



BIZVOTES RESPONSES

INFORMING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND ENCOURAGING
POLITICAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT.



Incumbents' names are listed in blue.

BLUE RIDGE

1. Please provide an overview of your background including your credentials and areas of expertise you intend to exercise if elected to the Loudoun County School Board?

PRISCILLA B. GODFREY

PO Box 373
Aldie, VA 20105

I have a Bachelors of Arts in English and Theatre from Muskingum College; the mother of three LCPS graduates and am a former legal secretary in Washington, D.C. I bring to the board my 25 years as a school volunteer and my eight years on the Board. I also bring six years of experience as a board member of the Virginia School Board Association. I am currently chairman of the VSBA Finance and Audit Committees and a strong advocate for Loudoun County at the Virginia General Assembly and before the U.S. Congress. My expertise on the School Board is health, safety and the fine arts.

JILL TURGEON

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I have been an educator in Loudoun County for 10 years. I taught Pre-K with Loudoun PRCS for 4 1/2 years, subbed in both long-term and short-term assignments for 1 1/2 years, and am currently in my 6th year of teaching 2nd grade for LCPS. I hold a Masters Degree in Education, and have been trained in a variety of educational practices used in Loudoun County, as well as nationwide. My insight and practical knowledge of the schools will be a valuable resource as the board works on issues from curriculum policy to budgetary concerns.

2. How would you rate the performance of the current school board? In what areas has the current school board excelled and what areas must be improved?

PRISCILLA B. GODFREY

I think the School Board has performed well despite a poor economy and consistent growth of 3,000 students per year. We have excelled in the area of policy, the backbone of any organization, by reviewing and updating all our policies within two years. We have excelled in the area of discipline management with policies that allow committee members to maintain safe schools and at the same time consider each student and their infraction individually. However, we have failed to manage our meeting time wisely. We need to train the new Board on best practices for efficient meetings.

JILL TURGEON

I feel that many members of the current school board are too quick to simply go along with the status quo, rather than listen to the genuine concerns of the taxpayers of Loudoun County. I do not think that the school board should "follow" the inklings of the superintendent without first exploring the issues themselves to come up with an answer. I would like to see a school board that is truly accountable to the taxpayers, and not a rubber stamp for the school administration.



3. How would you rate the performance of the LCPS Administration? In what areas has the current school board excelled and what areas must be improved?

PRISCILLA B. GODFREY

I think the School Board has performed well despite a poor economy and consistent growth of 3,000 students per year. We have excelled in the area of policy, the backbone of any organization, by reviewing and updating all our policies within two years. We have excelled in the area of discipline management with policies that allow committee members to maintain safe schools and at the same time consider each student and their infraction individually. However, we have failed to manage our meeting time wisely. We need to train the new Board on best practices for efficient meetings.

JILL TURGEON

LCPS has developed a wonderful learning environment for our children to learn. The standards that have been set for our children have been high, and have caused many students to excel. There are, however, areas where improvements can be made. I would like to see the LCPS Administration have more accountability to the parents and taxpayers of Loudoun County. The budgetary process, for example, needs to be more transparent. The taxpayers of Loudoun County should have ease of access to any and all information regarding the spending practices of LCPS.

4. What do you feel is the most important or critical issue facing Loudoun's K-12 educational system? Why do you feel this way and what would you do as a member of the School Board to address this issue?

PRISCILLA B. GODFREY

I feel the most critical issue for LCPS is the growing number of overcrowded schools at every level and the lack of classroom seats projected for the future. As a member of the School Board, I need to communicate better with the members of the Board of Supervisors who make the final decisions on the CIP and the operating budget. I am pleased that we were able to come to an agreement for our current five year CIP and will be working toward educating the public on how these projects are critical and will benefit all our children.

JILL TURGEON

As an educational system, we have become too reliant and focused on the standardized testing of our children. We are teaching them to regurgitate information, rather than utilize critical thinking skills. Such skills need to be taught & expanded upon in our schools. Instead, we are teaching to the test & underestimating the potential of our students. Without these crucial skills, we are producing students who cannot problem-solve. As a SB member, I will see that the focus of our teaching is on critical thinking & application, rather than standards such as those set forth through NCLB.



