

Arlene Silveira
Madison School Board, Seat 1
MTI Voters
2006 School Board Election Questionnaire
January 10, 2006

1. *The Madison Metropolitan School district held a referendum in June, 2003 to enable the MMSD to exceed the State's repressive revenue controls. Did you support the 2003 referendum?*

Yes

2. *2a. The School Board held three (3) referenda in Spring, 2005. Did you support the referendum to enable the School Board to continue the expenditure level for maintenance, as was approved in a referendum 5 years ago?*

Yes. I was one of the main leaders on the Steering Committee for Madison CARES, the community-based group supporting the 3 referenda in Spring 2005. I made presentations to numerous groups, staffed the referendum table at the Farmer's Market, and helped organize press conferences and lit drops.

2b. Did you support the 2005 referendum to exceed the State's repressive revenue controls in 2005 for general operating expenses, including staffing levels (so that class sizes don't increase and to provide wage increases)?

Yes

2c. Did you support the 2005 referendum to enable school construction to alleviate overcrowded schools?

Yes

3. *If the School Board finds it necessary to change school boundaries due to enrollment, what criteria would you use as a Board member to make such a judgment?*

As a member of the West-Memorial task force, I had given this some extensive thought. My first consideration is to avoid creating schools with high concentrations of low income families. Following this, my next consideration is to keep bus routes no more than 45 minutes, one way. My third consideration is that every effort should be made to keep geographically and historically defined neighborhoods together and to consider the proximity of students to a school when redrawing boundary lines. However, I must also say that due to the differences in the geography of the school attendance areas, as well as the distribution of low income students in relation to a school, the third consideration is important but may not always be possible.

4. *If the School Board finds it necessary to close a school/schools due to economic reasons, what criteria would you use as a Board member to make such a judgment?*

First, I must say that philosophically I am not in favor of closings schools because I support neighborhood schools. If the recommendation of closing a school was brought to the Board, I would want to know the information listed below before making a decision. I would use this information to construct a cost-benefit analysis.

- i. In the big picture, why was a certain school chosen
- ii. Financial savings associated with closing a school
- iii. Additional costs associated with moving children to a new school
- iv. Are the "new" schools set up to support the needs of the incoming students
- v. Demographics of families that would move to a new school
- vi. Plan for staff at school being closed
- vii. Projected growth for the attendance area of the recommended closed school as well as for the new school
- viii. Future numbers (capacity, low income, etc.) for new school
- ix. Affect of changes on the middle and high school tracks

5. *If the School Board finds it necessary to make the \$6-9 million in budget cuts for the 2006-07 budget which Supt. Rainwater is mentioning, what criteria would you use as a Board member to make such a judgment?*

In general, my first priority would be to keep as many cuts as possible away from the classroom. I believe we have to look at all areas being funded by the District's budget. I support the \$100 budget process because it will engage the community in the budget process. This will, in turn, help the Board to determine priorities. It may also build greater understanding of the difficult choices that the district is facing.

6. *Identify specific MMSD programs and/or policies which you believe should be modified, re-prioritized, or eliminated, and explain why.*

At this time I have no specific MMSD programs and/or policies which I believe should be modified, re-prioritized, or eliminated. My first step would be to seek input of staff and parents on programs, before making such decisions.

7. *What should the District do to reduce violence/assure that proper discipline and safety (of the learning and working environment) is maintained in our schools?*

I believe a consistent (equitable) behavior support system should be in place across the district at all school levels. In addition, any response to a behavior incidence needs to be done in a fair and timely manner.

I am in favor of the new restorative justice-based system being implemented in the elementary schools. It is a cooperative approach that focuses on community building and a culture of mutual respect. The focus is on the behavior as a bad choice, not the student as a bad person. With the high mobility of the MMSD, a consistent program like this, implemented across the district, is needed so children will understand rules and behavior, irrespective of attendance area. I also strongly support on-going staff training on how to respond to difficult situations.

Engagement in school is critical. Many discipline problems arise because students lack a "sense of belonging". In the budget times, we must carefully evaluate programs in their effectiveness at keeping students engaged at school and in their ability to help build and strengthen positive social skills and community belonging.

It is important to continue partnerships with the community such as the Dane County Narcotics and Gangs Task Force.

