

# 2013 SCHOOL BOARD VOTER GUIDE

*Albemarle County & City of Charlottesville*

ALBEMARLE  
*Jack Jouett District*



*Katherine  
"Kate" Acuff*

ALBEMARLE  
*Rio District*



*Pamela R.  
Moynihan*

ALBEMARLE  
*Samuel Miller District*



*Eric  
Strucko*

CHARLOTTESVILLE



*Edmund R.  
"Ned" Michie*

CHARLOTTESVILLE



*Leah W.  
Puryear*

CHARLOTTESVILLE



*Juandiego  
Riccardo Wade*

*One candidate is running for each available district seat (no contested races)*

*Three candidates are running for three available seats (no contested races)*

## VOTE ON TUESDAY NOVEMBER 5

This 2013 School Board Voter Guide has been co-produced by Charlottesville Tomorrow, the League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area and C-VILLE Weekly. It is intended to help residents make an informed vote on key quality of life issues in Charlottesville-Albemarle.

Charlottesville Tomorrow's website includes the complete audio and written transcripts of our interview with each candidate. The interviews were used in the compilation of the voter guide and each candidate was given an opportunity to review their verbatim responses before publishing.

Neither Charlottesville Tomorrow nor the League of Women Voters endorses candidates or make contributions to political campaigns at any level.

Charlottesville Tomorrow, a non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization, is a community news platform covering growth, development, public education, and local politics. We connect you to vital information for making informed choices about our community's future.

*Questions about Charlottesville Tomorrow and this Voter Guide may be directed to Brian Wheeler, Executive Director • [bwheeler@cvilletomorrow.org](mailto:bwheeler@cvilletomorrow.org) • 434-260-1533*



League of Women  
Voters of the  
Charlottesville Area



# Yes, Virginia, there IS an election.

**BE PREPARED TO VOTE ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5th  
POLLS OPEN FROM 6 A.M. TO 7 P.M.**

**GENERAL ELECTION REGISTRATION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 15**

## **VOTE411.ORG GIVES VOTERS THE TOOLS TO BE PREPARED FOR ELECTION DAY:**

- Deadlines
- Eligibility Rules
- How to Vote Absentee
- Polling Place Hours and Locations
- State Candidate and Ballot Information

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE  
FOUND AT [WWW.VOTE.VIRGINIA.GOV](http://WWW.VOTE.VIRGINIA.GOV)**

## **ABSENTEE VOTING BY MAIL**

Absentee ballot application must be received by 5 P.M. on October 29.

Absentee ballot must be received by your local Office of Elections by 7 P.M. November 5

## **ABSENTEE VOTING IN PERSON**

For locations, days, and times contact your local Office of Elections.

**Albemarle County Registrar** (434) 972-4173

**City of Charlottesville Registrar** (434) 970-3250

In-person voting absentee ends at 5P.M., November 2.

## **IDENTIFICATION AT THE POLLS**

Voters may use one of the following types of identification:

- Voter ID card
- Valid Virginia driver's license
- Military ID
- Any federal, Virginia state or local government-issued ID card
- Valid student ID issued by higher education institution in VA
- Valid employer-issued ID card
- Concealed handgun permit
- Current utility bill, bank statement, government check, or paycheck showing voter's name and address
- Social security card

*Voters without ID can cast a provisional ballot, but will need to send identification to their Elections Office by noon, Friday, November 8.*



# 2013 SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE PROFILES

In some cases, the candidates' responses have been abbreviated in this Voter Guide. Their complete responses, as well as answers to additional questions, can be found on the Charlottesville Tomorrow website. Additional topics in our interviews included

- Teacher quality
- Achievement gap
- Developer proffers to pay for infrastructure
- City-county relations
- Plans for a future high school
- Student engagement

## WHAT DO SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS DO?

School Board members hire and supervise the school division's Superintendent, set the budget, and make school policy. In Virginia, school boards do not have taxing authority and elections are non-partisan.

Charlottesville Tomorrow's website ([www.cvilletomorrow.org/elections](http://www.cvilletomorrow.org/elections)) features comprehensive coverage of the local elections including news, candidate interview transcripts, audio recordings of the candidate forums, and downloadable copies of this Voter Guide.

The League of Women Voters website ([lww.avenue.org](http://lww.avenue.org)) also features information on Charlottesville's Commissioner of Revenue election.

## ALBEMARLE JACK JOUETT DISTRICT

### Katherine "Kate" Acuff

My background is in law, science, health and public policy. I have worked in the private and public sectors and now consult, primarily with not-for-profits.



I have long been interested in education, particularly in science education. My father taught science in public schools for forty years. I am a product of public schools as is my daughter. Both of my granddaughters attend public schools. I believe promoting a first rate public education is the most important thing local government does--not only for launching good citizens but for ensuring the strength of our workforce and economy.

**EDUCATION:** B.S. Microbiology, University of Tulsa; M.S. Microbiology & Immunology, University of Colorado; Ph.D. & M.P.H. Public Health, Public Policy and Management, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health; J.D., Georgetown University Law School.

