



Vinson Xavier Palathingal
Vinson For School Board
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McLean, Virginia 22101

To,
McLean High Students, Parents and Community Expect Sensible School Size (McSPaCES),

Thank you for allowing me to participate in this survey. I believe that our public schools belong to the communities they are located in. That's how we make sure our communities remain stronger and kids grow up in a safe and secure community environment.

See below my answers to the questions presented by the 'McSPaCES':

1) What actions would you take to relieve overcrowding at McLean High School?

The explosion of growth in Tysons is a big factor in the overcrowding of McLean and other schools in the Dranesville District. Amazon coming to Northern Virginia with 1000s of new jobs is going to aggravate the situation. When corporations produce such pressures to the local communities, they have a moral responsibility to contribute resources to alleviate the situation. As a leader of the local community and elected school board member, I would start a corporate outreach and publicity campaign for a public-private partnership to come up with the funds to build the necessary infrastructure required at Mclean and other FCPS schools due to this exponential growth. Big and bold ideas and actions are what is required to come up with innovative solutions to complex problems without adding any additional tax burden to citizens, and as your At-Large school board member that's exactly what I will do.

Immediate relief for McLean HS overcrowding starting Fall 2020: From early 2020 onwards, I will work with the Great Falls and McLean communities to reach an agreement for a short-term reassignment of 50% (about 300 students) of incoming freshmen from McLean to Langley starting 2020 school year primarily based on geography and then as an opt-in on a first-come-first-served basis. The establishment of this new boundary adjustment will be a temporary one applicable to just this batch of students until they graduate from Langley in 2024. Part of 2020 freshmen batch will be the only batch that will be reassigned and 2021 freshmen enrollment will fall back to the 2019 boundaries. The long-term solution for McLean overcrowding which is addressed in the next paragraph will be already in progress by the time this happens. That way, there will be much less resistance from both communities for such a temporary boundary adjustment that affects just a section of one batch of students.

Long term relief for McLean HS overcrowding starting Fall 2024: Building new, safe and sound classrooms at McLean is the long-term permanent solution to address McLean HS overcrowding. 5 years is what I think will be required to achieve that long-term solution. My goal will be to create a \$500 million fund named 'Tysons Education Edge Fund' with the help of 20-25 major

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corporations who are beneficiaries of Tysons expansion. This fund will be dedicated to public education (K-12) related infrastructure needs in and around Tysons. State of the art expansion of McLean HS will be the first major project to benefit from this fund. As the At-Large school board member, I will work across party lines to ensure that the idea has the blessings of the Board of Supervisors as well as the state and federal governments. Potential tax incentives to the donors will be on the table to encourage participation.

Large corporates in the region such as Amazon, Google, and Microsoft as well as those who are headquartered in Tysons such as Intelsat, DXC Technology, Gannett, Hilton Worldwide, Cvent, Freddie Mac, Capital One, and Booz Allen Hamilton among others will be approached to fund the initiative. If we can develop such a framework in Fairfax county with the proactive participation of Board of Supervisors, School Board and the State of Virginia legislators, getting the commitment from 20-25 major corporations to raise \$500 million should not be an impossible task. Quick action from the government side will be the key to success and as an At-Large School Board member, I will provide the leadership on the government side for the necessary approvals and agreements, putting as many hours as necessary from my end.

2) What would you consider a realistic time-frame to provide overcrowding relief?

As I explained above, my short-term prescription above will provide immediate relief to the issue starting Fall 2020 and will help to remove all the trailers from McLean at the same time. My long-term solution discussed above will make Mclean HS one of the best and state of the art public schools in the nation and will be completed in 5 years.

3) Should the safety and security of students be a high priority when considering boundary adjustments?

Absolutely. Safety and security are the most important consideration when it comes to the lives of our children. Safe and secure neighborhoods and community living around schools is the next best thing that can happen to a student after having a loving and caring home. This is of utmost importance to the mental and physical health of almost everyone in the communities around. That's why I am totally against busing that forces children to go to schools far from their communities. Environmental impact is also kept minimum when we can sustain the concept of community schools.

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4) How do you see the county's One Fairfax policy affecting solutions to the overcrowding at McLean High School?

