



BIZVOTES RESPONSES

INFORMING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND ENCOURAGING
POLITICAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT.



Incumbents' names are listed in blue.

CATOCTIN

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?

PABLO "PAUL" ARIAS

I have been a Nurse for 17 years, caring for others, but more importantly being involved in decision making regarding healthcare. This has given me a first-hand appreciation of the impact of runaway regulations. As a former Chief Nurse Executive and Director of Case Management, I have the knowledge and skill to oversee a large budget and to question costs. Dealing with many people and agendas I have been able to build consensus; a mainstay of my ability in leadership positions for most of my career. I believe these skills would serve you well as your Catoctin School Board representative.

JENNIFER BERGEL
10901 George Mill Rd
Lovettsville, VA 20180

I grew up in Loudoun County, was educated in its schools, taught for LCPS after graduating from college, and then campaigned for and won the Catoctin District seat on the School Board in 2007. Though I have worked as a high school teacher for the majority of my career, I have also taught as an adjunct professor at NOVA's Loudoun Campus. It is imperative that someone with current classroom experience stays on the School Board. I know and understand the culture of a school: a school's culture often determines its success.



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?

PABLO "PAUL" ARIAS

Average, they have addressed the need for expansion due to the increase of the population but fall short of exercising economy of scale or of having a vision in which the schools are built to not max out in 1-2 years. They also have spent a surplus that should have been returned to the Supervisors to address other issues in the county. They also have not done a sufficient job in retention of our teachers.

Our academic achievements vary from school to school while some excel and others do not. Addressing a curriculum that meets the needs of our children needs to be at the forefront of action

JENNIFER BERGEL

The current school board has worked to maintain excellent educational opportunities in Loudoun during an economically depressed time period. Trying to inform the public better was a goal of many on this board. Members tried to juggle enrollment needs while pushing for more capital projects. Members also showed commitment to changing some of the current policies and getting them updated, while including the public and staff in this process.

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?

PABLO "PAUL" ARIAS

As the answer supra it is difficult to understand where the board begins and the administration begins, there is insufficient transparency in the decision making process along with out of control spending such as whiteboards for all the classes although many go unused and even the GPS technology for the buses.

JENNIFER BERGEL

The LCPS Administration has adapted to the recession and has been receptive to board members' ideas. For example, I wanted to make sure committee meetings were taped. Under my leadership, the Curriculum and Instruction meetings were taped for the public. We are now going to do the same with Finance. Changes in the Personnel department have made it more employee friendly. The staff made the budget doc align with the County's as well as hosted regional budget meetings to hear from the public AND the staff. Moving to social media has also helped to get more information to the public. .



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?

PABLO "PAUL" ARIAS

Retention and recruitment. As I gathered signatures for my ballot and my continued speaking with the citizens of the Catoclin district one theme has been consistent and that has been the loss of our teachers to surrounding counties and states due to the pay. As a county we rank in the middle of the pack for the state. To be a leader in the nation in education you need the teachers. Many of the teachers I spoke with brought this up as an issue along with a lack of control of the curriculum.

JENNIFER BERGEL

There is not only one critical issue, but the one that will impact everyone is the lack of facilities for our students. With construction costs low, I have asked for more schools to be built during this time because there were/are shovel-ready sites. I am concerned that the continued chiseling around the edges that has been done will cause a huge break if enough care is not taken with the educational system.

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?

PABLO "PAUL" ARIAS

It is well documented that in recent years there seems to be an increasing rift between the two. Anytime that there is a gap in collaboration the issues that has created the issue needs to be discussed and mapped out to figure out how to overcome it. Having a shared vision with a common strategic plan can assist in setting goals that can be mutually achieved. I have done this for many years in my career and can state that it is a strength of mine. I expect that once I am on the board that using my active listening skills and my planning and quality improvement skill can lead to improvement.

JENNIFER BERGEL

Though there is structure for a working relationship, it is not always effective. As a member of the Jt. Committee, I have spent time trying to correct misinformation while in these public meetings. The same issues seem to repeat themselves: too much time is spent having the same conversations. A Memorandum of Understanding was developed between the boards, which included public opinion, but the work is sometimes ignored in discussions as we discuss schools in/of the future. Budget talks need to be more conversational than rhetoric-based as well.



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

PABLO "PAUL" ARIAS

Input from the stakeholders is a key element in formation of site selection. Economy of scale, cost and future use and vision has to be included and accounted for. Using techniques such as Lean Six Sigma can improve any process by exposing the key areas that cause bottle necks and non-value added items. I have used this methodology for many years with success that includes growth, cost-savings and streamlining.

JENNIFER BERGEL

The site selection process was changed during this term to reflect some members of the public's opinions. Both boards work on school sites "together," but political will rather than what is best for all sometimes comes into play. A shovel-ready site is in the East on which a high school could be built while the HS-8 question plays out... There have been sites that have been considered that would meet the community's needs and the students'. Both boards could have more schools under construction right now.



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.

