

PTOC Meeting Notes – 10/19/2020

*The meeting is being recorded. I missed a lot of details because people were speaking pretty quickly. Please watch the recording. It should be posted on the PTOC website at some point: <https://www.a2schools.org/Page/7872>. I'm not sure if it'll be posted on the Meetings page under the October 2020 meeting or the Candidate Forums page, but check both (links are in the left menu). The meeting lasted just over 2 hours.

Announcements:

- The meeting may go as late as 9 pm today to allow for more questions.
- Originally there were two more candidates: Morgan and Hemphill are on the ballot but are no longer running, so please don't vote for either.
- A member of the PTOC executive board (Lisa Querijero) married to one of the candidates (Ernesto Querijero), so she recused herself from this meeting.
- The PTOC executive board selected questions from the submitted list that are representative of a number of topics that are of interest to the membership.
- There were other forums where candidates have been speaking. A list is on the PTOC website: <https://www.a2schools.org/Page/16801>
- The mission of PTOC is to contribute to quality schools and facilitate parent involvement and promote and share ideas through community avenues.

Candidate speeches:

- **Krystal Dupree (KD):** She is a social worker. She completed her undergrad degree at EMU and her graduate degree at UM. She is a combat veteran and a single parent. She is dedicated to service and advocacy. She is the mother of a 9-year-old. She joined COPAA (Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, Inc.) to stay up to date on special education law. She is a community organizer. She has organized town hall meetings for community advocacy. She plans to show up and create spaces to learn and grow together. She will be advocating for single parents, special education services, and belonging for marginalized groups. She is dedicated to eliminating bias. She has reached out to BIPOC parents to develop a remediation plan. With a system and follow-up, AAPS can create steps to equity. She has reached out to the UM Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative to develop a partnership. She works as a community and youth coordinator at Avalon housing. She wants to empower youth and wants to bring the youth voice to the school board.
- **Jeff Gaynor (JG):** He grew up in Detroit. He is a graduate of Detroit Public Schools. He went to UM undergrad and has been an Ann Arbor resident ever since. He taught for 38 years as classroom teacher. He has subbed in every building in Ann Arbor. When he announced his retirement in 2016, he was asked by parents to run for the school board. He decided that he wasn't done with education after retirement; there were still issues he was concerned about. He wanted to have an impact and ran. He is finishing his first term. His platform is for community dialogue, openness, and transparency. He supports inclusion in critical decision making, equity, and justice.

- **Jamila James (JJ):** She saw vacancy in the education system. She is a parent. As a parent, she is concerned that kids aren't being prepared. She wants social/emotional learning, restorative justice, and trade skills education for those who do not want to go to college. She believes need to teach money management as requirement for graduation. She asks parents: if their kid graduated without parental money and support, would they be able to navigate the world? She feels the answer is no, so she decided to run. She is willing to do the hard work.
- **Maggi Kennel (MK):** She is passionate about schools. She is a graduate of Ann Arbor Public Schools and has 3 kids enrolled in system. She is passionate about the Ann Arbor Public School experience. She is engaged in the schools. She was the PTO president at her kids' schools and has worked with the PTOC. She has done fundraising activities. She volunteers as a room parent. All of her work shows her that there are many factors outside of schools. She is a clinical research coordinator at UM Medical School. She has 10 years of experience at Pfizer. She is a graduate of EMU (undergraduate and graduate degrees). She understands the pandemic. So much of what drives the experience in Ann Arbor is the ability to connect, but a lot of people have not been included. She wants to make sure all voices across the district are heard. A lot of harsh realities are siloed at schools. She wants to include equity. There is a need to look at transparency in communication. There is a need to make environmentally sustainable choices in spending the bond money. She is about inclusivity.
- **Ernesto Querijero (EQ):** *[Note: he delivered his opening speech in Spanish (mad props for this!). I missed a lot of his speech because I was half typing in Spanish and half translating as I typed. What follows is the English translation of what I was able to note down. Please listen to his opening speech in the video linked above.]* He has lived in Ann Arbor for 25 years. He is active in the school community. He supports recommendations for smaller classes. Our community needs the perspective of active teacher. He has taught in public school and teaches at Washtenaw Community College. He supports increasing representation – kids who feel different for being LGBTQ, for having a disability, for socioeconomic differences, based on the color of their skin need to be included in opportunities. He spoke in Spanish, which he admitted is not his first or second language, but he had to work hard at it. He wanted to speak in Spanish for inclusivity.
- **Angie Smith (AS):** She cares about kids and education. She is an educator. She has taught, worked, and volunteered with learners of all ages. She is also a parent in the district. She has experience interacting with parents, teachers, and administrators. She was a PTO president and part-time support staff in school. She has sat on committees to investigate policy change. We need to invest in what is important to us. Her universal truth: strong communities start with strong education. She wants to be on the school board to invest in the community. The board should reflect and respect community values. She wants to challenge everyone to work collaboratively and creatively to create a just and equitable future for students.
- **John Spisak (JS):** He has been involved in education for a while. He has degrees in general education, special education, applied behavior analysis, and is working on his doctorate. He has sat on curriculum development committees. He has taught, and he

