County Commissioner Scott Ostrow
Unsubmitted Answers
2026 EASMC Candidate Questionnaire

Education Funding and Local Budgets

1. Do you commit to prioritizing public education funding in future county budgets? What are your top three budget priorities for the public school system?
   - *The public schools have been and will continue to be the major recipient of county funding.*
   - *The school system's budget priorities are established by the superintendent of schools and the board of education, not the county commissioners.*

2. How do you plan to fund public school priorities? What are your thoughts on the current county tax and revenue structure and any actions you would take to update the tax code to promote fairness and equity?
   - *Funding of the public schools is determined by an established budgeting process.*
   - *According to the EASMC, what is unfair and inequitable in the revenue sources?*

3. How would you utilize your budget authority to address shortfalls facing our schools if the state or federal government reduces their commitment(s)?
   - *Shortfalls in federal and/or state funding are reconciled by compromises between the board of education and the county commissioners.*

4. In many schools, educators are dealing with high class sizes and caseloads. How will you help address critical concerns with educator recruitment and retention in order to ensure we can increase staffing to reduce class sizes and caseloads?
   - *The recruitment and retention of school employees is a function of the superintendent of schools, not the county commissioners.*

5. Do you commit to honoring the role of your elected body in upholding the policy and funding mandates associated with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future?
   - *Compliance with the law is obligatory.*

6. Please discuss your philosophy related to charter schools. Do you believe they should be expanded in our county public school structure?
   - *The role of charter schools is determined by the superintendent of schools and the board of education, not the county commissioners.*

7. How will your budget address increased needs for mental health support for students and educators in our community, where mental health access is so limited?
   - *On a community-wide basis, the county health department addresses funding for mental health services, including school-based services.*

8. What is your opinion on local efforts to create and support community schools?

- *I would like to know the evidence-based costs vs benefits of community schools before expressing an opinion.*

9. SMCPS is in a period of enrollment decline. Our newest building is 10 years old. What should influence any decisions to redistrict?

- *Determining the need for redistricting is the decision of the superintendent of schools and the board of education, not the county commissioners.*

Public Funding for Private Schools

10. Do you support or oppose allocating public funding to non-public school students through voucher programs?

- *I support the state's Broadening Options and Opportunities for Students Today (BOOST) Scholarship Program.*

11. Do you support or oppose allowing non-public school students to participate in public school extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)?

- *I have no opinion on the subject.*

Collective Bargaining

12. Do you support or oppose school employees gaining the right to strike?

- *I am opposed to government employees having the right to strike as doing so is against the public itself, not a private entity.*

13. What is your understanding of the nature of the relationship between the Board of Education, Superintendent, county government, and union as it relates to negotiations, budget development, and administration of schools? How do you see yourself utilizing the power of your office in working within this structure?

- *The nature of the relationship between the two governmental entities is established by state law. The nature of the union represents the collective interests of its members' working conditions through contracts with the board of education. As a county commissioner, I am a participant in this structure.*

14. Do you commit to meeting with union leadership to talk about the needs facing our schools (including salary and staffing levels) and the revenue or other budget actions necessary to meet those needs?

- *It would be inappropriate for the county commissioners to meet with union leadership in that the union is a contractor with the school board.*

Racial and Social Justice

15. EASMC supports honesty in education. To encourage critical thinking within our classrooms, we believe educators should have professional autonomy on how to implement curriculum to meet the needs of our students. Do you support or oppose this position? How would you respond to political pressure threatening that professional autonomy?

- *The implementation of curriculum is a function of the superintendent of schools and the board of education, not the county commissioners.*

16. Do you support or oppose a curriculum that reflects the perspective and background of diverse learners? How would you respond to political pressure requesting changes to content and curriculum?

- Curriculum is a function of the superintendent of schools and the board of education, not the county commissioners.

17. What specific policy goals and objectives will you pursue aimed at addressing racial and social justice, including support of diversity, equity, and inclusion for all students and providing equitable access, opportunities, resources, and support?

- *The county commissioners have no role in the policies, goals and objectives of the public schools.*

18. Immigration enforcement is a matter of federal jurisdiction. What is your position on how local law enforcement should interact with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement? And how will you work to ensure school grounds, bus stops, and other school spaces are safe havens against immigration enforcement actions?

- *The interaction between local law enforcement and federal agencies is the function of the county Sheriff's Office, not the county commissioners.*

19. Stable, safe, and affordable housing is necessary for all students to be able to succeed in school and in the recruitment of educators, including education support professionals, to live in the communities they serve. How do you plan to address the housing crisis in the county?

- *See the "Issues" page on the website at https://www.scottostrowforcommissioner.com/*

Privatization and Support for Education Support Professionals (ESP)

20. Are you in favor of contracting out custodial, cafeteria, and maintenance services rather than have those services provided by the Board of Education employees?

- *The contracting of services in the public schools is the function of the superintendent of schools and the board of education, not the county commissioners.*

21. Too many ESPs work second jobs and struggle to provide for their families, buy homes, save for their futures, and afford community or four-year college tuition for their children to learn a trade and plan a career. The looming threats of privatization by school districts, which would import even lower-paid workers from outside areas, risk the stability of schools and communities and further undermine the value of ESPs and their jobs. ESPs across the state are organizing to build presence, strength, and power in a campaign focused on a bill of rights that defines the issues long nagging these dedicated employees and now threatening not only the recruitment of new employees but the retention of dedicated veteran employees. You can read about the ESP Bill of Rights here. Do you support the ESP Bill of Rights?

- *Educational Support Professionals (ESPs) are the non-teaching school employees serving in roles such as paraeducators, bus drivers, food service workers, custodians, clerical staff, and security personnel.*
- *As employees of the school system, the county commissioners have no relation to their rights.*

22. Please share how you would use your office to help make the ESP Bill of Rights a reality in the county.

- *Not Applicable.*