



LOUDOUN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2015 BizVotes Questionnaire Results

Loudoun County School Board – Algonkian District

Debbie Rose / Ryan Myers



Answer is consistent with Loudoun Chamber's Position



Answer is inconsistent with Loudoun Chamber's Position or nonresponsive to the question



Answer is partly consistent with Loudoun Chamber's Position

1) What is the biggest issue/challenge Loudoun's K-12 educational system faces in the upcoming term?

DEBBIE ROSE: The challenge facing LCPS is how to ensure that LCPS continues to be a successful school division providing students with an education that prepares them to be successful in the workforce of today and tomorrow. LCPS has entered a critical stage where curriculum, infrastructure, human resources and the technological goods and services used must be proven effective and

RYAN MYERS: Declining test scores of the socially and economically stable students. If Loudoun loses its reputation as having a high quality school system, the economy of the county will take a huge hit. Not only will property values decline long term but attracting a commercial tax base will be almost impossible considering Loudoun's location.

2) How do you propose to address this challenge?

DEBBIE ROSE: The School Board is already working with LCPS staff and the stakeholders to meet this challenge. Shortly after Dr. Eric Williams became the new Superintendent, he initiated a process to develop a mission statement, core beliefs, and a strategic plan to ensure LCPS is headed in the right direction. This process has included workshops with all stakeholders, including staff, administration, business leaders, advisory groups, special education, and community members. The recommendations from the stakeholder group are now under consideration by the SB. It is hard to get "there" if you don't know where it is you are going. Having a mission statement, core beliefs and a



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strategic plan will focus decisions across all departments on how to ensure that LCPS is providing an excellent education to students and preparing them to be successful in the workforce.

RYAN MYERS: From the School Board, make the best use of the money the Board of Supervisors allocates to the school budget. By getting the class sizes down and focusing on preparing the students not going to college. Vocational training can prepare students for great jobs in the medical field, the trades, and even technology.

3) Do you feel the working relationship between the Board of Supervisors and the School Board has improved over the last four years? Please provide additional comments that support your position.

DEBBIE ROSE: No and yes. The fact is that there was a long history of tension between members of the Board of Supervisors and the previous LCPS Superintendent. This resulted in a lot of division and drama during budget seasons. Despite improved relationships between individual School Board members and members of the Board of Supervisors, the budget process for the first three years remained difficult and divisive. However, with the new Superintendent, Dr. Eric Williams, the last budget cycle was marked by cooperation and collaboration. Dr. Williams made the budget preparation process public, spent considerable time working with each BOS member and SB member, found reductions and demonstrated the need for expenditures. The result was a fully-funded budget.


RYAN MYERS: I am most familiar with the Algonkian District where the Board of Supervisor and School Board member don't get along. I think that is the case for at least one other district.


4) How can the Board of Supervisors and School Board work collectively to streamline the school site selection process, design, construction and associated land use approvals while ensuring that all sites selected best meet the community's needs and ease of access for students?

Chamber Position: The Chamber supports the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, the School Board and LCPS continuing their efforts to work together on a framework for school site selection and land use permitting that streamlines the process and locates new schools in a manner that supports both the education and economic development mission of our community.



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 **DEBBIE ROSE:** The two Boards need to meet to discuss these issues. The difficulty of the process is that it is hard to understand all the issues and perspectives involved in each potential school site selection. The members from both boards representing the areas where school are needed discuss the issue and then report back to their respective boards. And, both boards have staff that research and analyze different parts of the proposed sites. The back-and-forth is not able to convey concerns a SB member knows about the community reaction to a certain site or what the BOS member understands in terms of zoning or what school staff know in terms of overcrowding and seats needed for students. There has been more effort by this SB and BOS to improve this process. While the process can get better, the number of new schools needed is growing smaller.

 **RYAN MYERS:** The two boards have to trust one another to carry out their duties to the best of their ability. Land use approval should be the area of real collaboration. We get frustrated with the process, but I think the checks and balances of the process serve the community well.