**OCCUPATION:** Health Policy Consultant

**PREVIOUS POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** Have volunteered in many elections at the federal, state and local levels; Currently, I am in the University of Virginia's Sorensen Institute's Political Leadership Program

**AGE ON ELECTION DAY:** 62

**NEIGHBORHOOD OR AREA OF RESIDENCE:** Ivy Farm neighborhood

**FAMILY:** Husband, Edward D. Hess, Professor, UVA's Darden School of Business and Batten Institute Executive in Residence; Daughter, Jen Jenacova, and two granddaughters, Sarah Jenacova, aged 10, and Caroline Jenacova, aged 7

#### **OTHER INTERESTS AND EXPERIENCES:**

- Public Board Member, University of Virginia Physicians Group
- Board Member, Vice President, Mental Health America—Charlottesville/Albemarle
- Steering and Finance Committees, Charlottesville's Community Mental Health and Wellness Coalition
- Thomas Jefferson District Public Health Department's Working Group on Pregnancy Outcomes
- Consultant and Working Group Member, Virginia Supreme Court's Commission on Mental Health Law Reform
- Consultant to The Carter Center's Mental Health Program
- Adjunct Assistant Professor, Emory University's School of Public Health
- Vice President of Policy and Education, National Public Health and Hospitals Institute
- Consultant DHHS, Office on Women's Health
- Attorney and Policy Advisor, District of Columbia's Medical Assistance Administration

**Telephone: (434) 979-6333**

## ALBEMARLE RIO DISTRICT

### Pamela R. Moynihan Incumbent

Pamela R. Moynihan holds a B.A. in Political Science, Magna cum Laude, from Long Island University-C.W.



Post College, and an M.A. in Diplomacy from Norwich University. A retired U.S. Army officer; she is a senior analyst at the NGIC. Pamela has served on the Albemarle County School Board for twelve years and was Vice-Chair from 2005-2007. She also serves on the Charlottesville—Albemarle Technical Education Center Board. Pamela and her husband Sean have two children, Jennifer and Brian, both of whom are graduates of the Albemarle County Public Schools. The Moynihan's live in Earlysville.

**EDUCATION:** B.A. in Political Science, Magna cum Laude, Long Island University-C.W. Post College. M.A. in Diplomacy, Norwich University.

**OCCUPATION:** Senior Analyst, National Ground Intelligence Center

#### **PREVIOUS POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:**

Albemarle County School Board Member, Rio District 2002-Present

**AGE ON ELECTION DAY:** 55

#### **NEIGHBORHOOD OR AREA OF RESIDENCE:**

Earlysville, Loftlands Woods subdivision

**FAMILY:** Husband, Sean J. Moynihan; Daughter, Jennifer L. Moynihan; Son, Brian J. Moynihan

#### **OTHER INTERESTS AND EXPERIENCES:**

Retired: U.S. Army Officer

**Telephone: (434) 973-4464**

**4 ALBEMARLE  
SAMUEL MILLER  
DISTRICT**

**Eric Strucko**  
*Incumbent*



I have dedicated myself to life-long learning, particularly as I fulfill professional responsibilities and engage in civic work. These values guided my efforts during the last four years as I served on the Albemarle County School Board. I tried to represent the views of parents, students, and teachers and meet their high standards and expectations of educational excellence. I plan to continue this work with transparency, honesty, and energy. I also commit to improving public accessibility to School Board proceedings, and to staying involved at the school level on issues that warrant the attention of elected officials.

**EDUCATION:**

- A.A., Piedmont Virginia Community College (2007)
- B.A., Vanderbilt University (1987)
- M.P.A., George Washington University (1992)
- M.P.P., Georgetown University (1995)
- M.P.H., University of Virginia (2012)
- Ph.D. Candidate (ABD), Virginia Commonwealth University

**OCCUPATION:** Chief Financial Officer, University of Virginia Physicians Group

**PREVIOUS POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** Incumbent School Board Member; Albemarle County Planning Commission

**AGE ON ELECTION DAY:** 48

**NEIGHBORHOOD OR AREA OF RESIDENCE:** Ivy

**FAMILY:** Wife: Laurie Strucko; Son: David Strucko, age 15, sophomore at Western Albemarle High School; Daughter: Claire Strucko, age 11, 6th grader, Henley Middle School.

**OTHER INTERESTS AND EXPERIENCES:**

**Selected Professional:**

- Vice President and Director of Financial Planning, CFA Institute (1999-2007).
- Manager of Finance and Director of Budget, University of Virginia Medical Center (1995-1999).

**Selected Civic:**

- Albemarle County Planning Commission (2006-2009)
- Albemarle County Public Schools Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (2006-2009)
- Meriwether Lewis Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization (2003-2007)
- Miller School of Albemarle Board of Trustees (2002-2005)
- Free Union Country School Board of Trustees (2000-2005)

**Selected Community Service:**

- Western Albemarle Rescue Squad Paramedic and Treasurer (2002-2008)
- Earlysville Volunteer Fire Company Firefighter, President, Treasurer (2000-2005)
- Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce, Government Affairs Committee (2000-2005)

**Telephone: (434) 973-3815**

**CHARLOTTESVILLE**

**Edmund R. "Ned" Michie**  
*Incumbent*



After City Council first appointed me in 2004 to the School Board, I then was fortunate enough to be elected to the Board twice by the citizens of Charlottesville. I have decided to run for one more term because, although we have made remarkable strides as a division in the last several years through the hard work of staff and the excellent leadership of Dr. Atkins, I would enjoy continuing to help address the ongoing challenges (e.g., persistent achievement gaps, new state/federal demands, decreased state funding, and moving toward the planned reconfiguration that includes upgrading our 47-year-old middle school).

