



Candidate Survey for Mayoral Candidates

Please return by Monday, July 29 to info@nyckidspac.org

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Candidate's full name	Anthony Gronowicz
Staff contact and e-mail	Carl Lundgren cllundgren@earthlink.net
Phone number	347-948-4010

Governance

Many New York City parents feel disenfranchised by the current system of mayoral control over public education and feel there are few checks and balances. Only 22% of New Yorkers believe that mayoral control should continue in its present form after the state legislature revisits the issue in 2015.

	Yes	No
Would you support changes to the system that would give parents a significant voice in decision-making and/or provide checks and balances to the current system?	Yes	
Which of the following changes to what is now called the Panel for Education Policy (the <i>de facto</i> Board of Education) would you support? Please check as many as you like.	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A directly elected Board of Education 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reconstituted Board of Education with a majority not appointed by the Mayor 		No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Education Councils (CECs) selecting parent representatives to the Board of Education 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having Board of Education members with set terms, who cannot be fired at will by the mayor 	Yes	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The creation of an independent committee to nominate potential Board of Education members, from which the mayor will select the actual members 		No
Which of the following measures to ensure that parents and community members have a say in their children's schools would you support? Please check as many as you like.	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanding the powers of CECs, including giving them approval authority over school closings and co-locations? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authorizing municipal control; i.e., the City Council making law on educational policy, including school closings, etc.? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowing School Leadership Teams (SLTs) to regain the power to develop school based budgets? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconstituting school based committees or SLTs to select principals? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoring the district structure, with a superintendent who supervises principals and provides access for parents with issues and problems? 	Yes	

Do you have other proposals to provide a stronger parent voice and/or checks and balances in school governance?

As formal advisors and monitors

What is your view of how parents should be involved in educational decision-making? Please be as specific as possible.

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Chancellor

We have had a series of Chancellors who have required a waiver from the NYS Education Department. The Mayor has defended his appointments based on his belief that the public education system needed a business manager.

As to the role of Chancellor, would you support:	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chancellor being chosen by Board of Education rather than the mayor? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selecting only a chancellor who does not require a waiver from the state (i.e., an educator) 	Yes	

In what ways would you change the Chancellor's role, if any?

Greatly limited powers.

Do you have any other proposals for changes in the Chancellor's role?

Would require more thought.

Please describe some successes you believe mayoral control of education has brought. Please describe some problems you see as well.

A mayor who stated as he did on December 1, 2011, at MIT that he would be comfortable with a class size of 70 when his daughters went to Dalton where the largest class size was 20 clearly is destructive of public education. All students should have small classes.

Testing

Another issue that parents feel passionately about is the need to reduce standardized testing, test prep, and their being used to evaluate schools, students, and teachers. What is your position on this matter?

Would you support:	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminating the use of test scores as the primary basis for making promotional decisions? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminating or minimizing test being used as the primary criteria on which school grades or progress reports are based (currently, school grades are derived about 85% from test scores)? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminating school progress reports altogether? 		No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crafting a teacher evaluation system that depends as little as possible on standardized test scores? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refusing to expand standardized testing into other grades (Pre-K to 2nd)? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pledging not to create new local standardized exams? 	Yes	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposing the creation of 3-8th grade standardized exams in subjects other than ELA, math and science? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making admissions to all schools based on more holistic factors, and especially Gifted & Talented programs and the specialized high schools? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging other NYC high schools to join the portfolio/alternative assessment consortium as opposed to basing graduation decisions on the results of the Regents exams? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a non-punitive process by which NYC parents can choose to have their children opt-out of the standardized testing? 	Yes	

Would you propose any other policy changes in this area?

Can't think of any offhand.

What do you think is the best use, if any, of standardized testing?

As one component in evaluation.

Resources and equity

The last few years have seen cuts of about 14% to school budgets. Class sizes have risen, and in the early grades are at the highest level in 14 years. Art, music, science, and afterschool programs have been eliminated from many schools. How would you address these issues? How would you go about guaranteeing the civil rights of all students and providing them with an equitable opportunity to learn, regardless of their background?

