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**"Supporting those who support our schools!"**

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**2021 MAYORAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**  
*(PLEASE TYPE YOUR RESPONSES IN THE SPACE PROVIDED.)*

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**Questions:**

**1. Please provide personal biographical data including information on your family, community involvement, work history, and your qualifications for office.**

We all know what it's like to live in a city that's run from the top down, but isn't it way past time for everyday Chattanoogaans to take back the power?

I am one of the few candidates in this race who knows Chattanooga from both sides of the tracks. I am proud to be Baylor School's first African-American graduate and to have earned a degree in Economics from Harvard, but I am equally proud to be the kid who grew up in Alton Park (attending Calvin Donaldson Elementary) and who lived in City View Apartments in East Chattanooga.

Until I was 14 years old, I was raised by a single mom. I watched her go to school, work multiple jobs, and do whatever it took to provide for us. As Mayor of Chattanooga, I will put children, families, and neighborhoods first. As a community leader, I have partnered with residents in neighborhoods all across Chattanooga. In business, I have both started small businesses and worked for large corporations. As your Mayor, I will bring these experiences to bear to create a Clean Money Economy (one that balances economic development, environmental sustainability, and social justice). Great public schools are vital to the success of our city.

**2. Please describe your experience/relationship with public schools.**

I am a product of Head Start at Calvin Donaldson Elementary School. I also attended 1st, 2nd, and 5th grades there (I lived in Indiana when I was in the 3rd and 4th grades). I am most appreciative for Head Start. I realize that it provided me with a launching pad that set me on a path of lifelong learning.

As Chairman of Chattanooga Venture in the early 1990s, I supported the launch of the Public Education Foundation and have been a staunch advocate for progressive, inclusive reform of public education in Chattanooga ever since. Recently, I have participated in both UnifiEd and Chattanooga 2.0.

Today I am the proud father of a daughter who is a 5th grade teacher at East Lake Elementary School. I am impressed daily by her ingenuity, determination, and dedication to her students. I know that her example is the rule (and not the exception) for teachers throughout Hamilton County Public Schools.

As Mayor, I want to support our students, families, and teachers. If we all work together, we can make the schools in Chattanooga the very best that they can be.

### **3. Describe your platform's impact on the future of public education in Chattanooga.**

When I have spoken with Superintendent Bryan Johnson, I have told him that I want the City of Chattanooga to be a strong partner to our public schools. I want to get beyond the notion that public schools are just the responsibility of Hamilton County government. We all share a moral obligation to the students in our community. There are three primary initiatives that I would like to launch as Mayor that would benefit our public schools.

First, I will expand our investment in Early Childhood Education. I have already begun conversations with the JB & MK Pritzker Family Foundation in Chicago. JB Pritzker is the Governor of Illinois, and the foundation is a leader in funding innovation in Early Childhood Development. The Pritzker Foundation is interested in partnering with organizations in Chattanooga to pioneer best practices in this area.

Next, I want to create counseling programs for all students entering middle school in HCDE. When students are transitioning between 5th and 6th grades, we should engage with them to not only ask "What do you want to be when you grow up," but also "Who do you want to be when you grow up." Each child should have a life plan that is updated annually and follows them through high school. This program could be funded by the City of Chattanooga.

Finally, I will make CARTA buses free to ride for all passengers all of the time. I will also reroute the system to include putting bus stops at every middle and high school in Chattanooga. This will allow students to stay at school beyond the departure of the 2:15 school buses. They can participate in extracurricular activities, get extra academic tutoring, and still be able to take free public transportation home each day. This free transit configuration will allow more students to participate in Future/Ready Institutes, because the cost barrier to move between schools will be eliminated.

### **4. What is the role of the city in public education and how do you see its resources positively impacting students in our area?**

I believe that sometime we all suffer because we set our expectations too low. Our goal should not be to just get our public schools up to some minimum passable standard. We should establish an expectation of excellence and let students, parents, and teachers know that we will equip them with the tools and resources they will need to attain these high goals.

The City of Chattanooga should step up to the plate to be the best possible partner to HCDE. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly shown us that our teachers are heroes and rockstars. It is imperative that City, County, and HCDE leadership come together to increase teacher salaries, fix or replace crumbling infrastructure, and increase counseling services to students.

*Please email your response by **January 25 at 6:00 PM** to [president@hceaeducators.org](mailto:president@hceaeducators.org)*