

Individual Information (supplementing CommonQ)

Name/District **Cindy Vaillancourt**

List who has been compensated to provide services to your campaign. List your campaign managers. Note current cash on hand in your campaign account, and your donations received and spent. You only need to note figures that are not included yet on campaign finance filings.

I have received no donations. I have spent around \$2,000. Approximately \$1200 from The Victory Store for signs, \$275 for printing to Dingle Printing, \$100 for misc supplies, \$25 for filing fee.

I have no cash on hand. I have an outstanding loan to campaign balance from myself for approximately \$5,000

List organizations/groups/committees (both education-related and not) of which you are an official member.

I am not currently an official member of any organization, group, or committee. I tend to do my community service on an informal basis, pitching in when needed, and participating in other ways when needed. I have been a member of the ACLU, NAACP, PTA, and have attended meetings of the various HCPSS committees periodically for many years.

Community Interest / Position Questions

In what areas of public education do you refuse to compromise, due to strong beliefs?

I believe in Neighborhood Schools with logical and reasonable attendance areas that maximize the ability of students to walk to school, and be fully engaged with the school and neighborhood community.

I also believe in the special education concept of least restrictive environment with adequate and appropriate support - where students' individual needs are met in an inclusive environment when possible.

I believe in Public Education as the foundation of a strong democracy.

How would you make changes in these areas?

I believe Policy 6010 already sets out a framework that enables the Board of Education to support the concept of Neighborhood Schools, provided the Board of Education sitting at any given time is in agreement, and there is sufficient capacity. As a Board Member I have demonstrated my commitment to maintaining communities and attendance areas as much as possible during 3 episodes of redistricting.

Changes that need to be made in the HCPSS delivery of Special Education services include adequate funding in order to ensure proper staffing, with appropriately trained and credentialed educators, including paraeducators and student assistants. HCPSS has also failed to provide adequate specialized programs within the school system, and county, to meet the needs of our various student populations. The next Board of Ed must take a more aggressive stance in directing funding to the special education staffing, training, and programs that have demonstrated success.

I will continue to fight the erosion of Public Education through underfunding and the pushing of charter, voucher, and other programs being pushed via numerous channels. The best defense against these efforts is a high quality program across all of our schools.

Give examples of how you collaborated and compromised with colleagues who disagreed with you. (Character limit please 1200)

I spent the first 6 years of my time on the Board of Education as a minority of one and sometimes two. Even in the face of unrelenting provocation, I maintained a civil and collaborative demeanor and continued to work to persuade my colleagues on several issues. It took 5 years, but I was able to finally bring the group around to a vote to change High School Start Times to no later than 8:15am. Sadly, the subsequent Board voted to overturn that decision based on budgetary constraints. On a Board of 7 people it would be a reach to claim to have been solely responsible for any action. However, in spite of the resistance of most of the Board, Dr. Altwerger and I were able to get - and keep - the issue of mold in front of the Board until the rest began to acknowledge there was a problem. I was also a consistent champion for Special Education funding, and additional mental health and guidance counselors.

Give examples, in your personal or professional life, that demonstrate your willingness to hold people accountable and include transparency for the community. (Character limit 1200)

I believe the most obvious and public example of my willingness, and effectiveness, at holding people accountable would be leading the effort to force the previous Superintendent to either acknowledge the authority of the Board of Ed, or depart. On numerous occasions I was (falsely) accused of breaking confidentiality when the earlier Board did not want to share legitimately public information even with the rest of the Board. I supported and in some cases led the efforts to pass legislation to hold HCPSS accountable to the public for MPIAs, and to give the local BOEs the ability to initiate the

termination of their own Superintendents. Some of these efforts were at great personal cost.

For incumbents, what do you feel is your legacy you have left so far on the HCPSS? For other candidates, what would you want your legacy to be and why are you the best choice to create it? (Character limit 1200).

I believe I left a legacy of empowering the Board of Education to assert its rightful legal authority over the school system. Part of the exercise of that authority was to stand up for the rights of all HCPSS employees, citizens, parents, and students to be treated with respect. Events over the past year or so since I left the Board have demonstrated that there is still work to be done. It is critical that the gains we made be codified as soon as possible. The next Board must include some members who are experienced with this specific Board and school system, MSDE rules and regs, education law, policy and politics, and the various people and components of funding and how they work, in practice as well as in theory. The first two years of the next Board's term will be critical for HCPSS, and we cannot afford everyone to be at the start of their learning curve. There will be another round of countywide redistricting, the decision on whether to renew the Superintendent or hire a new one, and the ongoing budget crisis. It is imperative that strong, experienced individuals who will not be unduly influenced by the staff or the status quo be seated. I am uniquely qualified with a demonstrated track record of standing strong and leading in an ethical manner during crisis.