

Triad City Beat 2024 Candidate Questionnaire  
Submission from Maurice (Mo) Green  
October 7, 2024

**For all candidates:**

1. What is your background in politics? If you are an incumbent, please state which offices you have held and when.

**I have never run for political office before; this is my first time as a candidate.**

2. Why were you drawn to run for office?

**I am running now because I am deeply concerned about the current direction of the North Carolina Public School system. It is woefully underfunded, even while funding for a taxpayer-funded private school voucher program is being increased dramatically. Its educators are belittled through low pay and respect. Statewide student academic performance must be improved, and we must have a vision of excellence. North Carolina public schools need a champion who will provide a new vision. Given my experiences, which are outlined in question three below, I believe I can be that champion.**

3. If you had to pick three issues (housing, economy, schools, policing, etc) which three issues would you say are most important to you?

**Education, education, and education! Within education, there are many layered issues that I seek to address as State Superintendent of Public Instruction. My comprehensive Vision, Direction, and Plan for North Carolina Public Schools is called "Achieving Academic Excellence" and features six key pillars: prepare each student for their next phase in life, invest fully in public education, revere public school educators, enhance parent and community support, ensure safe, secure learning environments, and celebrate the good in public education. More details for each of these and specific action items are available on my website:**

**[www.mogreenfornc.com/pillars](http://www.mogreenfornc.com/pillars)**

4. If elected, how would you work with fellow representatives on the other side of the political aisle?

**The NC Superintendent of Public Instruction serves as the chief administrative officer and, I contend, the chief advocacy officer for public schools in North Carolina. I think that if you want to run our system of public schools and advocate for them, you should believe in them. I bring experience with and belief in our public schools.**

**To bridge political differences and buy in from teachers and parents, I will apply my decades of leadership experience where my overall strategy is to listen, learn, and then lead. I have a track record of bringing communities together - beyond political differences - to achieve remarkable things on behalf of students. This moment goes far beyond political affiliation - this is about the well-being of our children in public schools and the future of our state.**

5. What do you see as the role of the office you seek?

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction is an enormous job. The State Superintendent serves as the chief administrative officer for North Carolina's public schools. The position guides North Carolina's 115 public school districts and more than 2,500 public schools, including more than 200 charter schools, nine lab schools, a regional school, and the state's three residential schools serving hard of hearing, deaf, and visually impaired students.

The State Superintendent leads public education from pre-kindergarten to 12th grade, which includes more than 1.3 million students, and leads the Department of Public Instruction, which administers approximately \$11 billion annually in funding, develops subjects, course content, assessments, and provides licenses to over 100,000 teachers and administrators.

The State Superintendent also advocates on behalf of public schools.

6. Which city do you live in and what are three favorite things about it?

I live in Greensboro. I love: 1. The public schools I led when I was Superintendent of Guilford County Schools. 2. The people. 3. The various things to do including the restaurants, the parks, the libraries, the minor league baseball, etc.

For state races:

7. Where do you think our state is headed? What stands in the way? How can you help us get there?

I think our state continues to make great strides economically for businesses and many individuals; however, the major obstacle to continued economic progress is the woeful underfunding of our public schools. Our public schools transform lives, communities, our economy, our state, our nation, and beyond. They have been, are, and can be bright beacons of hope in North Carolina. They're filled with hope because of great educators, whom we should revere, and supportive and engaged parents and community members. However, for them to continue to be successful and to be improved where necessary, we must fund public education adequately. I can help by being a chief advocate for our public schools and by ensuring that the resources that are provided are managed effectively to produce high quality education opportunities for all public school students.

8. Our state seems divided by party. What are some of the things that both parties agree on?

The efforts to reform the way we teach reading in North Carolina has been a successful bipartisan initiative: a renewed focus on the science of reading. I would keep and expand upon how children are taught early literacy skills. I served on a leadership team in North Carolina related to the implementation of that effort, so I have a very good sense of how important this effort is to improving student outcomes. I would work to expand these efforts to struggling readers in middle schools. It is not about partisan differences, but ensuring that every child in our state learns how to read.

**For school board:**

9. State representatives have been working to expand school vouchers. Are you in support or against these programs? Why or why not?