ran the Concordia special education program. He was a social studies teacher – economics and political science. He works with kids with Autism as an applied behavior analyst. His original degree was in finance and economics, and he understands what a business plan is and pro forma statements. He can work in a classroom and plan lessons. He is helping his kids with algebra (he held up his kids' work to the camera). He is a Big-10 soccer referee. He has worked in nearly every building in Ann Arbor Public Schools. He is running because he is well rounded and understands what is needed for the district to move forward.

Q&A (All candidates are referred to by their initials. See Candidate Speeches above for their names):

- **Advocacy:** In your position as trustee, you will be in a powerful position to advocate for kids, including those from marginalized groups. How do you see yourself exercising that power?
 - **MK:** Everyone has to have a voice at the table. She will create committees for marginalized groups to begin to have discussion to hear their concerns. Not everyone can meet because of life (work, child care, etc.), but we have to encourage people to take the time to know people outside of their school but who are still in the district. We need targeted communication to respond to concerns. Maybe there should be a teacher representative to school board. There should be student committees to learn about the student perspective. She will help board advocate for people.
 - **EQ:** The power is not his. If he's on the board that power is shared by everyone. Everything he would do as a school board member isn't everything he 100% believes, but it is what community believes. The job is to represent the people. He would distribute power so that everyone can say their piece. Teachers, climate voters, students, anyone who has something to say should have the means and the path to speak. When conversations are uncomfortable, it is not a problem, but everyone needs a chance to speak out. His use of power is to share it. Elected officials need to lend their voice to someone else.
 - **AS:** The first thing that came to her mind is to listen. That is the superpower of the school board. That can be a big group of people who feel marginalized. She has felt marginalized. She is reading a book called *Leaders Last* which calls trust as the key to success. There are three things: certainty (feeling safe with where you are, knowing norms), significance (needing a purpose), and connection (a basic need for all humans – I've got your back). Those three things are necessary to build trust. The school board needs to build trust.
 - **JS:** Listen. How can you advocate for someone if you don't know what to advocate for? It's all about forming lines of communication and understanding what the issues and problems are. As a good leader, one must also be a strong listener. A leader must be able to hear what people are saying, feed it back to them so that they can affirm what they said, and then move forward to advocate.