5. Do you feel the working relationship between the Board of Supervisors and the School Board is effective and well structured? Why or why not? If not, please provide your recommendations to improve this relationship?

PRISCILLA B. GODFREY

The relationship between the Board of Supervisors and School Board changes with each election. The current supervisors did a lot of their work with joint committees these past four years in which I participated; sometimes they were productive, other times nothing much changed. It is inherent in their two roles that some tension will exist. Because almost every supervisor decision affects schoolchildren it is best if both Boards can work well together; respect their differences and look for common ground as we did with the five year CIP.

JILL TURGEON

I do not feel that the current relationship between the BOS and the SB is effective. Since the BOS allocates funds to the SB, I feel that it is imperative that the BOS become more involved with the SB. They need to be aware of the needs of the schools on a first-hand basis. Too often these communications are not made until the budget process has begun. This is too late. They need to be aware of the ongoing needs and priorities of the SB in order to make an informed decision regarding budgetary allotments.

6. How can the Board of Supervisors and School Board work collectively to streamline the school site selection process and associated land use approvals?

PRISCILLA B. GODFREY

We are one of the few counties where public use facilities are treated just like a developer with years before full approval is granted. We can save not only time but money if we would pattern our approvals after other counties like Fairfax. All counties value public input and that is always provided but the process of approval is expedited by using a standards-based review system. The county did not purchase land in the beginning that coincided with their planning documents. Now that the county is so developed right where the students are located, the land is scarce, expensive and rare.

JILL TURGEON

Both boards need to provide ample opportunity for the community to provide input. By this, I mean a real, genuine conversation between the boards and the citizens. The formality of the public input sessions is good for input, but not discussions. The people of Loudoun County are very educated and resourceful. We need to draw upon that knowledge to work together to find the best solutions for our community schools. Land deals where more than market value of a property is paid needs to be a thing of the past. It is irresponsible use of our tax dollars.



7. Please provide your thoughts on the following potential approaches to supplement traditional education funding, and for those your support, how each approach could be incorporated into Loudoun Public School's budget and operating system?

- a. School-Business Partnerships;
- b. Public charter and magnet schools;
- c. Open enrollment to balance population amount schools;
- d. Distance-learning for in-school and home-schooled students;
- e. Adjustments to class sizes; and/or
- f. Other approaches that may compliment the education today's Loudoun County children are receiving through LCPS.

PRISCILLA B. GODFREY

- We have 340 school-business partnerships. These businesses provide services and products to our students. The popular Internship Day provides students an experience that money cannot buy.
- We will follow the State's new charter school legislation as applications reach the School Board. Since the school board is responsible for teacher salaries and other expenses, I don't know how much money will be saved but I am open to any new opportunities . We support two magnet schools – the Academy of Science (supported by HHMI) and Thomas-Jefferson Math and Science High School.
- We do have open enrollment in specific situations. The Board's use of Tuscorora shows that we are flexible in use of school space to meet student needs.
- We offer several ways for students to access on-line courses and have over 100 students enrolled. Ed Anywhere is open to any student and several home-school students get instruction online.
- In an effort to save money we have increased class size twice in the last three years.
- As a member of our academy committee, I would like more magnet schools. Savings in our operating budget will be realized as we move toward hand-held devices.

JILL TURGEON

I believe that the most successful schools are those which are locally based, with the focus being on the needs of the students in those particular schools, rather than looking at the needs as an entire nation, state, or district. In other words, the one-size-fits-all mentality of our current school system is not working. Partnerships are a great way to draw on the resources of the community. I would whole-heartedly support school-business partnerships. Charter schools are a great way to individualize education and give parents a real choice in their child's education. Open enrollment encourages fruitful competition among schools to provide the best education for our students, as well as addressing the enrollment number issues. Parents of home-schooled children pay taxes to the schools, so I feel that they, too, have the right to access the resources available to LCPS students. Regarding class sizes: Due to the one-on-one attention that is crucial to those early years, these numbers must be kept low. Reading and writing are not subjects that can be taught in large group settings, especially in grades K-2.



