to remove the passion and the divisiveness that a boundary review creates.
 4. Are you supportive of later start times for older students? Do you think it is possible for the school system to make this change? At what point would you think later start times would be too expensive to support?
 - Yes. Yes. The transportation system is in need of re-engineering and the cost is estimated at \$20M per year. That needs to be accomplished regardless of what is done with start times. The consultants determined that once that was accomplished, that the start time would cost between \$0 and \$9M depending on how they were implemented. I would have to consider it too expensive if the additional cost exceeded the \$10M mark (Full day kindergarten cost \$11M per year for the additional 5-6000 students, \$10M for 60,000 should be acceptable).
 5. A recent survey of graduation rates showed that – while Fairfax County continues to have one of the highest graduation rates in the nation – the rate of students finishing high school dropped from 1994 to 2004. What can be done to reverse this trend?
 - There needs to be early intervention for students when they have declining grades or a large number of “Ds” and increasing discipline infractions. I have asked that a “dashboard” feature be included in the new student data system that would bring a student to the school staff's attention when certain conditions are met. Once identified, the student should be assessed to determine their reading, writing and

- math grade levels, and appropriate additional support should be provided so that the student can succeed.
6. If the county faces an economic downturn and the school system receives less money next year, where would you attempt to find cost savings in the current budget?
 - This is a challenge because of the lack of visibility into the base budget. There were considerable funds carried over from last year's budget to this year's and next year's budgets. I would start with the areas that did not spend the funds that were allocated to them in last year's expenditures.
 7. What do you believe should be done to help close the achievement gap between white and minority students? Do think the current school board is doing enough to address this issue?
 - Children must have the fundamental skills in reading, writing and math at each grade level before moving them on to the next grade. There should also be an outreach to minority parents to help them understand how to advocate for their children.
 - The board has not addressed this issue very well. We should address it by having the accountability measurements accurately portray the ability level of all children in reading, writing and math and not move a child forward until they have mastered the skills required for the next level of work or grade.
 8. Many elementary schools in Fairfax County have high concentrations of poor children. What are the implications for the success of students in those schools, and would you support drawing boundaries to increase economic diversity in schools?
 - I would not support changing boundaries strictly for that reason. In the course of a boundary if two options are generally equal, I would support "breaking the tie" with economic demographic data. Children from low economic homes are just as capable of learning and that should not be an excuse for failing to provide them with fundamental skills in reading, writing and math.
 9. Fairfax County did not make "adequate yearly progress" under the federal No Child Left Behind act for the first time this year. What conclusions do you draw from these results? Do you believe there is a reason to be concerned?
 - LEP level 1 & 2 student test scores should be removed from the county-wide data in order to provide a true impression of the school system's performance. Fairfax County is reaching the limit of where it can make changes around the margin and keep ahead of the NCLB requirements. The growing number of Virginia school systems that are exceeding Fairfax County in reading scores indicates that change is needed in the way reading is taught. NIH scientific research supports systematic explicit phonics as a critical skill in learning to read as opposed to the FCPS whole language approach.

Please answer Yes or No to the following questions:

1. Would you support a countywide boundary study over the current system, where boundaries are adjusted region by region? I would support investigating the cost savings and reduction of time in transit for children that might occur if the entire county boundaries were redrawn.

2. Would you support using a separate commission (like the one used during the BRAC process) instead of the school board to make decision regarding boundaries ? No

3. Do you believe the board and school system is adjusting its priorities to serve a school population that will soon be majority minority with a significant number of English-as-a-second-language students? No

4. Does the school board engage the public and parents appropriately? No

5. Should an effort be made to change school boundaries (particularly at the elementary school level) so that there is more economic parity across the system? No

6. Should the school superintendent command a higher salary than the county executive in Fairfax County? If his performance dictates it.

7. Does the school system adequately address the needs of students with disabilities? No

8. Does Fairfax County Public Schools have too many employees in administrative positions as opposed to classroom positions? Yes

9. Is there too much emphasis placed on testing in Fairfax County? Yes