- **KD:** In the words of Woodrow Wilson: The words of a leader must ring with the words of the people. She wants to meet people where they are. If we want to hear these voices, we have to show up at things that are organized by people in the community. We have to show up in community, and don't expect people to come with us. We need to listen and be willing to take concrete steps. A lot comes from conversation and showing up is the key thing.
- **JG:** It was his priority to establish channels of communication with parents. He wants to work in good faith in working through concerns. When came on the school board, he had the same focus initially. He bid to be the secretary because he wanted open channels of communication. School board members can't do their jobs unless they hear from all stakeholders in the community. This takes time, but you have to be there and listen. He cited a testimonial on his campaign website: I don't often agree with Jeff, but appreciate his openness and willingness to listen. This is important for school board members. It's important to also be out in community and advocate. He works to be available and listen and make sure all views heard equally.
- **JJ:** Being open and being available is necessary. All children are underrated and undermined in the sense that people don't recognize that they are little humans. They don't know everything, but they know a lot. We must listen actively and recognize their value. She supports student representation on board. It is about their future...why shouldn't they be a part of the conversation? It's also about being willing listen and available. People have to put their ego out of the way and shut up and listen. We must be open to new perspectives to get to real solutions.
- **Equity:** Enrichment activities are funded by PTOs. There is a vast difference from school to school in Ann Arbor in the amounts allocated. How would you help to bridge this inequity at the school board level?
 - **AS:** It's a question of money. The school board can't call for line item spending. That's why PTO work is important and valued, because enrichment experiences mean a lot to kids. It's experiential learning. But it also brings inequities. It's not just field trips but other things too. We can talk about the opportunity of pooling money and splitting it among schools, but local control is important. We need to rely on communities as a whole – not just parents in the community but also organizations like the PTO thrift shop. The Ann Arbor community foundation, which is rolled into the educational foundation, is a source for grants.
 - **JS:** At what point do we realize that the value of doing these things is more important than some kids being able and others not due to where they live? He is always looking for different sources of funding in his work with low socioeconomic families. He will create a list of resources to allow people to access sources. Writing a grant isn't easy. But there are people who are good at doing that. How do we tap into that resource? With PTOs, we have parents who want to be involved, and we should facilitate that involvement. It's about educating people about other sources of funding.

- **KD:** We can benefit from strengthening community partnerships. Finding grants is important. We are so tied into UM, so maybe students can take this on as a project – internship hours maybe. We can lean in on the community for collaborations. How can we do these things together in a way that is equitable and allows for local control with PTO? She wants more parents involved in the PTO.
- **JG:** Equity has to be part of the fabric of decision making. There are not equal resources from district to district or within Ann Arbor Public Schools. The district has done and continues to make efforts to narrow those gaps. Back in the day, a few schools set up computer labs funded by their PTOs. The school board recognized the value in this and funded computer labs for other schools. Those schools funded by PTOs were upset, but we do that in various ways. We do that now with playground equipment. We have a partnership with UM education students in Mitchell. We must continue to advocate and make access equitable.
- **JJ:** She feels that we're either about equity or we are not. She is thankful to the PTO because she had to use those funds lots of items, and thankfully her kids went to a school with lots of money available. She is not knocking it, but if we are for equity for real for real, then we can come up with a way for all PTOs to share the money. We can come up with a districtwide PTO to manage money. We should work together as a community to disperse money. If we're going to do it, then let's just do it. If we're not going to do it, then let's not pretend we're about equity.
- **MK:** She went to PTO websites and noticed lots of differences. PTOs should have budgets up for review. She emailed all PTO presidents for budgets to understand how big the disparity is. We need to educate parents because we are so siloed in our schools. We need to build database systems for all PTOs to have access to tools. We can link up items that have helped with assemblies and field trips, and maybe rate options.
- **EQ:** He believes that the localized cultures of buildings is important. It's why students attend schools and is important. He's not for restructuring of what exists, but rather the creation of something new. To ask PTOs to change how they fundraise is a big ask, because they have been working hard for a long time. Often it is the same 15 families who step to the plate. Sometimes other families step in. He wants to come up with something new to distribute fundraising across all schools based on populations, like the PTO thrift shop model, which distributes money across all schools. People won't be on board for disrupting what's going on in their buildings.
- **Priorities and pandemic:** Do you agree with the way Ann Arbor Public Schools are handling the pandemic? Would you do something different?
 - **JS:** In terms of fundraising, we need to be thinking in terms of economies of scale. Why don't we operate as a unit and do group pricing for everyone districtwide? In terms of the pandemic, it's challenging to second guess what's done. We hear about what's happening and what's going on, who died and got sick, and we know schools are a hotbed of viruses. He gave an example about