8. How can Loudoun County Public Schools best improve either its curriculum or career training to ensure its students meet the requirements of the future workplace?

PRISCILLA B. GODFREY

LCPS is incorporating in every classroom 21st century learning skills required by the marketplace of today and tomorrow; we are also ensuring that students will be bi-lingual, a requirement of many jobs; we have changed our methods of assessment to better measure skill set acquisition rather than rote memory; and we have a heavy emphasis on being a world citizen not just a Loudoun County resident. Through many business and civic organizations both local, national and international, we keep updated on what the marketplace demands of trained employees.

JILL TURGEON

As discussed in question 4, I feel that critical thinking skills need to take precedence in order to produce successful workers. In addition, I would like to see an expansion of the trade-school skills within LCPS. Not all students are slated to attend college. We need good, skilled workers in our society. Monroe Tech is a wonderful resource for our students, but we need more of these opportunities within the LCPS system.

9. What economies of scale or other creative efficiencies should the School Board initiate to reduce the cost of education per student while maintaining the highest level of educational experience for our K-12 students?

PRISCILLA B. GODFREY

Our operating budget is the same as three years ago despite the fact that we are educating 9,000 more students than we were three years ago. We have increased efficiencies in every area of the budget; transportation has re-routed bus routes to keep from purchasing buses or hiring bus drivers; public relations is putting more and more information that used to be in paper form on our school website; we use webconferencing as a means to save on travel costs; we continue to save large amounts of energy by practicing conservation. We will continue to seek cost savings wherever we can.

JILL TURGEON

Giving more control to the school administrators regarding the training teachers receive, the programs they implement in their school, and which technologies they want to utilize will cut down on a large amount of waste. The principal understands the needs of their particular school. There is no need to train teachers in a learning method that will not be useful with their population of students. Principals can decide what upgrades are needed in their schools, rather than depending on Central Office to make the decision. LCPS spends too much money on things that are not needed.

10. Do you see any areas where LCPS and County functions may be pursued collaboratively to better leverage available services and resources?

PRISCILLA B. GODFREY

The county and LCPS share resources in many ways: central garage maintenance and fueling; and IT shared services and equipment are just two ways that money is being saved on a yearly basis. We recently received a 93 efficiency rating from the Center for American Progress which makes us the second most efficient school district in Virginia and more efficient than any school district in suburban Maryland. We were also studied by MGT of America, Inc. just a few years ago and we have fully implemented 44 of the 60 recommendations for efficiency and organization.

JILL TURGEON

I think that open communication between all county organizations would be of great benefit to all parties. Sharing resources makes the most sense. The use of all county facilities, for example, should be open to all county organizations. For example, if school buildings are not in use during the weekends, then they should be available for use by other county groups, such as LC Parks and Recreation.

11. Why are you a candidate for the School Board? What differentiates you from your opponent(s)?

PRISCILLA B. GODFREY

I am running for the School Board because there are many challenges ahead and lots of work to do. I don't know my opponent but I do know that I approach the job with energy, zeal and a strong desire to provide whatever our students need to succeed. I am responsive and responsible for the decisions I make. My work with the Virginia School Board Association and the National School Board Association has increased our ability to learn from other school districts around the country and around the world.

JILL TURGEON

I am a candidate for the school board because I know that I can make a difference. I am a person who looks to solve problems through research and determination. I do not base my actions on the opinions of others. My opponent relies heavily on the word of our superintendent to make her decisions. Unlike my opponent, I will be available to my constituents. My opponent has told several people that she is running so that she can serve as president of the VA State School Board. I am giving up my beloved career as a teacher to serve the residents of Loudoun County.

12. Do you have a web site where more information about you is available? If so, what is that web site address and can this be provided to our membership?

PRISCILLA B. GODFREY

I have a website at www.godfreyforschoolboard.org. I have a Facebook page at Godfrey For School Board. I invite Chamber members to check me out! My email is godfreyblueridge@gmail.com.

JILL TURGEON

My website is: www.jill4schoolboard.com
Please feel free to share this with your membership. Thank you.