

MARILYNN BAKER

District 2, [campaign website](#)

Strategies for Improving Student Performance in Low Performing Schools

Would you support shifting personnel in order to ensure academic achievement for students in low performing schools? Why or why not?

I am in favor of meeting the needs of our students and educators in ALL of our public schools, ESPECIALLY our low performing schools. I am an advocate for fully funding our public schools, and bringing our spending per student to the national average.

I have been an active advocate for public education and social justice for many years, participating in Moral Monday marches and the NCAE rallies in Forsyth County, Raleigh, and even Washington, DC. I will continue to be an advocate for public education and social justice. I believe the two (public ed and social justice) go hand in hand.

I recognize that our low performing schools need excellent, experienced educators, e.g. teachers, TAs and administrators. I also recognize that teachers in low performing schools need smaller classes and need to spend extra planning time. Therefore, I hope that we can work with the Raleigh legislature and our County Commissioners to pay an additional stipend for teachers (and perhaps TAs) in our low performing schools. That will help us recruit and retain highly qualified teachers for these schools.

I also believe that we need MORE Pre-K classes. Further, as a COMMUNITY, we need to find solutions for high quality Daycare and Pre-schools. The earlier we can help low income children, the quicker and more effectively we can close (or even prevent) the "achievement gap".

Equity in Resource Distribution

Do you support the building of a new school for Ashley? If so, when? If not, why not?

I wish I had more details about the board's plans to replace or renovate the schools in aging/deteriorating buildings. It is my understanding that there is funding for plans (blueprints, models) for Ashley, but I do not know the time frame. I apologize for not knowing more specifics and what my recommendation would be.

Please allow me to share my VISION for the system.

I AM in favor of building new schools in our system, and I hope we can develop a COMMUNITY-INVOLVED PLAN for new schools, especially in low income communities. We currently have several small, aging schools that can hopefully

be combined into larger, more energy-efficient schools with room to expand. In that way, we could spend LESS MONEY on administration and overhead, and MORE MONEY on instruction (teachers, teacher assistants and supplies). With larger schools, we could also have more variety of instruction, and can hopefully explore the feasibility of creating one or more magnet schools in low income communities, e.g. a Montessori-style public school.

My goal would be to have a preliminary, community-involved STRATEGIC building plan for WS/FCS by the end of 2019 which could be further refined and supported by school bonds in 2020. (Okay, I admit that this schedule might be overly optimistic, but goals should be a stretch.)

Importantly, I am in favor of FULLY FUNDING public education and standing up to our NC Legislature's unreasonable cuts in funding that has forced our WS/FCS to have INADEQUATE FUNDS for repairs and maintenance, along with other needed resources (including textbooks, nurses, counselors, etc.).

Do you believe that past decisions about the building of new schools, stadiums, and athletic centers have been made in the spirit of equity and fairness to all of the communities served by the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools?

I believe that EVERY student and EVERY educator deserve to be a part of a great public school in a great school system. However, that is not currently the case.

I regret that as a candidate who isn't an incumbent, I don't have the details and that led to decisions regarding building new facilities. I hesitate to "Judge" the motives of the current board members. Nevertheless, I DO understand why many people believe that there have been decisions which favor suburban students over the urban students. Clearly, a lack of transparency in decision making and planning is an on-going problem.

It is a travesty that repairs and maintenance have been inadequate for many years and have contributed to the deterioration of our aging schools. I primarily blame Raleigh for failing to fully fund our schools. However, I also blame the Republican members of our WS/FC school board for failing to stand up to our Legislature for inadequate funding. Instead of advocating for increased funding, they have acquiesced to meekly accept whatever the Legislature decides to dole out. We need board members who will "speak truth to power" instead of robbing our textbook fund to pay for teacher assistants. Both textbooks and TAs need to be funded.

Similarly, I don't have the details regarding the past decisions for locating new schools, and how the plans of the current and past school boards were prioritized. But I can understand why the past plans seem to favor the suburban areas. Once again, we need more community involvement and better transparency in how decisions are made.

I will strive to promote equity and fairness to ALL of the communities we serve, even though I am running in District 2. Most of our schools serve students in both districts, especially our middle and high schools. I will advocate for more

transparent information sharing, more community involvement in decision-making, and better communication of progress in the implementation of previously approved plans. And, importantly, I will continue to advocate for our state legislature and county commissioners to FULLY FUND our public schools and bring our spending per student to the national average.

LIDA CALVERT- HAYES

District 2, [campaign website](#)

Strategies for Improving Student Performance in Low Performing Schools

Would you support shifting personnel in order to ensure academic achievement for students in low performing schools? Why or why not?

I would support shifting personnel to ensure academic achievement for our low performing schools. Our title one schools do receive more funding but I do believe it is very important to make sure it is spent wisely to obtain the best education possible in these schools.

Equity in Resource Distribution

Do you support the building of a new school for Ashley? If so, when? If not, why not?

