



2020 Pinellas County School Board Candidates ACE - Arts for a Complete Education Survey Results

Candidates:

District 1	Laura Hine Stephanie G. Meyer Tom Topping	laurahineforeducation@gmail.com StephanieGMeyer@gmail.com Tom@ElectTomTopping.com
District 4	Eileen Long Chris Hardman	EileenLong2020@gmail.com CWHardman01@gmail.com
District 5	Carol Cook	cjcook928@gmail.com
District 7	Caprice Johnson Edmond Corey Givens, Jr. Sharon D. Jackson Karl Nurse	CapriceEdmondDis7@gmail.com Corey@CoreyGivens.com SharonJackson4SchoolBoard@gmail.com KarlNurse2@icloud.com

Survey Questions:

Q2 - I support arts courses (music, theater, dance, visual arts) as an essential Part of the core curriculum in Pinellas County Schools.

Laura Hine	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Stephanie Meyer	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Tom Topping	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Eileen Long	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Chris Hardman	As of publication, Mr. Hardman has not responded.
Caprice Edmonds	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Corey Givens	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Sharon Jackson	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Karl Nurse	<i>Strongly agree</i>

Q3 - Have your children ever personally participated in arts courses in school?

Laura Hine	Music, Visual Arts & Drama. All elementary school so far. They are now 1st & 4th grade. I look forward to their arts experiences growing as they grow!
Stephanie Meyer	Music
Tom Topping	I don't have biological children but my godchildren have and do participate in the arts (band) in PCS.
Eileen Long	Music
Caprice Edmonds	We have 4 wonderful children who have attended or are currently attending Pinellas County Schools. They have participated in art electives in school. One of my children attends Perkins Elementary's Magnet Program.
Corey Givens	I do not have any kids currently in the system.
Sharon Jackson	Music
Karl Nurse	Music, Theater & Dance

Q4 - Have you ever personally participated in arts courses in school?

Laura Hine	Arts and music were part of the school day as I grew up, and I value that and remember it! Exposing children to the arts across the board, at young ages broadens their horizons and opens their minds in important ways.
Stephanie Meyer	Theater
Tom Topping	Music
Eileen Long	Theater
Caprice Edmonds	Attended John Hopkins Middle School & Gibbs High School where arts were embraced, I participated in music and visual arts.
Corey Givens	Music
Sharon Jackson	Music
Karl Nurse	Music

Q5 - What cultural events (professional, community, school) such as concerts or art exhibitions have you attended in the past year?

Laura Hine	Music, Theater, Visual Arts & Museums. This is making me realize that we did not attend a dance performance in the last year which is unusual. We will when we can! My husband and I both are museum directors, so we are fortunate to be ensconced in the Visual Arts and Museums on a near-daily basis.
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Stephanie Meyer	Theater
Tom Topping	Music
Eileen Long	Music
Caprice Edmonds	As a current educator, parent, child advocate and actively involved community member, I have attended several concerts and art exhibitions. I have attended the performances of my children as well as cultural events held in the community with my family and the child I represent as a Guardian ad Litem. This year I helped coordinate art exhibits, programs and field trips as well as attended The Little Mermaid Jr. with students.
Corey Givens	Museums
Sharon Jackson	Theater
Karl Nurse	Music, Dance, Theater, Visual Arts, Museums

Q6 - How do you support the arts?

Laura Hine	Attendance at arts events, serve on board/committees of cultural institutions, financial donations & volunteer for arts events or organizations. The arts are a significant part of our personal and professional lives and we believe in supporting them in all ways and having our children and family enjoy them in all ways.
Stephanie Meyer	Financial donations
Tom Topping	Attendance at events (concerts, art exhibitions, theater, etc)
Eileen Long	Attendance at events (concerts, art exhibitions, theater, etc)
Caprice Edmonds	Attending events, financial donations & volunteering for arts events
Corey Givens	Volunteer for arts events or organizations
Sharon Jackson	Attendance at events (concerts, art exhibitions, theater, etc)
Karl Nurse	Attendance at arts events, serve on board/committees of cultural institutions, financial donations, volunteer for arts events or organizations

Q7 - What strategies do you suggest to ensure access to high quality arts education for Pinellas County students with the demands of high stakes testing/state accountability?

Laura Hine - *We know that there is a strong correlation between math & science learning gains when children have arts education. We know that arts education correlates to increased curiosity & resilience. We know developing one's perception (which arts is the top vehicle for) leads to analysis and critical thinking, developing personal opinion, and the ability to express oneself which leads to confidence and achievement. Knowing all of these things, arts must be thoughtfully provided, required and funded in order to support all of the learning gains, and in*

order to provide an enriched life experience. Regarding the state accountability, I would like for Pinellas County Schools to remake our school grade. And in doing so, decide what it is we value in the whole-child education, and measure how we are doing on that. Yes, the state test can be one factor. But there are so many others, and certainly access to arts education is one of them.