**EDUCATION:** Charlottesville Public Schools: Greenbrier; Jefferson; Walker; CHS class of 1978; Denison University, B.A. cum laude, 1982; University of Richmond, J.D., 1985

**OCCUPATION:** Attorney with private practice in Charlottesville (1985 - present)

**PREVIOUS POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:** Charlottesville school board member from July 2004 to present; Chairperson during 2008-2010, 2012

**AGE ON ELECTION DAY:** 53

**NEIGHBORHOOD OR AREA OF RESIDENCE:** Greenbrier

**FAMILY:** Wife: Karen; married 1990; Daughter: Molly, CHS -- 2010 graduate

**OTHER INTERESTS AND EXPERIENCES:** Time with family, playing basketball, tennis, hiking. Piedmont Housing Alliance (PHA) committees, 1997 – present; Greenbrier Neighborhood Association, President, 2002-2008 and Executive Committee mid 1990's –present; Board of Rivanna Trails Foundation, June 2004 – present.

**Telephone: (434) 296-1198**

## CHARLOTTESVILLE

### Leah W. Puryear *Incumbent*

I have decided to seek a third term on the Charlottesville City School Board because I feel there are still several issues that our Board continues to move forward, that I feel passionate about, and that I would like to contribute to their continuation. They are the expansion of our three year old program, the reconfiguration of our schools and the renovation of Buford Middle School. The African-American student graduation and college going rates continue to improve as well. All of these issues strengthen not only our students but our community as well.

#### **EDUCATION:**

B.A., Hampton Institute, M.A., University of the District of Columbia

**OCCUPATION:** Education Administration

#### **PREVIOUS POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:**

Charlottesville City School Board

**AGE ON ELECTION DAY:** 60

**NEIGHBORHOOD OR AREA OF RESIDENCE:** Greenbrier

**FAMILY:** Alysha Corbin and Eugene Puryear

#### **OTHER INTERESTS AND EXPERIENCES:**

Reading, listening to jazz, active member of Trinity Episcopal Church

**Telephone: (434) 964-1275**



## CHARLOTTESVILLE

### Juandiego Riccardo Wade *Incumbent*

I am running for the Charlottesville School Board because I truly believe in our motto of personal and academic success, "excellence for every child".

#### **EDUCATION:**

B.A. Urban Planning, Norfolk State University; M.A. Urban Environmental Planning, University of Virginia

**OCCUPATION:** Career Counselor for Albemarle County

#### **PREVIOUS POLITICAL EXPERIENCE:**

Served on the Charlottesville School Board since 2006

**AGE ON ELECTION DAY:** 47

**NEIGHBORHOOD OR AREA OF RESIDENCE:** Locust Grove

**FAMILY:** Married 1993. Daughter.

#### **OTHER INTERESTS AND EXPERIENCES:**

Crochet, watching football, volunteering

**Telephone: (434) 293-7432**



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**Please describe your past experience that qualifies you to be on the school board. (asked of candidates in both jurisdictions)**

**ALBEMARLE**

**Kate Acuff (Jack Jouett)**

By statue, as you know, all that is required is that I am a resident, which I, of course, am. But beyond that I have professional training, experience, and skills in a variety of areas. I have a background in law and in policy, and I think that will help me add value to the board in untangling the mix of federal, state, and local policies, statues, regulations and ordinances that affect everything we do with our kids, whether we're transporting them, we're protecting their heads in football practice, we're feeding them, etc.

I also have graduate degrees and experience in both science and public health, both of which the County has endorsed in terms of developing 3 different academies at the high schools, whether it's the Health and Medical Sciences Academy at Monticello, MESA at Albemarle, or the up-and-coming Environmental Sciences at Western. I'm very interested in all of those, and those subject areas have all been identified as areas of job growth, so I'm really interested in that....I also worked in the public interest area for many years. I have collaborated across disciplines and agencies, and public and private, and I think those skills could possibly be useful.

**Pamela R. Moynihan (Rio)**

My past experience that qualifies me to be on the Albemarle County School Board is a history of incumbency going back to 2001. This is my 12th year on the School Board, and I'm ending my 3rd term. I've had children in the schools. My children are both grown, but they were graduates of Albemarle High School,

so I'm very familiar with the County schools and the County School Board. I've lived in Albemarle County since 1995. While that's not a 195-year resident, I feel that I've lived here to see a lot of the growth that has occurred, and a lot of the changes that have occurred in Albemarle County since the late 90s.

I've lived through some very good budget times, and I've lived through some very bad budget times, so I feel I have a very good perspective as to how the budget has been going, and to what we've done in the County schools, whether it be through good times or bad times. And I think I can look at both of those times and learn from them and bring that experience and knowledge, as I have been doing, to the County School Board.

**Eric Strucko (Samuel Miller)**

I am an incumbent. I have served on the school board for the last four years and that is valuable experience that offers me insight into how the board operates and gives me an ability to really figure out ways to push issues through the board and how to trigger discussions.

I have also had time and experience on other school boards in Albemarle County. In 2002, Governor Mark Warner appointed me to the Miller School of Albemarle Board of Trustees. I served there for 3 years. I was also on the board of the Free Union Country School for 5 years and served as their treasurer. I was on the County's Long Range Planning Advisory Committee for three years. So that's the list of my board experience.

In terms of personal qualifications, I am in the process of completing my sixth academic degree. So education is an important part of my everyday life, not just through board service, but through my own experiences.

Most importantly, I am the parent of 2 Albemarle County Public School students, my daughter Claire is 11 years old and she is a sixth grader at Henley Middle School and my son David is 15 and he is a

sophomore at Western Albemarle High School.

**CHARLOTTESVILLE**  
**Ned Michie**

Well I've been on the School Board for about nine years, so I think that qualifies me, but prior to being on the School Board I was an active parent volunteer on the PTOs, PTO president of the elementary school, then on the PTO Council, which has one representative from each school and I did that for a number of years. I was on the QUEST Advisory Board as a parent and just generally involved as a parent. I've also been involved in a number of boards in the City, both prior to and currently, I'm on the Rivanna Trails Board and have been for a number of years now. I'm also involved with boards and committees with the Piedmont Housing Alliance and those kinds of experiences help me know how to be a good board [member].