I certainly do want Ashley to have a new school and I have fought for this and been on board from the start. I have met with leaders wanting a new school for Ashley and I think all know where I stand. It is past time for land to be acquired and it needs to be in a location that is convenient for the students of Ashley.

Do you believe that past decisions about the building of new schools, stadiums, and athletic centers have been made in the spirit of equity and fairness to all of the communities served by the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools?

We as a board did work hard on priorities and we came up with over \$700 million dollars in projects needed. The commissioners granted us our monies. I only wish all of our projects could have been accepted. It certainly would have made a big difference in our WSFCS projects. To be honest we tried to do the best we could with the monies we received from our commissioners. We have to keep trying and work together as we all want what is best for our students. Thanks for reaching out to me and thanks for all you are doing for our kids.

LORI G. CLARK

District 2, [campaign website](#)

Strategies for Improving Student Performance in Low Performing Schools

Would you support shifting personnel in order to ensure academic achievement for students in low performing schools? Why or why not?

I am always in favor of making needed changes within a school to ensure academic achievement for all students. Studies have shown, however, that even when extra pay was given to staff to recruit them to work in struggling schools, it can get them there, but often is not enough to retain them (even big bonuses do not keep teachers past three years in difficult schools). As it is, on average, we lose new teachers by their sixth year (that is across all schools). The day-to-day work in a struggling school is so taxing, and with that understanding, I would support looking at ways to incentivize high-performing teachers to voluntarily make a move. The Board is not involved in the hiring of staff within a school - that is the principal's duty. Therefore, we can examine ways as a district we might attract teachers to teach in struggling schools - ways that are within our realm. Priority/Focus/Title 1 schools - those falling under those umbrellas, already receive funding (equates to higher per pupil spending averages) that other schools do not. I believe that to really make an impact in these schools where children come to Kindergarten already behind in reading and basic skills, we are going to have to help families understand the importance of the first five years of a child's life. Until we look at home situations and emphasize two-parent homes as a way to break the poverty cycle, and until communities (businesses, churches, outside groups) work to help families prepare their children for school, great teachers who can grow a child a whole year's worth academically will continue to struggle, as will the children they teach.

We do, however, seek to "share out" strategies within struggling schools that are proven to work - and seek to replicate them. Another way that we are recognizing successful teachers is through the Teacher Academy. We incentivize these teachers in our district to be leaders to other (younger, newer, or struggling) teachers, and model classrooms, and mentors. We do it through extra pay, leadership, and recognition - which is what teachers stated they wanted when we surveyed them. It is one way - the teacher academy - we are, within our means, seeking to reward and value teachers, and keep them here.

Equity in Resource Distribution

Do you support the building of a new school for Ashley? If so, when? If not, why not?

I would support a new Ashley, yes, though I truly see the character of the current school. It has much history, is special, part of that area and neighborhood, and has been home to many a student over the years. The design piece of that project (a new building) was put into the 2016 bond as evidence that this Board believes in its future. Many parts of a puzzle still must fall into place that are outside of the Board's control and involve several other organizations.

Do you believe that past decisions about the building of new schools, stadiums, and athletic centers have been made in the spirit of equity and fairness to all of the communities served by the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools?

Much goes into making those types of decisions each time. Boards have to consider where they have land already, where there is land for the project that can be obtained, etc. For new schools, much more has to be considered, such as projected birth rates, population growth, and schools that are overcrowded. If you look at the projects in the 2016 bond, for example, this board did take care to consider how we would place projects in the bond that were distributed all over the county - both in types of work being done, location, and in dollars spent. Yes, I believe our decision-making was fair based on the needs we had at that time, and considering projects left out of the last bond (2006). If you understand that we currently have a 10-year capital needs plan (begun in 2010 to go through 2020) that is only half-funded through this point in 2018, it is apparent we are always playing catchup and climbing uphill in the maintenance/facilities battle. That is a plan outside of the projects in the 2016 bond! I do think that, as often as possible, and even as we look at a new Ashley, public/private partnerships that will allow for a sharing of facilities can be a way forward.

DANA C. JONES

District 2, [campaign website](#)

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I am in favor of giving all schools, especially our under performing schools the resources they need to be successful. Title I schools already receive more funding per pupil than other schools. I am in favor of providing researched based supports for students, staff and parents.

Equity in Resource Distribution

Do you support the building of a new school for Ashley? If so, when? If not, why not?

Yes, I support the building of a new school for Ashley. It would be the first shovel ready project in the next bond. I support going ahead and purchasing the land for the school so that the design can be completely ready for the project. This would allow for community input on placement as well as overall needs and service for the new school.

Do you believe that past decisions about the building of new schools, stadiums, and athletic centers have been made in the spirit of equity and fairness to all of the communities served by the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools?

