

Dr. Joseph Guzman's Responses to the Loudoun Education Association Questionnaire

7/25/2007

To the Loudoun Education Association:

Of all honorable endeavors, none calls to it more dedicated and giving professionals than our K12 teachers. Our system of public education relies on these dedicated teaching professionals. Indeed, the future of our country rests squarely on the education of our youth – and the care we give to the teaching professionals who will educate them.

My overriding priority for our schools will continue to be delivering the best educational value for our students, parents and taxpayers. Central to the service of that priority are a disciplined budget, expanded student enrichment and a special care for the educational environment in my district and our neighborhoods.

The importance of teachers is central to my motivations as an advocate for our school system and for education in Loudoun County . I have led and supported our efforts to expand recognition and compensation of NBPTS-certification, resulting in a manyfold increase of National Board -certified teachers in our school system.

My answers to the LEA survey follow.

1. In LCPS budget deliberations, I have always ensured that educational delivery to students is the last item to be affected. I consider educational delivery to be the learning environment and content that our students receive. Since joining the School Board, we have never experienced a “cut” in the LCPS budget.
2. Remaining competitive in employee salaries and benefits is a high priority. We must maintain the ability to attract and retain the best, both new and experienced, teaching professionals. The net compensation for teaching professionals provided by LCPS is second to none. I have also led and supported efforts for competitive compensation of hourly staff.
3. The vitality of our educational system depends on continual improvement and reform. Alternatives to public education have proven their effectiveness and should not be discouraged. Our overriding goal should always be to provide the best education for all children.
4. Professional responsibilities, with salaried compensation, normally entail work beyond the 8-to-5. LCPS teaching salaries are competitive and significant augmentation of responsibility, such as for coaches and department heads, is compensated.
5. See above

6. Although not presently under consideration, a significant increase in the school year would warrant consideration of the compensation schedule.
7. I support the LEA's constructive role in voicing teacher concerns and positions. The LEA is welcomed at committee meetings.
8. This is a specific operational question that must be considered in full context. There is presently an allotment of planning time that includes days set aside for just that purpose. I would be open to consideration of alternatives presented by the Superintendent and/or senior staff. Having said that, I must emphasize that my criteria would again focus on educational delivery and quality.
9. Implementation of SOLs and NCLB requirements have had a net positive effect on public education. There is a balance to strike between the rote and enrichment. There are also technical adjustments to the NCLB to consider. The establishment of minimum standards and their verification are important elements of public education that are here to stay. I believe, and will continue to support the belief that these standards are starting points and that we must strive for much more.
10. Clarification needed.
11. It is especially important where there is student contact, that LCPS establish long-term, consistent relationships with those it employs. As a specific operational question, this merits more than a yes/no answer.
12. My relationship with my BOS counterpart is open and honest. Communication is key.
13. I have and will continue to seek thoughtful input from all quarters.
14. Directly linking pay to test scores is not presently under consideration. I do believe that, where appropriate, we should review and measure the teaching process.