**Leah W. Puryear**

Well this is my third run for a seat on the City School Board. I feel that with my prior experience, I have knowledge of our students, their abilities, things that need to be improved. I understand the workings of our school budget and all the things that go into compiling a budget and making it efficient and effective, not only for the students but for everyone; particularly those people in the City of Charlottesville who are all of our citizens who are responsible for a large portion of the funding of the school division. And we must be good stewards of the funds; and with less and less money, and with more and more requirements; I feel that people with that knowledge and that background make them suited for the position.

As director of Upward Bound at the University of Virginia one of our major goals is college access, so we are preparing students to graduate from high school on time and to go to college. So these skills and knowledge also transfer to my position on the school board.

**Juandiego Wade**

I am qualified because I care. I

care about children and education from a deeper background. My father was a public education teacher in Richmond Public Schools for nearly forty years. I was raised with five brothers and sisters and education was part of my life.

I didn't know that I wanted to get into this aspect of education. When I decided to make Charlottesville my home, through my fraternity we were involved with a mentoring program where we took a group of young boys from Walker Upper Elementary School starting in the fifth grade, and we followed this group of young men all the way through their graduation. Through that process, working with these same young boys I saw a lot of things that I felt could be changed in the education process. In 2006 when they graduated the election of school board started. I thought that was an opportunity for me to have a different or deeper impact on the education process.

What qualifies me is mainly I care. I have a deep passion for education and children.

**What is your top priority for action by the school board during the next 4 years? (asked of candidates in both jurisdictions)**

**ALBEMARLE**

**Kate Acuff (Jack Jouett)**

I think pre-K is one. Strengthening the quality of pre-K and broadening enrollment, at least to all at-risk kids, and perhaps even more broadly. I think it's critical to addressing the achievement gap and getting kids ready for school.

The second area is in the area of world languages. I know I'm not alone in thinking that is important. But strengthening that and bringing that down to elementary school level. The science is clear that kids learn languages more easily at earlier ages, so waiting until

they're a sophomore in high school to start taking Spanish doesn't make sense. And I think there's a lot of cognitive benefits beyond language acquisition that have been identified. So those would be the two areas.

### **Pamela R. Moynihan (Rio)**

Some of the things that I first ran for the School Board for were, for instance, excellence in arts, music, and theater education. I think we've come a long way with that, and I think that all of our schools have improved their arts, music, and theater programs. And it's still a priority, and I intend as long as I'm on the School Board to continue to make the arts, music, theater, and drama a priority....

I think we need to continue to find ways to [differentiate] instruction to the individual student. Nowadays students are very focused on learning with technology, but at the same time I think it's very important that we ensure that our teaching staff continue to know and monitor the strengths and weaknesses of every student, because only then can we make the lowest performers achieve. And we need to have individualized education as much as we possibly can. It's not always possible, but it's one of my goals, to try to make it so that we can sort of individualize the education to the students.

And another priority is even though we have bad budget times, it's still a concern for me to make sure that we're doing things with fiscal accountability in mind. That's always one of those things that's kind of been near and dear to my heart, both in good times and in bad times. I think we've been doing very well over the last couple of years....

Also, I...want to continue to see what we're doing with the magnet and the STEM schools. While I think that music, art, and theater are important, I think it's important that we develop good mathematicians, engineers, and scientists. We really need that, and we especially need that with the young women that we have going through school nowadays....

### **Eric Strucko (Samuel Miller)**

Selecting a single top priority is difficult. My experience the last 4 years on the board has demonstrated to me that issues do emerge that you do not anticipate and you have to move quickly to re-prioritize what you think you are going to be doing.

I have a general overarching priority, and that is to be an active representative to serve as an active representative of a constituency here in Albemarle County that really has high expectations and high demands for the public school system. I believe the people that I represent really expect Albemarle County Public Schools to meet the highest standards with regard to instruction, curriculum, classroom opportunities and the way the schools are run. That's my goal for the next 4 years.

There are particular things that I want to focus on. I want to make sure that Yancey Elementary School has a future here and continues to serve the Esmont community. That the education climate improves at Walton Middle School. That we really understand the impact of changing the high school scheduling [to an 8 period day] that we did a few years ago on how the students perform including the admission rates into the top colleges and universities in the country. And I want to start laying down strong plans for the future demands of Henley Middle School and Western Albemarle High School. I think the physical buildings there will start reaching capacity quickly if projections play out and I'd like to have a solid plan in place for those two institutions.

### **CHARLOTTESVILLE Ned Michie**

I think we're on a strong course, we have strong leadership in the schools with Dr. Atkins, she's really transformed the schools under her leadership and so the number one priority is to continue to be supportive of her excellent leadership. But within that, I certainly want us to continue to focus on things that I think are

going to make the biggest difference in consultation with Dr. Atkins and her team and other Board members, but all the research suggests that teaching quality is the most important factor in making a difference in achievement, and so I want us to continue to focus on improving teacher quality....

Our professional development program has greatly improved over the years under Dr. Atkins leadership, but I continue to wonder what more we can do, maybe turning to a coaching model than a seminar model, so continuing to work on that is a priority.