8. *Explain any concerns/proposed solutions you have about the District's minority achievement efforts.*

The School Board must continue to address the differences in proficiency levels and graduation rates between racial and ethnic groups. In addition to continuing what has been working, including Schools of Hope and cultural training opportunities for teaching and support staff, we must develop and expand partnerships with community groups and use a variety of venues for parents to come together to help the district find ways to allow all children to succeed. With the high mobility rate of some students, we should look at ways to help stabilize students' school experience by ensuring supportive and consistent enrollment processes across the district.

9. *Explain your position regarding four-year-old and all-day kindergarten programs.*

I fully support all-day kindergarten programs. I believe it provides a tremendous value to children and families. I support the concept of four-year-old kindergarten although there are issues that need resolution. I think this would be instrumental in addressing academic achievement for all students and would certainly play a vital role in helping to close the achievement gap. However, I do not think we should embark upon this new initiative until we are ensured of adequate funding.

10. *Would you support the Early Learning Initiative, if it violated the MTI/MMSD Contract ban on contracting out?*

I would not support violating the MTI/MMSD Contract ban on contracting out.

11. *Should planning time for elementary teachers be increased? If yes, how could this be accomplished?*

I strongly feel that elementary school teachers need more planning time. I would like to see an analysis of how planning time is actually used. This may provide an opportunity for the development of some efficiencies regarding other requirements that take up the teacher's time and thereby free up planning time for planning.

12. *Given that the Wisconsin Association of School Boards rarely supports the interests of the Madison Metropolitan School District, do you support the District withdrawing from the WASB?*

At this point in time, I do not have enough information to make a decision. I would like to know how much it costs and how much district time is required for membership. Some thoughts. In the Legislative portion of this survey there are a number of questions dealing with WASB. If we could actually influence and work with WASB in the manner indicated in these questions, then there may be an important reason to remain a member. Also, I see the need for communities and school districts to work together to work on changing the funding laws. I think membership in this type of organization could be beneficial.

13. *From what sources do you believe that public schools should be funded?*

I believe that public schools should be funded with tax dollars. I believe we should look at a system funds schools with tax dollars beyond property taxes.

a. *Do you support further increasing student fees?*

In general I do not support increasing student fees because of the financial burden it places on many families. As a result, we may see students not participating in certain activities based on fee decisions. However, in this difficult budget time, I would not rule out the evaluation of fee increases as long as the financial benefit of the increase is weighed against the impact on families and the effect of student participation.

14. *Do you support class sizes of 15 or less for the primary grades?*

Yes

15. *Do you oppose:*

a. *The use of public funds (vouchers) to enable parents to pay tuition with tax payers' money for religious and private schools?*

Yes

b. *The expansion of Charter schools within the Madison Metropolitan School District?*

No. My primary focus is on the support of the current schools in the MMSD. However, if there are specific needs that Charter schools address (i.e., Wright Middle School and the effect of small class sizes on achievement in a low income school), then I think they are worth evaluating.

c. *Senate Bill 377 which creates a charter school in Madison and Milwaukee under the direction of the University of Wisconsin system?*

Yes

16. *List MMSD staff and Board member(s) from whom you do or would seek advice?*

I would seek advice from any board member if they were working on an issue of interest. Most recently, I have sought advice from Carol Carstensen, Juan Lopez, Bill Keys and Johnny Winston Jr. Being actively involved in the PFO/PTO at Leopold and Cherokee and also having worked in support of the referenda in May, I know many teachers and MMSD staff from whom I seek advice. I also regularly seek input from retired MMSD employees as well, such as Marj Passman.

17. *Is your candidacy being promote by any organization?*

No

18. *Have you ever been employed as a teacher? If yes, please describe why you left the teaching profession.*

While not formally "employed" as a teacher, I did receive a BS in biology, chemistry and secondary education. I was certified to teach in Massachusetts and had completed my student teaching. At that time, I made the decision to pursue more advanced science training and received my MS in molecular biology. I was a teaching assistant in graduate school and have kept involved in education at Promega, the company at which I work.

19. *Do you support the inclusion model for including Title 1, EEN and ESL students in the regular education classroom? Why/why not?*

Yes, I support the inclusion model as stated above if it is determined to be in the best interest of the child. I believe inclusion maximizes individual growth and affords a sense of belonging to all involved. I once read, "Children that learn together, learn to live together". That is the benefit of inclusion. I think inclusion is a philosophy that must be shared by the district, school and community members, if it is to work properly.

I believe in order to have a strong inclusive program, there must be good communication between administration, staff and parents; there must be an adequate number of staff to handle a given classroom situation; staff must have appropriate training and resources to deliver a differentiated, yet challenging curriculum, so all children benefit.