The 2016 bond was vetted across Forsyth County with public meetings and times for all stakeholders to share concerns and give input. We had a list of needs that reached over 700 million dollars and yet, we knew a bond package of \$350 million would be all the county commissioners would and could approve based on the funding formula. Based on the information provided at the time, I believe we made good choices on the projects. I would be happy to meet with you and others within the group to talk through the details of these questions and hear other concerns.

ANDREA BRAMER

At-Large, [campaign website](#)

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Would you support shifting personnel in order to ensure academic achievement for students in low performing schools? Why or why not?

Yes. There are schools with multiple AG certified teachers and schools with none. We are not a small neighborhood community school, we are a county. A large diverse county. Resources should be divided as such and the county looked at holistically.

Equity in Resource Distribution

Do you support the building of a new school for Ashley? If so, when? If not, why not?

Yes. No child regardless of gender, race or socioeconomic status should be in a school that is unhealthy. We owe it to our next generation to not have a school as nice as ours, but instead reach for a school and education that is better.

Do you believe that past decisions about the building of new schools, stadiums, and athletic centers have been made in the spirit of equity and fairness to all of the communities served by the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools?

Yes. Again we are a large county and should treat each school as equal. Here is my exception: stadiums and extracurricular activities make school more enjoyable and therefore boosts attendance; however, the chance that these activities will provide income and welfare for a future life is low. We need basic academics, basic gymnasium for health, and schools that provide them first priority. Once that is accomplished, then we can provide stadiums and higher end athletic facilities.

ELIZABETH

MOTSINGER

At-Large, [campaign website](#)

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Improving performance in low performing schools is critically important. The strategies that are proven effective are hard to come by and track back to the complexities of this issue. The issues facing students in poverty are almost overwhelming and schools need to be a place of caring, engagement and growth. I believe we need to focus on school climate and culture- focusing more on social and emotional health than obedience. Schools need to welcome students and provide a safe environment for learning. Schools need to be a place where mistakes are learning experiences, where the natural curiosity of young people is encouraged and allowed to flourish. Schools, particularly elementary schools, need adequate play time and physical activity. Curricular materials need to reflect the full experiences of the children attending them and should be engaging. Teachers and staff need to believe in the children and in their capacities for learning. Schools also should not be silos but both reflect the communities where they are and have involvement from community members who are committed to their wellbeing and volunteer in them. Does shifting school personnel ensure academic achievement in low performing schools? This is not clear to me. I think moving teams is certainly worth trying with this caveat- The General Assembly makes it very hard for employees to risk their careers by moving to a school that is labeled “failing” and possibly losing their jobs if they don’t succeed. Until this changes it will be very hard to do this. Do you have any studies to share that shows this to be effective? I really do want to read them and would be grateful to see them.

Of course, I support building a new school for Ashley! That is why I asked for the 1,000,000 dollar planning grant in this bond-it was a promise that it would be the first new school out of the next bond. Konnoak is an example of a school that was not in a prior bond but was first out of the gate in the next one by having the planning done by a prior bond. I would hope that members of your Steering Committee have visited Ashley recently as well as other schools in our district. With 80 schools and lagging capitol funds we will always be behind in replacing schools. When I was first on the board there was no funds whatever from the county for maintenance and upkeep of buildings. We are now funded at less than half of the costs for upkeep we require.

Do I think we've been fair over the years? I don't have a clear answer for that. Are we fair to all kids? No, no, no. PTAs are able to provide things for children that public dollars do not. Athletic booster clubs raise funds to improve their fields, etc. and are upset they don't get more help. Votes are taken by the board to improve stadiums that otherwise would no longer be safe and athletics are indeed important for a significant percentage of our students. I fought like crazy to keep Hanes/Lowrance open because it gave kids in the neighborhood a neighborhood school. WS Foundation built playgrounds in title 1 schools. I've worked for years on a planning grant to green schoolyards and continue to run into blocks. From my own understanding of demographic shifts my guess is the biggest growth of the coming decades is actually going to be inner cities and not the suburbs. I have argued about this for a long time and I'm afraid I have not been successful.

I initially ran for the school board in 2006 because I wanted to make these problems better. Poverty in this country has been increasing for years and the middle class is shrinking. The hurdles for poor children, and particularly children of color, are high and wide and often overwhelming. I ran for Congress in 2012 because I was heartbroken about the challenges people face and my campaign was focused on poverty, access to healthcare, education, and environmental protection. I now passionately support DD Adams and the Democratic General Assembly candidates running now- including my son John. From my perspective the GA is actively trying to destroy public education and calling schools failing is a part and parcel of that effort. Within the limitations posed by the federal government and the state there are things we can do better and that's where I put my focus. I'm always interested in hearing new ideas that work for our students. We need longer school years, year round schools, interesting and engaging curriculum, healthy universal breakfast and lunch, afterschool activities that spark kids interests and a community in love with its children. Unless we collectively understand that children, all children, are the only future we have AND are willing to raise the money necessary to do right by them I worry we will not make significant, sustainable progress.