I think that Charlottesville has been a leader in the state in early-childhood education, we have five, we're up to five preschool classes. These are locally-funded preschool classes, and all the studies suggest that money is well-spent at the preschool age so most, our four-year-old classes serve most at-risk kids we believe in our community, and that's state funded. But the three-year-old classes are what we've added and what we're paying for locally and it's an expensive thing to do....We've been through a time of tough recessions and have not been able to expand the program for the last several years, but I'd like to see us look for opportunities to expand that in the coming years as hopefully budgets start to turn around during the economic recovery.

I'd like to continue to push for [grade] reconfiguration. I want to see us at least develop a plan that's a firm plan of when we're going to get to that. Or if we're not going to get to that I think we need to decide that, but I think a lot of people in the community are wondering when we're going to get to that....

### **Leah W. Puryear**

For me, my top priority is [grade] reconfiguration. We had an efficiency review that was completed when I first got on the board. We spent a lot of time doing what we call town hall meetings, neighborhood forums, talking to the people, and not only those people who

had children in school but people have a general sense and knowledge of education. And it was the consensus now, and then, that reconfiguration is something that should happen. And I feel that that would help our schools make us more efficient, make us better ready for the academic challenges ahead, and that is going to take a lot of focus, and a lot of concentration, and feel that I am up to the challenge and I really want to see that done.

### **Juandiego Wade**

I think that the top priority for Juandiego Ricardo Wade, and probably for other School Board members is to secure funding. That is primarily from the State and Federal Government. We have been blessed by the City Council who has helped us out for the last few years. But for the last 5 or 6 years we have seen a decrease in the funding we have received. Even though we have received more funding from the city; that did not compensate for all the money we did not get from State and Federal government, so we have had to cut. That has had an impact on some of the services we have to provide. What has happened is funding has decreased but mandates have increased, and that is not a good mixture. Despite all of that we are still progressing, we are still doing well in the system. If the funding could keep up with the mandates and things we really would be doing a lot better, so my top priority is to secure funding.

**What's your view of the proliferation of high stakes standardized tests? (asked of candidates in both jurisdictions)**

### **ALBEMARLE Kate Acuff (Jack Jouett)**

I recognize the desire or impulse to have some mechanism to measure student

achievement to see how well we're doing. How well we're doing within Virginia, within the county, and even internationally. I don't think we can get rid of them. I think we can continue to make them better and answer the questions that we actually have. I find it somewhat challenging in that Virginia's SOLs, although most people think that they're pretty good, they don't tell us anything about how Virginia students do compared to students in Maryland or North Carolina or Oregon, and I think that's important information.

And we have enormous costs associated with having 50 states with at least 50 different metrics that don't tell us much. We're getting a lot of pushback from business and universities and other colleges, because they don't know what scoring high on a Virginia SOL means, compared with New York kids scoring high on their test. It's hard to make sense of it, so I think we need something more than what we've got.

### **Pamela R. Moynihan (Rio)**

They've proliferated way too much. When I first came on the Board is when they first started the SOL tests, and we didn't like them then, and I don't think we like them now. I don't think there's anything we can do about it though, and that's the sad part. I think that people are so used to them now that it's almost something that people don't complain about anymore.

The Standardized tests, having them in all the grades we have them now, it puts the kids through a lot of stress that they don't need. It puts the teachers through a lot of stress that they don't need, because increasingly teachers are concerned that "If my classes don't do well on these tests, than something is going to backlash on me." So everyone is stressed out....It costs a lot of time and effort for everybody involved....

What I would like to see, and it's what we're trying to go to, is to try to create tests where the students can think analytically and creatively, and the teachers can create tests that aren't just multiple choice that

students can really think about. There are tests out there that the school division I know is looking at to see if we can perhaps replace some of these rote standardized tests with something at the end of the year that can be a measure of the ability to analyze to think creatively. I think standardized tests do not test that. We need a different test that will do that....

We don't want teachers to teach to the test, and that's what happens when you have high-stakes prioritized tests. And teachers get nervous that they aren't going to teach what's on the test. The students get nervous because they know that it's high stakes....

### **Eric Strucko (Samuel Miller)**

Like anybody who serves on the school board that has to meet state requirements or federal, the idea of standardized tests draws feelings of serious concern. We are in an era of accountability, no question about it. Organizations that serve as funding sources for the schools really want measures in place so they can see if we are using their invested dollar wisely....

I don't think we will ever get away from them, but I do think they can, if proliferated to a point where they are the focus of the curriculum in the classroom, they can be very distracting and take the learning experience away from critical learning skills like critical evaluation. We find that our students excel when the curriculum's focused there and not on answering a standardized test question accurately.

My personal belief, and I've seen this demonstrated firsthand, is a good teacher with a strong curriculum can focus the students toward critical learning skills and the standardized tests become an afterthought....

But I do have concerns that the number and the emphasis placed upon [standardized tests] is reaching a point where we have to push back. And just recently the Albemarle County School Board did just that, pushing back on the way

that accrediting bodies are looking at test scores and how they treat them....

My feeling is there's a place for them but it shouldn't be the emphasis of the curriculum or the classroom experience for our students.

### **CHARLOTTESVILLE Ned Michie**

I think that first off I want to start off with a compliment for it. I think that No Child Left Behind and the SOLs has done a very important service in that through the testing and the requirements it has shined a light on the significant number of kids who have struggled over the years and have not been succeeding in schools. I think that before those high-stakes tests were introduced that you wouldn't hear much about that....I think these tests have shown a light on the problem and made it clear that that's not acceptable, because it's not acceptable.

With that said I think there's been a lot of problems with the high-stakes testing and they continue to try to make tweaks. Virginia was given a waiver from No Child Left behind, but essentially to apply for the waiver and qualify for the waiver, you essentially have to adopt a lot of the things that are essentially part of No Child Left Behind with high-stakes testing and that sort of thing and so were still in high-stakes assessments.

