



SUSTAINABLE LOUDOUN


Loudoun County Committee for a Sustainable Society

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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School Board Candidates Discuss Environmental Initiatives



The Loudoun County Committee for a Sustainable Society (LCCSS) surveyed local School Board candidates last month regarding their positions on environmental issues. A summary of the survey responses follows. The completed questionnaires are available on our website at <http://www.sustainableloudoun.org/2007>.

A Healthy Schools Survey was sent to all 16 School Board candidates. These questions focused on the quality of the food and environment within public schools, as well as energy conservation policies. Twelve candidates responded, with Nuzzaco (Catoctin), Geurin (Sterling), Guzman (Sugarland Run), and Hammond (Sugarland Run) not participating. Marshall briefly responded that he currently lacked the necessary information to make adequate judgments. Generally, favorable responses were received from candidates pertaining to the Healthy Schools Survey and seem to endorse LCCSS's effort to encourage healthier schools.

All responding School Board candidates supported a food selection curriculum for students and parents guided by sustainability and personal health concepts. There was also unanimous support for a system-wide Sustainable Schools initiative and changes to school building standards in order to accommodate sustainable features.

Only one Healthy Schools Survey respondent, Stevens (Potomac), opposed initial review and follow-up trial programs to improve food service offerings. These offerings include lunches, vending machine snacks, and extra-curricular fund-raising food sales. Stevens cited funding concerns as the reason for his negative response.

While all Healthy Schools Survey respondents supported practices and policies to improve student health and safety, two participants opposed the idea of creating an interdepartmental task force to review and revise maintenance practices and materials policies stating that concern that staffing another task force may prove too burdensome.

Overall, the responding School Board candidates agreed that Healthy Schools initiatives bring positive outcomes. These include cost savings, student and staff health, and improved school performance. The candidates identified two obstacles which may prevent the implementation of such changes: funding concerns and selling new ideas to seasoned staff.

School Board candidates were also asked to rank eight Healthy Schools priorities in order of importance. The majority of candidates placed highest priority on upgrading the nutritional quality of school food,

Mission: LCCSS promotes the development of a local community economy based on environmental stewardship and the sustainable use of resources.

November 16, 2007

Page 2

adopting healthy snacks and restricting candy. Moderate emphasis was placed on teaching healthy habits, and the lowest priority was given to eating locally produced food.

LCCSS is a local, community-based, non-partisan group that works to promote environmental stewardship and the sustainable use of resources in Loudoun County. For further information about LCCSS and its activities, contact Tony Noerpel, anoerpel@loudounwireless.com, or by phone at 540.882.3289.