PABLO "PAUL" ARIAS

- Loudoun County Public Schools have begun to develop programs where the business community gets to interact with the schools in ensuring that our students are prepared for the workforce and that they have the opportunity to learn from those that are already working in their fields, as well as those in the world of higher education. These types of programs should evolve as they give local businesses and universities a chance to be interact and support all students regardless of their post-high school career choice.
- The Loudoun County Public Schools should support creative approaches to not only maximize efficient use of education funding, but to allow for less traditional forms of funding, including:
 - ♦ In-system attendance alternatives, such as open enrollment, to balance population among schools
 - ♦ Charter Schools and Magnet Schools for the open development of non-traditional curriculums
 - ♦ Distance-learning for in-school and home-schooled students
 - ♦ Universal Tuition Tax-Credits for private schools.



JENNIFER BERGEL

- The school-business partnership area continues to grow and to thrive. Without the support of our businesses, our school children would have missed out on many benefits.
- Public charter schools may help to solve some problems we face, like finding full-day Kindergarten hubs. Currently we have academies - they need to be allowed the opportunity to expand.
- There are policies in place to allow populations to shift into under-enrolled schools.
- Distance learning opportunities are available as well. Continuing to support these programs is advantageous to all.
- Class sizes must be lowered. They are too high at all grade levels. Only a few have the benefits of smaller classes in their current K-12 education.
- We have a large senior citizen population. I encourage seniors to volunteer in our schools - I hope more will give back their wealth of experience. The current classroom has its doors opened further through technology - not losing site of the people impact is important too. I like how the global community of students continues to open through the technology in our schools. Continuing to allow all opportunities - sports, activities, etc. - is important too.

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?

PABLO "PAUL" ARIAS

Expansion of vocational/technical education as an alternative needs to be included. Not all students will go on to college and some may choose a trade as a career path. We need to support those that choose this approach and not have a negative outlook. We also need to change the culture of expectation that all students should go to college or as a nation will be continue to be non-competitive in the area of manufacturing and other vocational settings.

JENNIFER BERGEL

LCPS works very hard to develop confidence in its students. This confidence will help all students to excel in the workplace. There are programs for different learners - these programs must be supported and expanded. Recently businesses have opened their doors in the summer for teachers to come see how they can use the business in their classroom - more of these opportunities need to be available in the future. There is a focus on 21st century skills; we can't ignore the fact that some of those skills were just as critical in 20th century success.



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?

PABLO "PAUL" ARIAS

When building new schools we need to look to decrease the overall footprint and have multi-use classrooms and facilities. We finally opened a two level middle school. Close attention to the outcome of that school will provide a blueprint on the impact of cost and use that we can learn from. Leveraging our current technology now that we have purchased it should be a priority for LCPS.

JENNIFER BERGEL

We are getting to a point where I am not sure how much more you can reduce the cost per student and still get the highest level of experience. I continue to worry about the students who are not protected by federal and state programs. They are the ones who now "help" to pull down the average cost per pupil. Technology is certainly helping to create efficiencies. Businesses are helping because they are taking on some cost when they help LCPS. I know teachers like me still pay a lot of money out of pocket to better help our students. I would need to ask the public a question like this one.

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

PABLO "PAUL" ARIAS

Advertising space for local businesses can be accomplished by using the buses as billboards generating revenue for the school system while providing a cost-reduced price for advertising for our local businesses. Fees that are generated from the use of fields as is done now can be expanded.

Hosting events at our schools with minimal fees to our community can also lead to expanded generation of funds that can be used for the county to improve outcomes.

JENNIFER BERGEL

LCPS and the County work together in a number of ways, many of which have been noted in Jt. Board Committee Meetings. Both staffs honor this working relationship because it helps the County overall. They make sure we citizens have services and resources. I am concerned about the services that people argue should be removed from budgets. I remember when there was not as much coverage for our citizenry and the human "cost" then. I do not want us to move back - we need to continue to move forward.



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

I chose to run due to my opinion that our academic standards are falling while our cost is increasing and the School Board is not listening to the public. My wife and I chose our district to live when we moved from NY due to its schools. I have one son left at home that is in 9th grade. His reports on class size and lack of use of technology have me alarmed. Being involved at the local level is crucial for our future. My years in a leadership position and knowledge of business sets me apart from my opponent by having a track record of saving millions of dollars.

JENNIFER BERGEL

I am a candidate because I am committed to our County and our schools. I am campaigning for re-election because I want to continue to honor my commitment to our greater community. I am "on-the-ground" all the time. I use County and School facilities regularly: I can provide a consumer and a taxpayer perspective. I demonstrate what it means to be a civil servant: I teach; I volunteer; I coach; and I serve. These were values instilled in me by my family and in Loudoun's 4-H program and schools as a young person. I can uniquely say I am giving back part of what Loudoun gave to me.

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?**PABLO "PAUL" ARIAS**

[Http://arasforschoolboard.com](http://arasforschoolboard.com)

JENNIFER BERGEL

www.Bergel4schoolboard.org
I also send out info on Face Book from Jennifer Keller Bergel-School Board