teachers getting sick a lot the first few years of teaching and then not anymore as their immune systems are used to the onslaught of viruses from children. At the same time, it's dangerous to say let's see what happens with the kids and hope nothing bad happens. We brought people in [current school board members] and said that we want them to make choices with the best information. It's not time to change what's going on, but maybe re-evaluate over the holiday based on information we have and what's going on then.

- **KD:** We have improved greatly. The end of last year was a struggle, especially with special education. She agrees with virtual learning right now. Part of the plan is to be advised by the county and state health departments. We've had outbreaks in Ann Arbor. Right now, it's not ideal to return in person. Right now, we are doing the best we can do with the advice given. She is all for moving to hybrid when it is safe.
- **JG:** This was the hardest problem he has had on the school board, but it's also the hardest problem we've faced as a society. It's a lose-lose proposition. It's really hard to hear stories from parents. He wants to find a way to make things better. But we are also faced with public health issues. He was having conversations with Dr. Swift a month ago as things were trending down to send the youngest kids back to school. The school board has made the metrics more flexible, and now cases are rising. He voted for those metrics. He is constantly looking at the research and talking with people in the community to see the basis for good choices.
- **JJ:** If she was asked this question a few weeks ago, the answer would have been different. She talked to a doctor about this, and it was a real and difficult conversation. The doctor's information, graphs, and podcast references, changed her position slightly. She agrees with starting online. However, private schools are open, strip clubs are open, bars are open, restaurants are open, but our schools aren't open. She had compared this virus to AIDS at the outset. Kids with IEPs and 504s need to be back in school. Get the kids who need help the most back in school.
- **MK:** She agrees as a scientist that a virtual start was right. The school board or Ann Arbor Public Schools should be more transparent. Some schools are around 63 years old. A few schools will be 100 years old. Airflow systems haven't been kept up. The ability to have clean safe spaces is hindered because schools are old. We need to bring teachers back safely. How do we execute protocols that safely ensure everyone at school is safe? Children are the most vulnerable population in research. Why do we want to bring children back given that the metrics are based on how we isolated kids so quickly in March. We need to educate parent population so they understand this.
- **EQ:** He doesn't believe we should return to school until at least the end of December. He agrees with the metrics the school board approved. He would like more clarification as a parent about when we go back to school, what happens when students don't follow safety protocols? When teachers turn around students will remove masks. What do we do then? We need to make sure plans

are followed. He thinks that when the school board meets face to face, one would be prone to think that students can meet face to face. We need modeling – when adults meet, why isn't it safe for students?

- **AS:** She thinks that the original plan was solid. There were a lot of pieces that had her eager to start school year. She loves idea of connections plus. She loves idea of Wednesday and Saturday Rec & Ed enrichments. But here we are stuck in a pre-phase that we can't get out of, and it troubles her. Families are in trauma and this is unsustainable. Staff are feeling that way too. As a culture, we are struggling with masks and distancing. It's the whole culture, not just kids. This needs to be addressed within society, not just Ann Arbor Public Schools. She wants everyone to feel confidence in the science and then it needs to be communicated very clearly.
- Anxiety and depression are increasing in the adolescent and young adult population. How will you support teachers and faculty in gaining competencies in managing these dynamics in classroom which show up as disruptive behavior and work to incorporate resilience skills and emotional health into the curriculum?
 - **EQ:** We need professional development districtwide. It has to be practical professional development, including roleplay, and not all theoretical. It has been helpful in dealing with student behavior that is representative of something else. The other side of the question has to do with justice when a student acts out, what is appropriate disciplinary action. This is localized in the building, but we have to have a bigger heart and respond in a way that doesn't stop them from learning.
 - **AS:** All her kids have gone through Ann Arbor Open. They focus on social and emotional health. She doesn't know what the rest of the district is doing, but Open does it well. Peer-to-peer support and development would be a way to start.
 - **JS:** Behaviors are a form of communication. When people act out, they are trying to tell you something and gain attention. It is important to understand what the function of that behavior is. How do we create an environment in which reinforcement is something that overtakes punishment? He is not a believer in punishment. We need to provide reinforcement – attention for what we want people to do. We need to make sure teachers have those tools. We need appropriate professional development. In terms of social emotional aspects, it is important to understand why kids are doing what they are doing. If we don't understand that, how can we alleviate those issues going forward?
 - **KD:** We already have a connection with the UM depression center. Maybe they can help develop curricula to help develop teachers' skills and help teachers. Being forward and honest that this is an issue that we are facing is important. We need to listen to kids when this is happening. Trauma and depression look different on different people – we need bias training to help with this.
 - **JG:** He has been hearing from teachers how overwhelmed and overtasked they are this year with virtual technology. They are up late responding to emails. Then they get email from an administrator that says please do self-care. If they are