Thought processes and action plans that try to centralize the decision making for a large number of people are seldom in the best interest of all people. Such approaches may sound expedient and seem easy to implement, but will destroy the identity of smaller communities that are part of the vast expanse of land area.

McLean and Langley High Schools are just 3 miles apart and there is a big overlap of the communities around these two high schools. The student achievement levels at these two schools are also comparable. When one of the schools are overcrowded and the other school can absorb such overcrowding, it would have been an easy process to assign part of a batch of students from one to the other while major infrastructure additions can be implemented at McLean HS. The current school board bringing in the utopian 'One Fairfax' idea and politically driven centrist planning to the mix messed up the whole process and that's why we are where we are today.

McLean-Langley issue is an example to demonstrate the dorkiness and unwieldiness of 'One Fairfax' and it is high time the Board of Supervisors and the School Board come back to its senses and reject the stupid concept outright. Whether they call it communism, socialism or 'One Fairfax' doesn't matter, these centrist and expedient sounding philosophies simply do not work. Dictating solutions to people against their wishes and without considering their emotions will ultimately fail. I have seen such failures first hand before I immigrated to the US and I can see what is cooking when I hear the utopian and vague utterances such as 'One Fairfax'.

Fairfax is a huge county with over 400 square miles of land area and 1.2 million people. "One Fairfax" is a phony and utopian socialist idea that will do irreparable damage to the county as we know it. I will represent the people and will be ready to do the hard work that is required to develop solutions to enable all schools in the county to become capable of producing great results. Just like any socialist idea, "One Fairfax" at its best will be able to just distribute whatever good the county has left and as a result, and will make the overall system mediocre. My goal is to make the whole of Fairfax excellent. Distribution of excellence by "One Fairfax" that will make all schools mediocre is not what I can root for.

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5) Do you believe boundary adjustments between McLean High School and Langley High School should be undertaken before any comprehensive, county-wide boundary study is initiated and completed?

Yes absolutely. The short term and long-term solutions that I have prescribed in Answer 1 addresses the McLean-Langley issue thoroughly and should be undertaken immediately.

When it comes to comprehensive and county-wide boundary study, for the reasons I have explained in Answer 4, I am opposed to boundary policy that destroys and/or has the potential to destroy the concept of community public schools we cherish so dearly in Fairfax county. Geographic proximity is the major consideration to keep the community nature of our schools as well as to ensure the safety and security of our children. That's why geography should be the paramount consideration in any boundary study. The current school board's proposal to almost entirely rewrite the existing school board policy 8130 is careless, outrageous and unintelligent and should be abandoned immediately.

6) Is there any further information would you like to share with the McSPaCES membership?

I have some thoughts on student achievement and some ideas to make high achievement a possibility for ALL of our students. High achievement by most immigrant groups in Fairfax county without any regard to the perceived privilege, race or skin color is well documented. School boundaries, zip codes and/or ethnicity are not found to have any role in such achievement. For the same reason, racial and/or socioeconomic diversity should not have any influence in establishing or changing school boundaries.

We have to nail down the reasons for the academic excellence of some so that we can replicate the same opportunities for ALL. The most obvious reasons for their success are high expectations from families and very hard work. But there is one additional thing that is very common to these high achieving immigrant groups. Even when they are not rich, they send their children to supplemental private education in addition to FCPS, by spending thousands of dollars every year. Such supplemental education centers such as Kumon, Mathnasium, C2 Education as well as numerous weekend schools organized by various ethnic groups contribute heavily to their apparent success. These centers use direct instruction methods at the elementary level, in contrast to the inquiry-based learning FCPS currently uses. Such methods for teaching arithmetic and phonics-based reading instructions with adequate drilling will benefit ALL students. This seems to be working very well for immigrants — so why not incorporate some of the same techniques

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and methods into FCPS elementary schools, so ALL of our children can benefit and become strong in fundamentals.

McLean HS is where both my kids graduated with outstanding honors. Our life in the McLean school district has been so good for us. Our family is so grateful to everything this community has contributed to our success in this great nation. I pledge my unwavering support and dedication to ensure expeditious action to alleviate McLean HS overcrowding. I encourage the McLean community to visit my website at <https://www.vinsonforschoolboard.com/> to learn more about my ideas for the Fairfax County School Board as an At-Large member.

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