Stephanie Meyer - *I believe that PCS should work to end high stakes testing so that students can develop a love of learning that is designed to meet their individual interests and needs.*

Tom Topping - *1. Ensure that all students have at least one course in visual/performing arts education per year. 2. Incorporating arts education into the standards for core classes in order to increase overall student achievement. 3. Increasing the value of the arts by championing increased funding for the arts through the general budget rather than primarily through independent sources.*

Eileen Long - *The referendum money ensures that art, music, theater and technology is part of every school. I was a special education teacher and most of my students really showed talent in the arts. This is an area where kids can express themselves and feel good about themselves.*

Caprice Edmonds - *I would recommend allowing our educators and administrators to be innovative with scheduling. This year, we were facing this challenge with Science instruction. I coordinated before and after school programs as well as worked with educators and cafeteria staff in order to provide additional science activities and gaming. The same can be done with arts. In our district, we have taken the initiative to begin working towards best practices. Which includes tapping into a students' strengths and differentiating. Incorporating arts will be another way of engaging and increasing student success.*

Corey Givens - *I support integrated lesson plans. I believe that music, art and academia, are all intertwined. Studies show that kids learn best when they can express their creativity.*

Sharon Jackson - *Students who have greater access to the arts do better in school and have higher graduation rates. With that in mind, equity and student access to the arts should be at the center of every decision makers' minds and the arts should be available to all students at every level. Continue to recruit, hire, and retain highly skilled teachers and staff who understand the diverse background and educational needs of students in high poverty schools.*

Karl Nurse - *In the near term, we are going to have to fund it by referendum. In addition, partnerships like the Florida Orchestra need to be duplicated. I have served on the Orchestra Board for about 10 years and am both familiar and supportive of the considerable youth outreach that we provide. We need to look for additional opportunities like this.*

Q8 - That strategies do you suggest to ensure high quality arts education for Pinellas County students during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Laura Hine - *It has been amazing to watch all of the museums, theaters, and artists in our community figure out how to best respond to this pandemic. Certainly, at The James Museum where I am the executive director, we immediately shifted to a virtual environment in the best way we could. And you have likely seen the performances streaming by the Florida Orchestra and St. Pete Opera. There has been a panoply of opportunities! Now how do we get those into the classrooms? We must work just vigilantly on providing art education during this time - the most creative and effective ways that we can - as we are the other learning areas. And provide the needed materials and equipment.*

Stephanie Meyer - *We need to provide options to families for returning to school. Additionally, as with all academic areas, students should be provided with the guidelines and safety measures recommended by the AAP and DCD.*

Tom Topping - *I am seriously concerned about the district's plans for ensuring academic rigor due to the financial and logistical issues created by the COVID-19 pandemic. My concern is not limited to arts classrooms only, but is inclusive of all academic disciplines. All teachers have been taught and trained to utilize a set of research-based best teaching practices proven to increase rigor and improve student achievement. The cornerstone of this teaching model is to conduct class utilizing small group, collaborative instruction. Those practices and research-based instructional strategies are difficult to replicate in either an online or physically distanced "classroom," I believe teachers need additional training that goes beyond the transactional aspects of entering grades/lesson plans into a computer program. There is a need for specifically designed training for virtual learning success and safe student collaboration in physically distanced classrooms.*

The arts provide extraordinarily unique challenges to traditional instruction when you consider the delivery of instruction, observation, feedback and evaluation of individual and group performance. My recommendation would be to increase rigor and expectations on individual performance rather than group or collaborative assignments. Integrating project-based learning assignments in the arts that meet traditional standards-based curriculum is another way to ensure that arts education is not lost or forgotten due to COVID-19.

Eileen Long - *supplies should still be available for students and instruction can be on line. To me, this is a way to let your emotions flow and you will not be criticized. The most important thing is to give students the opportunity and if that means delivering supplies to them, then we need to do that.*

Caprice Edmonds - *There are several strategies that I have used to incorporate science into virtual learning. These are similar strategies that can be used to ensure high quality arts education. Utilizing technology and applications. Our students know how to use many of the*

apps. I have seen orchestras and concerts put together by students and educators following DCD Guidelines. There may also be an opportunity for in-person practices if permitted.

Corey Givens - *Education, as we once knew it, has changed forever. The traditional brick and mortar school campus has become a thing of the past. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some children will return to the physical classroom, but others - due to multiple reasons, will not. It's important that we give our students and their families options, while stopping the spread of COVID-19. Most importantly, we must ensure that our students still have access to school-based extracurricular programs and activities, while abiding by the CDC guidelines.*

Sharon Jackson - *In reference to the Arts, teachers must follow all safety guidelines established in the district's plan for reopening schools in the Fall with social distancing, sanitizing and more. teachers will also need to continue utilizing the integration of technology and high-quality digital tools in arts programs so students who attend virtual delivery models can continue to receive a quality arts education. Continue to provide professional development to support the needs of the arts teachers; especially those serving students in high poverty schools.*

Karl Nurse - *We need to see where can we provide social distancing, masks and sanitizing hands and surfaces while providing arts education. Some arts programs will have to use either the outdoors and/or large buildings like gyms and auditoriums to provide sufficient fresh air and distancing. I believe we will be able to continue most arts instruction classes.*

Q9 - What is your stand with regard to the support of the Pinellas County Schools Referendum on the ballot in November?