already overloaded, it's a bind that can't be worked out. We need to look at it systemically. What are we doing to kids? What are our expectations? Starting with our philosophy of education. We need to look at what we want kids to be as adults, look at them holistically instead of as widgets to get test scores. This is an Ann Arbor Public School issue. What do we want, how do we get there, and what are the unintended consequences? We need to look at social, emotional, and mental health aspects of kids and be responsive.

- **JJ:** Ann Arbor Open is why social learning and restorative justice are a part of her platform. Open does this very well, making kids advocates of who they are. We need to train teachers and faculty on this. We should provide professional development and bias training. It's not just about color, but also about religious bias, disability bias, etc. The point is to figure out our biases to address them. We all have biases. If you're not aware of a problem, how can you address it?
- **MK:** This problem was around before. Kids being asked to do more, compete at higher levels. We are seeing a different ability for children to react to this, and we realize we haven't trained them for resilience or social-emotional health. There are differences in how schools address this across the district. If Ann Arbor Open has a great program, why is this not distributed across the district? By not instilling this in the children at a young age (how to be ok with emotions, conflict management, resolve issues), we get high levels of conflict like in the world today. We need to acknowledge it, find training for programs that work well with kids, and bring to all schools in Ann Arbor Public Schools.
- **Community involvement:** what do you see as the appropriate roles for parents and the broader community in local school policy development and implementation?
 - **JJ:** She believes it takes a village. It takes an entire community to raise and help empower a child. It's all of our responsibility. Schools are a huge part of our village. All of us have to have a seat at the table. We need to ask parents in more. Surveys are ok, but what about a conversation? What about a real interaction? Instead of asking about what you think you need to know in a survey, the district should ask about parent and community concerns. Give everyone the opportunity to express their views and then actively listen and do something about it.
 - **MK:** A part of this is using PTOs. We find that it's the same group of people coming to the table because some of it is out of people's reaches. We need to go into the community and engage more parents across the district using local resources, for example, partnerships with UM. UM is an untapped resource in the district. We need to partner with different groups to build policies and understand the research behind policy development issues. We should look to community members. We can use retired parents or grandparents or other people who want to give back to community. Our schools are within the community and need to be treated as such.
 - **EQ:** It's not about what your school district can do for you, it's about what you can do for your school district. If you are the kind of person who can contribute, make space and find a way to do that. We need to think about policy as a

working policy, not be so rigid. We need to be flexible with implementation. It won't always come out the way we envision it. Once we sign off on something we need flexibility. People don't always know how to get involved. Parents should reach out to other parents if they want to become active but don't know how. It's hard getting parents to commit time. If you want to be involved, you need to find a way.