I think that having one test at the end of the year be the be-all end-all is not the way to go. I think it ought to be smaller tests over the course of the year and measuring growth. There has been a lot of talk about moving towards a growth model so that we see how much kids are growing in their education. And that's not perfect either, because kids at the high end, for instance, because if they're getting A's than they don't have that much room to move. And so a high-functioning school that has really high-achieving kids may not show that much growth, so it's important to have assessments, it's important to have accountability, I do think we need to move more

towards a growth model and look for better ways to analyze, define, explain, show what schools are doing well and what schools aren't doing well. I think that these tests and the labels that get put on them as a result of these tests are really not accurate and fair....

### **Leah W. Puryear**

Standardized test are things that everyone frowns upon.... But standardized tests, believe it or not, serve a purpose.

It is a way for us to gauge how people are doing. My concern with standardized test is that we don't become so in awe of the test, that we teach to the test, and creativity and innovation goes out. So how do we take something that is very important, which may be an art lesson, but we are able to tie it to one of the measures in a social studies class, or a history class, or maybe even a math class; how to mix things together, how to measure in order to get particular colors.

And so I think that standardized tests are a way for us to see how are students are doing, but I also think it's a way for our teachers to look at how can we collaborate as a team. How can your math class help my science class? How can my science class help your English class?

I am concerned that each year, the stakes get higher. Charlottesville is an international refugee community. We have more students in our school division coming that are non-English speakers. And how we address the needs of those students, so that when it is time for them to take the test, they will perform just as well as those of us who are English speakers, and have had the advantages of knowing this system over a period of years. So I look forward to us doing those small mentoring, small tutorials and those types of things that we need to sure up our students so they feel successful when they're going into the rooms to take the test.

### **Juandiego Wade**

I am all for being held accountable, but if there is one thing

that I hear from teachers and parents is that there are too many tests.

Last year we had a community meeting at Clark Elementary school just to get out in the public, and that was the main thing they wanted. They [asked] what can we do to opt out of tests as a school system. To get that State and Federal funding, we have to [administer them].

We see these tests as a minimum standard, and we want to surpass those. At this point it is one of those evils, if you will, that we have to live with....I know when I was coming through Richmond Public Schools there was just one or two tests we had to do through our entire K-12 experience. Now it seems like we have those each year. It is just so much pressure on the kids, teachers and administrators for these high stakes tests. It's one of those things we have to live with....But we want to know where we stand, so we know what to focus on. In order to that we have to do some assessments but we are trying to reduce those as much as we can. We are giving the principals some flexibilities in that. This is just the first or second year we are doing it, so we will see the impacts of that. I'm not sure of too many people in support of these high stakes tests.

**Name one specific area of the school division's budget that you are concerned about and why. Do you think it deserves more funding or less? (asked of Albemarle candidates)**

#### ALBEMARLE

##### Kate Acuff (Jack Jouett)

I have not done a forensic examination of what has happened to the budget in the past decade. I know there's been belt-tightening in the past decade. There's been maintenance of effort for the past 4

years. And I do know that in 2009 there was a substantial cut to professional development of teachers, some of which has been restored. And I also know that reimbursement for teachers to take classes or go to conferences is really low. I don't know if there's any pegging of taking a course at UVA, but the \$250, \$500 max a year, I'm not sure what the hourly tuition is there, but it's probably more than that.

So I don't see how we can have schools for the 21st century without teachers equipped for the 21st century, so we need to examine that. Maybe we're spending enough, I don't know. I know I've talked to several teachers and teachers groups who are concerned about that. It's very difficult. I know the County had supported the idea of teachers getting board certification. But that's an expensive process of upfront, I think \$2,500, and after-the-fact, now I think the County would reimburse half of that. So I think that's an area. It's not a very appealing area for people in the community to think that you have to pay for this, but I think you have to pay for this, but I think you have to be serious about keeping our teachers up to date.

##### Pamela R. Moynihan (Rio)

The last couple of years I think we've been trying to hold the line on the entire budget, and we haven't had a whole lot of initiatives that we have been able to add. And this is largely because of the economic downturn and the budget situation. When I look at it, I'm concerned with instruction. And the reason I'm concerned with instruction is first, because of what looks like an enrollment increase. But also from the fact that, thinking about [differentiating] your classroom instruction, of having it become more individualized, means that we would need to have smaller classes. We would need to have teachers have more time for planning periods, because they would really need to closely be able to monitor

what their students are doing. With that being said, particularly at the high school level, you would need to be able to hire more teachers to be able to do this, and we've been trying to hold the line on that. ...I think if we had more teachers we would be able to provide more individual attention, particularly at the lower, elementary school levels.

The other thing that I would really like to look at [is]... foreign languages at the elementary school level. I would love to see us add back into our curriculum foreign languages at the elementary school level. But in order to do that it means changes in school start time. Elementary school is not like it was in the old days. All that time is taken up with things. And just to add maybe 15 minutes of foreign language instruction would mean having to add time to the school day, which would mess up the bus schedules; it's a snowball effect on a lot of different things....

##### Eric Strucko (Samuel Miller)

The capital budget and more funding....I do think that over the course of the last 4-5 years the facilities in our community [have gone] into deficit. We are trying to squeeze useful lives beyond the typical expectation regarding technology and even brick and mortar facilities. We've had a maintenance budget with maybe one [new] project in the capital plan for many years and I do think that we have a facilities disparity....

