

Washington's Paramount Duty Candidate Questionnaire - 2018

Washington's Paramount Duty is a group of parents, teachers, and community members who fight to ensure our state's public schools are fully and equitably funded. We are asking all candidates for the state legislature in 2018, regardless of party, to respond to the following questionnaire. These responses will be made public and shared with our more than 7,000 members across the state.

There are 12 short questions below. You must give an answer for the questions themselves, and following each question is space for you to expand on your yes/no/maybe answers should you wish to do so. We will publish those additional comments along with your answers to the questions themselves.

Email address *

claus.joens@protonmail.com

Candidate Name

Claus Joens

1) Do you believe our public schools are amply funded right now, as is required by the state constitution? *

Yes

No

Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 1)

\$1 Billion from the public works trust was raided to fund education, and educational definitions were changed to make it look fully funded. We need to close corporate loopholes to fully fund state government or these funding improvements could be raided themselves when the economy slows down.

2) Will you vote for new, progressive revenues to sustainably fund our public schools? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 2)

I agree with new revenues but not further increases in property and other taxes to pay for them. All you are doing is covering up and subsidizing the tax loopholes for big business. Close the tax loopholes to raise the money.

3) Will you vote for these specific revenues? *

- Capital gains tax
- Closing corporate tax loopholes
- Other:

(Additional comments for question 3)

Perhaps also a capital gains tax depending on how it is structured.

4) Will you vote to prevent \$1.1 billion in school cuts caused by the January 1, 2019 levy cliff? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 4)

I agree with your problem statement, and I agree to remove the levy cliff for any school district at or above the state average free and reduced lunch rate (as a measure of poverty). I want to see more of the math for other school districts before I commit further.

5) Will you vote to change the 2017 education funding deal (HB 2242) and add more funding to eliminate inequities between districts as well as ensure districts have the money they actually need to give every child a great education? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 5)

I completely agree with the premise here but the devil is in the details. I need a closer look at how the inequities would be resolved, as opposed to do the inequities need to be resolved, which of course they do.

6) Will you vote to fully implement Initiative 1351, which creates smaller class sizes and increases in counselors, nurses, teaching assistants, librarians, and social workers, and in particular, with additional class-size reductions and staffing increases in high-poverty schools? More info:

<http://leg.wa.gov/House/Committees/OPRGeneral/Documents/2014/I-1351Summary.pdf> *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 6)

Again I completely agree with the premise and want to review how we will fund each bill before I vote for it. I am not a fan of making commitments today and worrying how I am going to keep them tomorrow. We cannot keep raising taxes on working families because big business does not want to pay their fair share.

7) An OSPI survey of school districts found state funding for special education remains more than \$100 million short after the 2018 legislative session. Will you vote to fully fund special education? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 7)

Again I completely agree with the premise and want to review how we will fund each bill before I vote for it. I am not a fan of making commitments today and worrying how I am going to keep them tomorrow. We cannot keep raising taxes on working families because big business does not want to pay their fair share.

8) Would you support financial incentives to reduce school segregation (racial and economic)? *

- Yes (explain below what incentives you would support)
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 8)

Having to ask this question should be an embarrassment. There is no excuse for segregation in a democratic capitalist society. Charter schools have created some of this when they were established at the expense of public schools. I have a real problem using tax dollars to bribe Americans not to be racist or elitists.

9) Do you support a simple majority for school bonds and school levies? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 9)

Local taxpayers should have the same rules as large corporations who go down to Olympia to receive massive tax cuts without the approval of the taxpayers who are expected to fund them. Both should be established by a simple majority, and not established at all without a vote of the taxpayers who fund them.

10) Do you support school vouchers or other programs that allow public funding to follow a student to a private and/or charter school? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 10)

Talk with school superintendents who are responsible for improving the programs to keep students from leaving, then denied the funds to actually improve the same programs. The state should also cease all end of course examinations if the state is unwilling to hold back and support those students who do not pass them.

11) Will you vote against giving public money to charter schools or programs housed within charter schools? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 11)

As long as those charter schools are competing with public schools and not just focused charter schools such as engineering, Arts, or STEM.

12) Will you vote to raise the cap on allowable charter schools? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 12)

Let me be completely clear. When public schools are fully funded, we can start playing with charter schools. Until then, don't waste my time. When rich people had to send their kids to the same schools as everybody else sent their kids, school funding was never an issue.

Anything else you want to add about fully funding public education in Washington State?

Research at the University of Chicago strongly suggests that standardized testing is not adding value, is not a better predictor of academic or career success than GPA and attendance rates, and may actually adversely affect the poor. The AG should file suit for the federal government to either prove their case or stop reducing class time to replace it with standardized testing.

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire! Washington's Paramount Duty will let you know when we will be publishing these responses. Questions? Please email us at info@paramountduty.org.

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