- **AS:** We know that community involvement is necessary for strong students. Parents help in classrooms, but when it comes to policy, there is room for parents as well. She mentioned a triangle of education: students, school community, home community. All sides in between need to be strong. We have to be able to rely on all of those sides. She sat on the assessment advisory committee. Those committees need to be strengthened and need a stronger voice. There is more oversight from community when those groups are formed. It has to be about creating trust and trusting people on committees to have a voice in overseeing policy.
- **JS:** Parent involvement is the linchpin of student success. Parents are foundational to students. They set expectations and hold their children to the expectation. Parents know their kids the best. We have problems finding volunteers. We need to make parents feel more a part of the process and that they are wanted as a part of the process. We need to make sure that parents are involved in the process. Parents are consumers of education, not the kids. Parents are the ones who are deciding where to go to school, what resources kids need, where they get help, etc. We need an active talk. Get in a room and figure this out.
- **KD:** Nothing happens in a silo; all things are connected. We must involve parents in the name of collaboration. We must equally value different perspectives (social and racial). We must show up and hear what parents are saying. Are school board members going to events organized by parents? If they are going, they must apply what they have heard from parents. She mentioned that some of these meetings happen after hours or on weekends. As trustees, we must show up at weekend meetings at locations within the district. This helps with implementation because we can think of how it applies to parents and students when it goes into place.
- **JG:** Parents right now probably feel they have no power, especially those who want kids back in school. The administration sets up advisory groups but this is often an exercise in futility. There are few examples where parents have had power and the school board has had power: 1. When there was a push to have a transgender policy. Dr. Swift felt that the existing model of addressing this on a case-by-case basis was fine, but the school board and parents felt that the district needed a policy. Dr. Swift formed a committee and a policy was developed. 2. He described an example involving Pattengill that I missed, but parent involvement made policy happen was the gist of the example.
- How do you view the role of trustee with respect to your obligation to hold the school administration accountable to those obligations of special education?

- **JG:** Special education services have been a sore point in the community for a long time. We expected some improvement with the new executive director, and the school board received a draft copy of Hanover report. COVID-19 put things on pause, but apart from that, the school board has not received a clear enough picture from the administration for where we are going, how we are getting there, and how we meet the legal obligations. We hear lots of platitudes and promises. As school board members, we are advocates and are responsible for making it happen.
- **JJ:** The buck stops with the trustees. We can easily say that Dr. Swift did this or that, but who is her boss? The school board is responsible for checking the administration on it. If special education is a priority, then you are going to make sure you will know about it. Don't blindly go by what the superintendent tells you isn't wise. She gave examples from other professions about supervisors not blindly doing what their subordinates said. Parent involvement is awesome, but all parents can't do that. A whole new perspective needs to be added to the conversation. We need to find a way to help those who literally can't be involved due to constraints.
- **MK:** She said that she is not a subject matter expert in this field, but like everything, it's about educating herself, learning, and understanding the parameters and factors that affect special education. The school board creates policy that directs the district. The school board needs to hold the district accountable. The school board needs to listen to parents and families and teachers and create metrics that are manageable but can also gauge that things are moving in the right direction. The school board must review the metrics and the performance of the district against metrics to make sure that we are producing what parents want. There needs to be more communication back to parents about metrics and the reasons for decisions in regard to special education.
- **EQ:** About special education in general: not one size fits all. One of the biggest problems is making sure that policy can be adaptable to every student. We need to make it easy for people to do the job they are trained to do. You need to give teachers and staff training and a robust policy to cover all students with a wide range of IEPs and difficulties. In terms of monitoring what the administration does, the school board needs to make sure that a platform is provided that can lead to success. Access to sources should be visible and easy.
- **AS:** These are legal responsibilities, so we need to go beyond encouraging and supporting IEPs and making sure needs are met. While campaigning, she heard a lot of stories about how needs aren't being met. Kids need to feel fully supported. If we're failing at that, we're not taking our most basic responsibilities as we should. The school board can act as an advocate to make sure that the district takes it seriously. It has been very difficult with virtual learning during COVID-19. We need to look at what's feasible. The most important things to provide are tools and time and talk/conversation between pieces of triangle.

