

**1. What is your position on the proposed change to School Board Policy 8130.7 that was presented to the school board on July 22nd, 2019?**

I'm in strong support of the neighborhoods. Schools are centers of our neighborhoods. So, any policy or policy change that does not take into account how the change impacts the school as part of a community, I advise against such a change. Listen to the neighborhoods first, before making any policy changes, and see how those proposed changes may impact the entire school community: the students, the parents, the teachers, and school staff. We must have transparency when proposing any changes to our schools. I thank Voices of Fairfax for expressing the strong disapproval so many of us feel on this matter. Maybe we will need to make some hard boundary decisions, but not without a rigorous review process driven by lots of public input. New policies should not be rushed. Schools are about the communities they serve, and any potential impact on those communities must see the proposed changes from the perspective of the neighborhoods. We must especially watch out for any potential impacts on the diversity of our school populations: changing school boundaries shift who's in and who's out of certain schools. As a mother of two sons who graduated from Fairfax County Schools, I feel nervous when I see what looks like loose planning with our children's opportunities. Let's work together on understanding better the issues before rushing to solutions.

**2. How will One Fairfax affect your decisions as a school board member?**

No, it will not. I can't help but feel, "When are we going to learn?" I see redistricting, I see busing students around to distant neighborhoods, I see government trying to find some idealistic mix of students and opportunities. Take our students out of our neighborhoods and that will remove good chances for finding effective solutions. Yes, we have overcrowding. Yes, we have serious issues with inequality. And yes, indeed, we have issues with rapid growth and development impacting our neighborhoods. These issues are not simply school issues; but school and community problems. We must find a way without redistricting. The classroom environment, engagement with teachers, a sense of identity with a school—those conditions are so important to a student's comfort zone. But redistricting only stirs instability. Low-performing students suffer. The instability impacts students, schools, and neighborhoods. So many families in Fairfax already face enough uncertainty. Let's not risk stability with the proposed One Fairfax.

### **3. How should racial and/or socioeconomic diversity influence establishing or changing school boundaries?**

My focus stands on our communities. We want to strengthen neighborhood schools in all communities. Our diversity is a strength. But it's only a strength if our children know each other inside and outside their schools. As a Hispanic woman, I've long been suspicious of any effort to achieve some perfect economic or ethnic or racial mix. That's spending precious tax dollars on an unachievable outcome. Children should learn, grow, play and interact with each other in their communities and their schools. We need quality education programs at all of our schools. Within reach of all of our neighborhoods. So, let's focus spending money on a diversity of education programs for the actual mix of our students. Thomas Jefferson High School is a great example of academic quality. But we also need great examples of career and technical education programs. If we want to determine a good mix for our schools, let it be programs that enable diverse students to prepare for college, acquire vocational skills, or engage in some other career preparation. That's achievable.

### **4. What is your proposal to relieve McLean High School overcrowding for the short-term and for the longer term?**

The overcrowding is out of control. People propose band-aid solutions that can be done, such as more trailers. But those measures, especially, trailers, only treat the symptoms. Overcrowding at any school emerges out of a history of neighborhood changes: housing shifts, demographic changes, and community growth. Unfortunately, our School Board has neglected those factors for a long time. So, we have to move toward more sustainable solutions. For the short-term, we have to offer options to families. The McLean feeder schools should be combined to keep students together. McLean students should be eligible for open enrollment transfer to Langley High School, which is under-capacity. I prefer that be a choice rather than an imposed policy. And we've got to address the risks with overcrowding, primarily, school safety and security. An extra School Resource Officer should be assigned to monitor students going to and from the 18 trailers at the school. Parents should have opportunities to meet with school officials and propose additional solutions. For the long-term solution, let's look at the trends. The area is growing. Attendance projects show a steady increase over the next five years. We've got to fast-track building on to the current school building, to replace the trailers. The space exists. The issue is simply a matter of commitment: committing ourselves to adding more classrooms so that the school can accommodate the growth. The trends stand clearly before us. Let's commit ourselves to providing the McLean neighborhood with the school it needs. And let the parents, teachers, and school administrators participate in the rebuilding effort.

## **5. How do you propose to address Langley High School under-capacity?**

Langley High School stands as a great opportunity of how we can work with the neighborhoods to provide good schools. Redistricting the boundaries around Langley could severely impact the high school, causing property values to plummet and leaving less for the schools with reduced revenue from shrinking real estate taxes. In short, redistricting around Langley could trigger a ripple effect of unintended consequences. And with overcrowding at nearby McLean High School, the School Board should move to allow open enrollment for parents wishing to move their children. Looking to the future of Langley High School, we've got to stop thinking about drawing boundaries and focus more on who lives within the current lines. Our business is not real estate—it's education. Langley is under-capacity now, but the school can expect heavy growth with new housing developments about to be approved. With those changes we want to welcome future students with diverse education programs: additional programs such as an International Baccalaureate like that at Marshall High School and expanded Advanced Placement offerings. The Langley community is adjacent to the Dulles High Tech Corridor. Langley parents work in many STEM jobs, including cyber security and data analysis. Part of our opportunity is to look further into what kinds of information technology classes or offerings we may establish at Langley. The Langley community presents unique resources for future programs.

## **6. Is there a way to change the CIP process so that it can be more responsive to increases in school enrollment?**

Yes, the Capital Improvement Process must be changed. The process must be changed from a reactionary process to a more proactive process working closely with the Board of Supervisors. Otherwise, a process meant to improve schools instead keeps our facilities stuck in a backlog of renovations. Some renovations must be prioritized for now. Safety and security measures should be at the top of the list; after that, improvements should be made to the more crowded schools. The School Board must review construction needs, renovation costs, and any impacts on student safety and security. That review must be as transparent as possible, considering current and project enrollments at our schools. We shouldn't be wasting time discussing how to improve our school facilities. We should have a transparent, needs-driven process aimed at reducing the backlog of improvements at those schools with the more pressing priorities. Otherwise, the current, 37-year renovation cycle will only get longer. Redistricting will only add years to the cycle.

**7. How will you ensure that Great Falls (and surrounding areas currently zoned to Langley) remain in the Langley pyramid?**

Why break up a strong community like Great Falls? That's exactly what we don't want to do. We must maintain the neighborhoods. Langley is part of the Great Falls neighborhood. Schools anchor neighborhoods. Whatever we propose to do to a neighborhood like Great Falls, we must do with through a lot of listening to the community. Transparency is critical. I believe that school officials must work with the neighborhoods to address issues. Communication has got work in both directions. To start changing boundaries, to draw up new district lines, often draws lines around neighborhoods and their families—telling them where they cannot cross. I believe that contradicts the mission of education.