20. *The Board of Education has moved from the development of policy to becoming involved in implementation of policy; i.e. matters usually reserved to administration. Some examples are when it:*

Decided to hear parent's complaints about a teacher's tests and grading.

Decided to modify the administration's decision about how a State Statute should be implemented.

Do you believe that the Board should delegate to administration the implementation of policy which the Board has created and the implementation of State Statutes?

The Board should create policy and then delegate to the administration the implementation of the policy. The Board should be responsible for, and be held accountable for, ensuring that policy is implemented in a manner consistent with the goals/direction of the Board.

Do you believe that the Board should delegate to administration the implementation of State Statutes?

The Board should create policy and then delegate to the administration the implementation of the policy. The Board should be responsible for, and be held accountable for, ensuring that policy is implemented in a manner consistent with the goals/direction of the Board.

Would you support the Board exploring a means to make their meetings more efficient?

Yes as long as the efficiencies do not preclude a format for public feedback and a time for discussion and thorough review.

21. *Do/did/will your children attended private or parochial schools during their K-12 years? If no, and if you have children, what schools have/will they attend?*

No. My daughter attended Leopold Elementary School, K-5; she attended Cherokee Middle School, 6-8 (currently in 8th grade); will attend West High School.

22. *Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote passage of legislation to eliminate the revenue controls on public schools?*

I am unsure of what is involved with the "introduction of a motion" at WASB. Therefore, I cannot comment on that part of the question in #s 22-33.

23. *Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to oppose any legislation which would authorize a tax freeze and/or taxpayers bill of rights (TABOR)?*

I oppose TABOR.

24. *Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote passage of legislation to eliminate the Qualified Economic offer which restricts free and open collective bargaining for teachers and would enable teacher wages to be established through negotiations between the parties?*

I believe that teachers and support staff need to be paid fairly and would support collective bargaining.

25. *Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote passage of legislation to prohibit the privatization of schools via the use of tuition tax credits (vouchers) to pay tuition with taxpayers' money to private or religious schools?*

I do not support the use of tuition tax credits to pay tuition with taxpayers' money to private or religious schools.

26. *Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote passage of legislation which will maintain or expand the benefit level of the Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave Act?*

I support the Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave Act as should the District. It is a law that supports family values.

27. *Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote passage of legislation which will increase the retirement formula multiplier from 1.6% to 2% for teachers and general employees, i.e. equal that of protective employees?*

I would require more detailed information on what this means before answering.

28. *Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote passage of legislation which will prohibit public employee residency requirements?*

I do not support having public employee's residency requirements for district employees.

29. *Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote passage of legislation which will eliminate and forbid restrictions to free and open collective bargaining for the selection of insurance for public employees, including the naming of the insurance carrier?*

I support health insurance being mutually agreed upon by the District and MTI.

30. *Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote passage of legislation which will guarantee free and open collective bargaining regarding the establishment of the school calendar/school year, including the right to begin the school year, via negotiations between MTI and the District?*

I believe the start of the school year should be determined between MTI and the District and should not be a directive from the State.

31. *Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote passage of legislation to forbid the work of employees organized under Wis. Stat. 111.70 (collective bargaining statute) to be subcontracted?*

I would not support subcontracting if it violated the collective bargaining statutes.

32. *Will you introduce and vote for legislation which will mandate full State funding of any State mandated program?*

I favor State funding for State mandated programs.

33. *Will you introduce and vote for legislation which will provide adequate State funding of public education?*

I will work hard in dealing with the inequality in the State funding structure. My goal is to work with the community to address school financing. I commit to working to lobby the government for reform in education financing.

34. *Are you, or any of your campaign committee members, active in or supportive of the "Get Real", "ACE" or "Vote No for Change" organizations?*

I am not involved in these organizations. No one from my campaign committee, to my knowledge, is involved.

35. *Name of campaign committee/address/phone #/treasurer. List the members of your campaign committee.*

"Silveira for School Board", 5760 Barbara Drive, Fitchburg, WI, 53711; phone: 516-8981

Treasurer: Tammy Peyton

Campaign Committee: Tammy Peyton, Marisue Horton, Beth Zurbuchen, Joan Eggert, Janet Morrow, Robert Godfrey

36. *Do you accept PAC contributions?*

At this point I am leaning toward not accepting PAC contributions.