- **JS:** The law tells parents that it's the school's responsibility to teach to your child regardless of disability. The rest gets put on the parent a lot. What accommodations will we put in place for outside of schools? This is not taken into consideration. Parents are struggling right now. Who do we hold accountable? As a board member, he would be willing to hold accountable the superintendent and SISS director who are not meeting needs of students.
- **KD:** She thinks it is up to the trustees to work with parents and not on behalf of people. Parents are the ultimate advocates for their children. She would like for board members to know what a manifestation determination review is, what a behavioral inhibition plan is. We need to see these as symptoms that are being managed and not flaws. Trustees need to know about special education services. It's important to be educated on the special education system.
- **Budget:** As a board member, where would you look to make budget cuts? What order of priority would you put your choices?
 - **AS:** She started out talking about the overreliance on standardized testing instead. It's a corporate opportunity to make money off of our students. Assessment is important, and goal setting is important. When we over-rely on standardized tests, it sets us off our goals. There is a lot of cost related to it, not only with our financial budget, but also how we prioritize learning. It is important to see who needs supports, but we overuse standardized tests in the district. She would like to look at in the budget.
 - **JS:** Budgeting is a process. We must look at the overall budget and priorities and then order priorities to make sure we are funding all we need to prioritize student success. We need more dollars in classroom. Cuts can be made in Balas. They have a lot of money in Balas that can be transitioned into classrooms. He gave lots of examples of the large administration. The number one priority is student success.
 - **KD:** A big part of being on the school board is collaborating to hear everyone's voices as to what to cut. She feels need to prioritize supports for special education and to strengthen other programs for anxiety and depression. The budget is collaborative effort. She looks forward to working with school board members to make adjustments needed to implement a culturally responsive curriculum.
 - **JG:** He also voiced concerns about standardized testing. There are some things that we can do, but some is state mandated. Will Ann Arbor go out on limb and defy regulations? Balas is an issue, but not as much as we think it is. He has looked, and there are not that many staff. He argued against the high salary for an administrator and was told that the administrator needs the high pay because they have to work evenings. He feels that this is an insult to teachers. We can't cut athletics because we will lose student to other districts. It's hard. Staffing/personnel is the highest expense, and we have to engage in good faith negotiations with unions and respect the representation of teachers and work on budget issues that way.

- **JJ:** The way money is divided, we have specific ways that we can spend money. This has to be taken into consideration. As a candidate, she said that she has not seen the budget. If you go line by line, you'll find some money. She said that you have to go line by line, but it's hard work that she's willing to do. The first priority is the kids. In ideal world, she will do social-emotional training and bias training. Money will go to anything to build up the kids.
- **MK:** We need to support and protect teachers. Children remember their teachers but not necessarily all the extras. The focus should be on the core curriculum. We should focus on and listen to teachers to build an engaging curriculum and build tools into the budget. Some money is allocated for certain needs. Getting a billion-dollar bond should relieve the general fund to support school improvements. We can partner with <l missed it, but she mentioned some county program>. Some of Ann Arbor's tax money goes to public schools in the county that are not in the district. We need to work with the state to change structure of school funding so that we can use all of our tax money in Ann Arbor.
- **EQ:** He agrees that standardized tests are expensive and that we should try to get rid of them. We should put money in the classroom. We should stand in defiance of regulations that the state put in to take standardized tests. We should work in collaboration with unions for fair pay. He will cut administration. He will cut unnecessary conference travel, nonessential memberships, and support staff. When we spend money, we should be able to say it directly affects student learning, and if we can't do that, we have a problem. There is money in the budget. It takes work to find, and we need to make tough decisions.
- Close of meeting:
 - Please vote. All down-ballot votes are important and have the greatest impact on our community.
 - The PTOC was overwhelmed with the number of questions. All questions were shared with the candidates, so if they choose, they can post answers to their own websites and their own social media. For information on the candidates, visit PTOC website: <https://www.a2schools.org/Page/16801>.