**I am opposed to the taxpayer-funded private school vouchers, called the Opportunity Scholarship program. In general, I do not support the use of public funds to allow students to attend private or parochial schools. My opposition grows exponentially when these types of programs are allowing wealthy families, who can already afford to pay the tuition for private schools, to receive vouchers.**

**North Carolina's taxpayer-funded private school voucher program diverts desperately needed funds from students in our public schools. Our state is, sadly, already 48th in the nation in funding for public education. Its educators are woefully underpaid, making it extremely challenging for our state to meet its constitutional mandate to provide a system of free public schools where all students can receive a sound, basic education. The current legislative action through House Bill 10 – to spend an additional \$463 million taxpayer dollars on more private school vouchers for the wealthiest of North Carolina families – will only make the ability to meet this obligation worse.**

10. What is your opinion on cell phones in schools?

**I am concerned about the impact that cell phones and access to social media may be having on how children are being taught. Before saying what should be the number one item changed regarding what is being taught, I would want to listen and learn more to educators, families, and all stakeholders.**

11. The issue of safety in schools is at the tops of many parents', students' and teachers' minds. How would you prioritize school safety?

**Our schools should be safe, welcoming, and inclusive to everyone. Every child deserves to learn, and every staff member deserves to work, in an environment that is safe for them to be themselves. Using my extensive experience dealing with school safety issues, including having worked with law enforcement and directly supervised a school district law enforcement department, I will work to ensure safe, secure learning environments for our children in our over 2500 public schools. To that end, initiatives will include:**

- Gathering and communicating best practice information for making schools safe environments, including information about facility upgrades, effective technology tools and behavioral practices; advocating for resources to implement those best practices; and providing technical support to local school systems and schools so that they can implement best practices.**
- Increasing access to mental health services across the state through advocacy efforts with the General Assembly, seeking funds from various other sources for these services and working with schools on ways to make it easier for students and staff to access mental health services.**

- Working with law enforcement and school personnel to develop effective, positive relationships that enhance the safety of schools while also developing positive behaviors of students.
- Developing and refining policies that make schools welcoming and safe environments for all students, develop positive student behaviors and character and address inappropriate behavior.

12. Related to that, do you support the inclusion of more police officers in schools? What about metal detectors?

I believe the school resource program is working well but there are certainly areas for improvement. I believe in and support law enforcement; I also believe in accountability. I have real experience working to make school systems safer for North Carolina's children. I am proud to have worked in tandem with law enforcement officers to keep our schools safe and to ensure students could focus on learning. In Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), I helped create CMS's own police department that reported directly to me. As Superintendent of Guilford County Schools, I worked with the district's safety division and local law enforcement agencies to ensure schools had effective school resource officers. It is not one or the other: social workers or school resources officers. That is a false choice. School safety requires collaboration. School safety is the most important priority, and I have experience creating partnerships to put safety first. My position on metal detectors is that we must keep options on the table and evaluate how to harden our school buildings in order to protect our children.

13. The issue of book challenges and book bans has been rising across the country. Can you talk about your philosophy on restricting certain materials in schools?

Educators carefully select age appropriate books and materials for students that will expand their horizons, nurture their quest for knowledge and understanding, help them see themselves and help others see them. Of course, we all want our children to be safe with what they're reading or viewing online. That's a non-negotiable. And if a parent sees something concerning, there should be an open channel for them to communicate with their child's school. And that process exists. But when politicians use schools as culture war battlefields, that doesn't help anyone.

North Carolina's public schools educate more than 1.3 million students. Our schools are growing more and more diverse in terms of race, language, and nationality. Collectively, North Carolina's students speak over 380 different languages. We must have books where students can see themselves and also see other perspectives. Because the State Superintendent of Public Instruction leads all public schools and students in our state, it is critical they embrace North Carolina's diversity.

14. The issue of trans, and other LGBTQ+ students in schools has also become increasingly politicized. Can you talk about your philosophy in terms of LGBTQ+ rights in schools?

I believe that our schools should be safe, welcoming, and inclusive to everyone, including the LGBTQ+ community. In contrast, my opponent has made hateful, insensitive, and false comments about various communities, including writing that the + in the LGBTQ+ community includes pedophilia. I believe that every child deserves to

learn, and every staff member deserves to work, in an environment that is safe for them to be themselves, including members of the LGBTQ+ community.

15. Do you support tax increases to support school infrastructure or teacher pay?

I will seek more funding for our public education system, from school infrastructure to teacher pay, through various forms. I must note there are already significant funds that should be going to public schools that are being diverted to private schools through the taxpayer-funded private school voucher program. We need to focus on having those funds returning to public schools before seeking tax increases.

I am supportive of a statewide bond program to address public school infrastructure needs. Once again, it is not clear whether taxes will need to be raised to pay for this program if current resources were appropriated differently (e.g., public funds not going to private schools).

16. What are parents' roles, if any, in shaping school curriculum?

While the State Superintendent will lead the development of the Standard Course of Study along with the State Board of Education, it should be informed by experts in the subject areas combined with input from other stakeholders across the state including teachers, parents, and even students where appropriate.