I do think we missed an opportunity. As the economy went into recession, fiscal policy was fairly immediate and obvious, resulting in some of the lowest interest rates we have seen ever, and savvy organizations really took advantage of that. That's when they started going to the capital markets, issuing bonds, where interest rates are extraordinarily low, and really investing in facilities. Albemarle County did not take advantage of that.

I tried to make the case on several [occasions] and unfortunately the school board does not have the power over the purse, so I had to attempt to try to convince several [members of the Albemarle Board of] Supervisors that now was the time to actually issue debt and in the long run taxpayers would benefit because of the low interest rates. And we could stimulate our local economy through construction projects at the schools.

But that argument did not prevail, so here we are. I do think interest rates still offer an opportunity, though not as lucrative as in the past, though I do think we need to really beef up our capital budget and that's what I'll be advocating for over the next 4 years.

**Charlottesville City Council has provided the school division with one-time funds to balance recent budgets. What steps should Council and the School Board take to help build a more sustainable school budget? (asked of Charlottesville candidates)**

#### CHARLOTTESVILLE

##### Ned Michie

That's a dialogue that's going on right now. The City has formed this Blue Ribbon Taskforce with people with a variety of backgrounds and expertise and they are talking about the very issue. I think at the end they're going to do a report and that's scheduled for December, and then the City Council and the School Board will be talking more about it.

I think the biggest factor that has led to the problems that we have is that the state backing off on its commitment

10 to education and cutting funding and I think that's just not appropriate. I think that the state, and maybe again with improving economy maybe that will start to turn around. But that has been the biggest factor....

And that's essentially where we've been. We've had a flat budget for I think it's about four years now, and if you're going to give your employees raises, you're going to have to find [other] places to cut. We've cut forty-one positions I think so that we can do some initiatives and give some raises. Also there's cost of living increases that you just don't have any control over or health insurance or contracts with outside vendors....

It would save a lot of money to close an elementary school, but every time we think about that we hear strong objections all around and that everybody likes their neighborhood school. And [grade] reconfiguration frankly is part of that....

I think we have to continue to look for ways to save money and to be as efficient as we can and I know that the School Board and Central office is committed to continue to do that....

And so if we want to not have the school system we have, we can do that. But if the citizens want to continue to have the school system we have then either the City needs to reprioritize where its spending goes, or we need to look for other sources of funding.

### Leah W. Puryear

We are very grateful to Council for all that they have done, and all that they continue to do. I believe we have got to develop a sustainable revenue stream for the schools.

Things recently that have happened are not due to anything that the school division has done to show that we are not good stewards of the funds. Fewer dollars are coming from the state, the sequester has impacted all school division budgets. So when you are looking at all of the over 130 school divisions

in the commonwealth, everyone has been affected.

But I think that what has helped us is that our City Council understands education. And they appreciate what we have done, the results that we get, with the money that they give us. And we are good stewards of those funds but we are able to show them that when we have a financial crisis, we are able to tighten our bootstraps and look at what's on the paper, look at the impact of what's happening, and how that is going to affect the students. And what we do is we've developed an outside-in approach. So we look as far out as we can go before we actually impact the classroom.

It means often we do more with less money, but people love what they do, and when you talk about children; that energizes people. But I am very impressed with the fact that Council and Board are sitting down to have discussions about a sustainable revenue stream so they are not always put in a position of -- "Well, do we need to take this from contingency? Do we need to cut from another service that is just as important as the schools?" -- so that they are not feeling that they are having to make decisions that are not the best for the citizenry of Charlottesville.

### Juandiego Wade

You are going to hear this from all three candidates. We, as a result, over the last four five years we have gone to City Council to have them supplant the funds we did not get from the State and Federal Government. We didn't see us as a School Board being able to go through and cut again. And this year after we finished the budget it was determined that we would create a Blue Ribbon Panel.... Hopefully they will come up with some recommendations that the school board in collaboration with City Council can use as we go into budget discussion for this year. Ideally this panel will complete their recommendations by the end of this year

2013, and we will have those. As the school system goes in a locality is how the economy goes. We know there are people that are drawn here to this district because of the education system. We have several hundred people that pay to come to Charlottesville City Schools, because of the various offerings that we have and we want to sustain that. That is something that's a drawing it's a selling point to the City of Charlottesville and I think they understand that, that's why they have supported us. We know that is something they can't continue to do at the level they have because they still have the other part of the government to run as well.

So we are glad that this panel has been compiled, the people are wonderful people who have given up their time to input their expertise. It is a cross section of the community, teachers, educators, business people, parents, so we feel that the recommendations will be something, we are hands off- no school board members that are regularly involved on the panel- so we will let them do their work, whatever that may be.

**Business leaders and social service agencies say that new investments are sorely needed in the area of early childhood education. Will you work with the Albemarle Supervisors to make pre-K education and quality child-care a priority and if so how? (asked of Albemarle candidates)**

**ALBEMARLE  
Kate Acuff (Jack Jouett)**

It is critically important, and I think whenever you're implementing or advocating a policy you've got to sell it and you've got to persuade people that it's worth it. The National Institute for Research in Early Education have done studies, and they really show that for every dollar invested in early childhood education, you get \$7 in return, in terms of kids stay in school longer, they have better job potential, they have less involvement with law enforcement, bumps along the way, discipline problems.

So I think the combination of the investment and the return, plus the fact that businesses are really advocating for this. There was a conference for this this week in Atlanta by the US Department of Education, and part of that was businesses such as Dominion Power really emphasizing the need to invest in early childhood education. So we need to get business leaders involved in making the case for the community to support it.