More specifically would you:	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that school budgets remain stable and/or increase in the future? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set reduced class size goals to achieve by the end of your first term? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with the plan the city adopted in 2007, as a response to the Contracts for Excellence state law, which calls for class size reduction in all grades? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to spending a larger percent of the city budget on reducing class size, and if necessary, raise revenue to fund this? 	Yes	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-evaluate “fair student funding” to discern whether it has provided more equity or, instead, incentives to principals to increase class size and/or get rid of their experienced teachers? 	Yes	
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How would you address the need to reduce class size, the top priority of parents on the DOE’s own surveys?

Make it my #1 concern.

How would you ensure that children are provided with a well-rounded education, including art, music, science, and physical education, and how would you fund this?

Mandate it. Restore stock transfer tax, commuter tax, and personal income tax that places the burden on the 1% as was the case 30 years ago.

How would you go about developing and supporting measures to attract and retain experienced and high-quality teachers?

Raise salaries.

Our schools have become increasingly segregated over time. How would you address the goal of increasing diversity in NYC public schools? Please be specific.

By not allowing charter schools that promote segregation. Ensure that every student be taught the history of racism in this city so as to promote tolerance and understanding.

Any other comments on resources and/or equity?

I would never tolerate a situation as I experienced in Wingate High School at the turn of the millennium when I visited an art class and discovered that the wonderful work being done by the students was because their teacher bought out of pocket the supplies the students needed.

School facilities

Overcrowding is a chronic and ever-worsening problem in NYC schools. The city has underinvested in school facilities over the last decade, resulting in most of our students attending schools in overcrowded and/or substandard conditions. There are thousands of children on waiting lists for their zoned elementary schools. Mandatory Kindergarten, expanded Pre-K and community schools with wrap-around

services will require even more space. And yet the current capital plan does not have enough new seats to keep up with future enrollment growth, not to mention eliminating existing overcrowding or reducing class size.

Do you support any of the following measures? Please check all that apply.	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A more ambitious capital plan that would provide the space necessary to eliminate overcrowding and allow for smaller classes, as well as devotes sufficient funds to maintenance and repair. 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest a larger percentage of the city’s overall capital spending towards these goals. 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reform the blue book formula so it more accurately reflects overcrowding and incorporates the need for smaller classes. 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commit to providing transparent enrollment projections. 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require developers to provide space for schools in overcrowded areas or pay “impact” fees into a fund for school construction. 	Yes	

Do you have any other proposals to address overcrowding?

These will suffice for now.

Privatization

DOE is spending more than \$4 billion this year on private contracts, which represents the fastest growing part of its budget. More and more educational and support services are being outsourced and the budget for charter schools is approaching \$1 billion.

Would you:	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the spending on privatization, outsourcing, contracts and consultants? 	Yes	
If your answered yes to the above question, how would you do so?		
By outlawing them.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent the awarding of contracts to companies that have already been shown to have stolen funds or are suspected of corruption? 	Yes	

If you answered yes to the above question, how would you do so?		
By having inspectors to monitor these abuses.		
• Support the continued expansion of charter schools?		No
• Support the practice of co-locating charter schools in existing DOE facilities?		No
• Enforce the provisions in state law, which requires co-located charter schools to pay for the services and space that they now currently receive from the DOE for free?	Yes	

How would you work to ameliorate the divide and inequities between the charter school community and those in district public schools?

By promoting demographic equality within these schools

Any other comments on privatization?

It needs to stop for it fosters greed.

School closings, small schools and online learning

Mayor Bloomberg will have closed more than 150 schools during his administration, and created more than 450 new small schools. Most parents opposed these school closings because they disrupted our children’s education and displaced the neediest students elsewhere. There is also discontent with the requirement that all new schools be small; i.e. 400 students or less; which leads to an inefficient use of resources and space, and difficulty in providing students with advanced coursework and a full range of extra-curricular activities. The rapid expansion of online learning has also been among this administration’s priorities, replacing the personal contact between student and teacher by delivering course content and instruction through computers and software.

Would you:	Yes	No
• Continue the Bloomberg-era policy of closing schools and forming new schools, or instead pledge to do more to improve existing schools?	Improve existing schools	
• Relax the requirement that all new schools be of a small size?	Yes	
• Ensure that students have full, face-to-face, in-person access to teacher, or	Face-to-Face over Face to	

continue to expand online learning as the alternative?	Screen.	
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Other comments on school closures/new schools/online learning?

There is no technological substitute for face-to-face learning as most studies demonstrate.