Laura Hine - *YES on the referendum! Thank you to those who started this and keep it going and the work it takes every cycle to re-elect. These funds significantly supplement teacher's salaries, yes, and they bring arts experiences to many, many students who may not otherwise receive them. Vital! Thank you! Funding matters. And I am gratified and buoyed that when presented to the voters, they affirm the importance as well.*

Stephanie Meyer - *I support it.*

Tom Topping - *I am a strong supporter of the referendum and have voted/advocated in favor of it in every election. Many Pinellas County Schools' employees, including my wife and I, were very concerned about the health of the referendum in 2016 when the Tampa Bay Times published the series on the "Failure Factories" in Pinellas County Schools. We were ecstatic to see the referendum pass by a wide margin even under those conditions.*

Eileen Long - *100% support*

Caprice Edmonds - *Voters should support Pinellas County Schools Referendum for several reasons: bringing additional funds to our schools in order to support arts, technology, and other important aspects of learning is essential. As a current educator and parent of children attending Pinellas County Schools, it is important that we have resources available to ensure all children are provided a high-quality education.*

Corey Givens - *I support the renewal of the referendum.*

Sharon Jackson - *I support the referendum. According to reports, the arts programs have been strengthened by the Referendum. It is not a new tax, but must be renewed every 4 years. We need to continue the support so all students in Pinellas County Schools has equitable access to arts programs.*

Karl Nurse - *I have always voted for this. I will continue to support this funding. It provides funds for teacher salaries and the arts. As important, it provides the school system with flexibility which much of the State funding does not.*

Q10 - Comments

Laura Hine - *Arts are the system by which we take measure of the world. I am grateful to the Arts for a Complete Education and to the St. Pete Arts Alliance for your belief in the same and your vital work in the arts; thank you!*

Tom Topping- *Many of or arts programs in Pinellas are known as national models of excellence, yet that's not the only goal. Pinellas County's children need, now more than ever, more opportunities to be creative.*

The referendum and district partnerships, like the one with Cenergistic, are representative of how a smart school district can do two things at once. (Much like incorporating arts education into the core curriculum.) These partnerships have helped increase supplemental avenues for funding teacher pay and the arts. As a former physical education teacher, I appreciated creative ways for increasing funding because I understand what it's like to be passionate about and supportive of an electives class. I also know what it feels like to get the short end of the stick when it comes to funding and support. I've been in department meetings when we've had to talk about budget cuts and doing more with less. It stinks. As a school board member, I will not let this happen!

As an avid reader and writer, I know Language Arts classes aren't the only places you'll find literacy education. You'll find linguistic development in the Arts as well. In fact, several years ago, I taught screenwriting on the 6th grade wheel at a middle school. We actually wrote movies! From "fade in" to "fade out." My kids loved the freedom to create settings and found themselves generating improvisational themes and dialogue.

I'm a champion for digital arts, fine arts et al. In my opinion, there's been too much emphasis on core classes, standardized testing, and not nearly enough on what I call creative electives. Kids need to create! That's what I did when I started my business. I had a vision, developed a plan and created it. The arts help kids learn to solve problems and surpass perceived limitations. Even if students don't end up an "artist" by trade or part of a group recognized for its excellence, the lessons learned will stay with them for a lifetime.

Eileen Long - *I love showing off the bands at the MLK Event in Tarpon Springs. It is important for the schools to show off their talents to the community and I hope the community enjoys seeing what students are participating in.*

Caprice Edmonds - *Thank you for providing this opportunity for me to share my perspective. I am a current educator working in our public schools with school-aged children, with a Psychology degree, Master's degree in Elementary Education & Educational Leadership, & a Certification in Infant Family Mental Health. My work for over 18 years involves working with children and education. I am actively involved in the community and I serve on several boards and committees specifically impacting children and education. I'm running because we need equity in education. My current and past experiences make me the most qualified candidate to serve. I have been endorsed by PCTA-PESPA, Suncoast PBA, Rep. Jennifer Webb, CM Brandi Gabbard, Steve Kornell, Linda Lerner, Terry Krassner, Andy Oliver, Toriano Parker, Debbie Canning and many others. For additional information, visit www.edmondforeducation.com.*

Corey Givens - www.CoryGivens.com

Sharon Jackson - *As a parent, I would be highly disappointed if equitable Arts resources were not provided in schools; especially in those schools that are identified as high poverty. Children need to be exposed to the arts. It promotes student achievement.*

Karl Nurse - *I have been an active supporter of the arts for about 25 years. My youngest went to American Stage summer acting camp which was followed by PCCA which she loved. My wife, Jody, was a professional actor for about 15 years, primarily in Chicago. I have served on the Florida Orchestra Board for about 10 years, and served as the Treasurer for 2 years. My company has co-sponsored plays at American Stage over 15 years.*

The bottom line for me is that I understand that arts education leads to more engaged and passionate students who perform better in the traditional courses as well. You will not find a more supportive arts advocate in this race than Karl Nurse.