### Pamela R. Moynihan (Rio)

I think adding preschool education is important. I think all children can benefit from it, and I definitely agree that investment is needed in that area....[I]t goes back to what is available in the budget and where this comes from. There might be some grants out there and that's great. We have Bright Stars and we have a number of students coming into Bright Stars, but what about the waitlist for Bright Stars....

I think preschool education would benefit everybody and that everybody should have access to it, and not just a few. Because if we could start kids out on the right foot from the time they are very little and develop a love of learning from the time they are very little, then everybody would be able to start out at that same baseline. So for me, I would love to see it for everybody. Can we do that? It all depends on where the money is, on if the money is there.

The state likes to talk a lot about preschool education, but they could pony up some money for it too. It's great to talk about, and it's great to use it as a way to say "Hey, I'm for education." Well I'm on the School Board, I'm for education, and I would love to see preschool education for everybody. I would love to see preschool education for those kids on the Bright Stars waiting list, but it all depends on the money factor, and if the money is not there, can we ask the tax payers to pay more for it? I don't know....

**Eric Strucko  
(Samuel Miller)**

Yes. The simple answer is yes. I think the wisdom of the business leaders and social services agencies that are saying new investments are needed in early childhood education really understand what adds value to a community....

If there is any one vulnerable area in public education it probably is that early childhood experience, so I think that's a great area to target. I do believe in pre-K education. We have it at a few of our schools, but it's not spread out to all the elementary schools as it should be.

I like to start with good information. I would ask the administration...for an assessment of what elementary schools are facing the greatest demand for pre-K education. Where are the students coming in where English is a second language and fundamental communication is a problem? Or where students are coming in to elementary school deficient in terms of fundamental skills--math, reasoning and reading. Once we have targeted places where we can intervene I would work to continue to develop programming in pre-K education in those areas.

I have to admit I don't know the extent of the problem as of right now, so probably my first step would be to educate myself on what we are facing and then add that as a priority in our annual budgeting.

**Do you support the grade reconfiguration plan for city schools such that Buford will house grades 6 through 8 as the only middle school? If so, how will that be funded and can it happen in your next term? (asked of Charlottesville candidates)**

**CHARLOTTESVILLE  
Ned Michie**

I absolutely do continue to support it. I think it's pedagogically correct to have fewer transitions. Right now students are in elementary school up until 4th grade, and then they go to 5th and 6th at Walker and then they have another transition for 7th 8th and Buford and then go to the high school. It's a tough a challenging age to begin with and to throw in transitions like this it's tough on the kids, it's tough on the teachers. The teachers have one less year in middle school to follow the kids and talk to teachers in the building about "Yea I know that Billy. The thing you need to do with him is such and such." And so it's tough on the teachers to have the kids around, and the administrators to not follow the kids for an extra year during these tough transition years....

I think that even...if you weren't going to have a standard middle school, that Buford itself, just the building needs an upgrade. And we talked about this before, that the City hasn't had to invest major dollars in capital improvements as far as upgrading what you see and the experience in the building. The City has done a great job maintain our schools. Let me be the first to say that. The schools are very well maintained, but Buford and Walker

were built in 1965 and that is what they are. They are buildings from 1965 and they haven't really changed since then, except for the very exciting labs that we did get the City to fund because the reconfiguration was being pushed off....

So I still remain very much in favor of the reconfiguration. It's a significant expense, and you can only do what you can do, and I understand that. It's going to be a dialogue that we have with the City and frankly with the citizens of the City, because it's again a significant expense and how do you get there, how do you reprioritize current spending or set aside enough money to make this happen? But it's something I very much want to push for and see us realize. I don't know that it's going to happen in the next four years, but I think that in the near future, we ought to have a plan for when it is going to happen so that the community knows what to expect. We do hear a lot of questions in the community about when this is going to happen and so we need to come up with an answer.

**Leah W. Puryear**

I support reconfiguration...and fingers crossed that it happens in the next term. I think it would be excellent, because it would allow us to free up some space to do the work we are doing by having the six elementary schools, the fifth graders are back in their home schools, it gives us a sense of stability as it relates to doing our standardized tests for the third and the fifth grades. Those students that are in the sixth through eighth grades are in one building, they are ready to be in that building, that gives them a sense of security so that when they are doing their testing they are in the same environment for a while. And it is fewer transitions, you are doing three transitions instead of four transitions which I think is advantageous to the students. It's a help to the parents, and as I said it gives us more space. For our division offices one and two, for our alterna-

tive school environment, it gives us more spaces for conference space, our preschool program, all of the things we do within our division. That means our building are running more efficiently, and we are using our money wisely.

**Juandiego Wade**

I do support it. I'm not sure if it will happen in my next term. I think a lot will go to the previous question of what the recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Panel will be.

We are doing a major renovation of Buford School science lab, and that is something that whatever happens with Buford, that can be part of that reconfiguration of the school. It's not something we will have to go back in and change around or anything....Buford needs to be modernized. And we are modernizing the science lab but the other partner school needs to be updated as well. In order to do that, we need to make changes to all of the schools.

When we did the change I think in the 80s to move fifth graders out, we didn't have some of the Quest programs, we didn't have the preschool type of things, so we'd have to make some changes to all of the schools, and then change Walker, and then change the Central Offices, so there is a lot that we will have to do as part of that. I do support it; if it can happen in the next four years – that's undetermined at this point because the economy can turn around in a couple of years, and there is a lot of extra money available. It can happen, but that is not something to be honest that I have any control over, the School Board does not have any taxing authority. Each year is basically a zero-based budgeting for us because each year we have to go to City Council or get those funds from other sources. We have no other way than charging a couple of bucks for a hot dog to get in at a football game. That is primary way we have of generating funds.

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