Transparency

Even experts at the Independent Budget Office say the DOE’s budget has become less transparent than in the past, making it difficult if not impossible for parents and advocates to learn what funds are being spent on, not to mention give input about possible improvements in spending & priorities. Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests are rarely responded to, and never promptly, and there is much data that the DOE refuses to disclose, such as results of surveys and enrollment projections.

Which of the following measures to increase overall transparency would you carry out? Please check all that apply.	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Itemized, fully detailed breakdowns of education budget comparable to other city agencies 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to FOILs in a timely and complete fashion 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an online log which reports on which FOILs have been submitted and when they were responded to, with a link to the results [along the model of the Illinois board of education; see http://www.isbe.state.il.us/foia/default.htm] 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More accurate reporting of class size and overcrowding 	Yes	

Any other suggestions as to how to increase transparency?

These should suffice for now.

Special education

Under the current special education reform, schools are required to accommodate children with a large variety of special needs in general education or inclusion classes, often resulting in their being placed in

extremely large class or with a teacher who is not adequately trained. In fact, principals have been instructed to accommodate children with Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) in general education classes up to the legal limit (32 children per class in most elementary grades). While parents understand the benefits of inclusion, they worry that sufficient resources and staffing are not being provided either to meet the needs of students with disabilities or the rest of the students in the class.

Would you:	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promise to release reports twice a year, showing how many students have IEPs that are out of compliance? 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to commission a report, in consultation with Citywide Council on Special Education and the District 75 Citywide Council, by an independent research group on the implementation of the special education reform, including survey results from parents, students, administrators and educators at the school level 	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission a study, again by an independent expert, analyzing the causes of the increase in the number and percent of students diagnosed with special needs? Such numbers have been on the increase in NYC in the past five years. 	Yes	

How will you make sure that the needs of students with disabilities are met, that they are provided with the individual attention and smaller classes that they require, and that the funding provided is sufficient and is properly spent to achieve these goals?

Closer monitoring.

Estimates are that 25% of special needs students in NYC do not receive their mandated services. How would you ensure that all students with disabilities receive their services promptly?

Enforce the laws on this matter.

How would your administration deal with the over-representation/identification of students of color in special education?

More funding and curriculum development.

Other suggestions to improve opportunities for students with disabilities?

Not off-hand.

Other policies

Cellphone ban

Most parents believe that for safety reasons their children should be allowed to carry cellphones to and from school. Would you continue the official policy of prohibiting students from bringing their cell phones to school?

Yes	No
Yes	

Privacy protections

The state and the city are currently sharing highly sensitive, personally identifiable student data with a corporation named inBloom Inc., which is storing it on a vulnerable data cloud and making it available to for-profit vendors without parental consent. At the same time, inBloom has stated it will not be held responsible if the data leaks out either in storage or transmission.

Would you agree to:	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pull NYC student data out of the inBloom cloud as soon as possible?	Yes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pledge not to share personally identifiable student data with <i>any third party</i> without parental consent?	Yes	

School to prison

Many parents and advocates are concerned by the number of police in our schools and the high rate of students who are arrested for minor offenses. What would you do to protect children with minor behavioral issues from being suspended or otherwise forced into the school to prison pipeline?

I would not do it.

Credit recovery

To inflate their graduation rates, some schools have implemented sub-standard credit recovery programs based on online learning or packets of homework that allow students who have failed their courses to graduate on time. How would you address this issue to ensure that receiving a high school diploma actually means that a student is equipped to become a productive citizen?

Hire more teachers, counselors, and tutors.

Open-ended questions

Please summarize your record of achievements in public education as a policymaker.

Developed course, and ran an institute that funded educational conferences for high school and community college students, including a mock constitutional convention.

Please describe the ways in which, as a public official, you have demonstrated responsiveness to parental concerns or community members in the area of public education?

What would be your top educational priorities if elected mayor?

How would your approach differ from the current Mayor, and in what ways would you emulate his policies?

I would have teachers work together with parents and students, with administrators acting as facilitators, not as overseers, or punishers. This mayor has done more damage to public education than any of his predecessors.

Anything else you would like to share?

I have spent 45 years in public education.

	Yes	No
Would you agree for a member of our group to interview you in person, if we have follow up questions?	Yes	

Thank you so much for taking the time to answer our questions.