5) 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 complement the education today's Loudoun County children are receiving through LCPS.

Chamber Position: The Chamber supports:

- Every student being able to choose his/her school in order to foster successful individual educational outcomes;
- Flexible policies that enable public school attendance alternatives, such as open enrollment and expansion of online education options for in-school and home-school students.

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- Providing authority to local school boards to determine its school calendar.
- Greater consideration and use of charter schools and magnet schools
- Greater use of pilot programs within the school system to provide opportunities to consider new and innovative ideas that offer additional education choices.
- Creation of a Loudoun County Teacher Cabinet by the School Board that provides an opportunity for Loudoun County teachers to share innovative ideas and successes so that others may have the chance to benefit.



DEBBIE ROSE:

- **a. School-Business Partnerships;** I strongly support school-business partnerships. There has been much success with partnerships to date. The annual awards to businesses partnering with LCPS demonstrates that. Still, this is often not official or necessarily lasting partnerships. As the SB and LCPS administration start to develop programs and curriculum for the new Academies of Loudoun, the issue of how business partnerships can be built and incorporated into the budget has been a priority. At one meeting, I suggested that the SB could employ a "Best Housekeeping Seal" type of program. This could be built on a website listing LCPS needs that local business could meet. Those business who qualify would be allowed to participate in the program and get recognition for their contributions on the website. This was just an idea, but it is an example of trying to think outside the box for ways to build lasting partnerships.
- **b. Public charter and magnet schools;** I support charter schools. Approved charter schools must result in some savings to the school division. The charter school process is highly regulated and thoroughly integrated into the budget process already.
- **c. Open enrollment to balance population amount schools;** First, with the recent rezoning of school boundaries in the Ashburn and Dulles North areas, many of the previously over-crowded schools are now operating at capacity or slightly below. The adopted boundaries focused on stabilizing the boundaries and enrollments in established communities. The over-crowding issues now are primarily in the Dulles South and North area. New schools will eventually provide relief. Second, two years ago LCPS revised its special permission process. It is not necessary any longer to show a hardship in order to attend another school. Any student can attend another school, so long as that school has capacity or room in the elementary grade level. LCPS staff report the new system has worked very well. It requires less administration and has resulted in far fewer appeals. This is, in essence, an open enrollment policy that allows parents to make the best choice for their student.
- **d. Distance-learning for in-school and home-schooled students;** I support distance learning and innovative approaches to providing services to home-schooled or home-bound students. With the support of this SB, LCPS administration developed Virtual Loudoun. This offers online courses and new

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educational opportunities for students. This program program has the capability of producing revenue for LCPS as it can be licensed for use by other school divisions and students. With respect to home-schooled students, I have not received any concerns or suggestions with respect to how the current system can be improved. Additional uses of distance-learning for home-bound students or students requiring an alternate educational environment is an important issue. Formalizing a program should be part of the strategic plan. And, it should use robots:) Seriously, there are new technologies that allow a student "robot" to attend class and allow a home bound student to participate by live-feed.

- **e. Adjustments to class sizes; and/or** I do not support increasing class size as a means of reducing costs.
- **f. Other approaches that may compliment the education today's Loudoun County children are receiving through LCPS.** Internships. While there are some programs that offer internships through the Monroe Technology Center, we should consider requiring an internship experience as part of the graduation requirements. This is only an idea and I'm not sure how well it could be implemented in a system this large. Still, internships are valuable opportunities to learn about a field or career.



RYAN MYERS:


- **a. School-Business Partnerships;** I am all for school business partnerships. I would like to see Skills USA become a partner in explaining vocational classes. The technology and medical communities are always looking to partner with schools because of their specialized work force needs.
- **b. Public charter and magnet schools;** I see magnet schools as a way to attract more business investment than charter schools. Magnet schools allow children with specific talents to learn more rapidly and the business community to clearly see their invested dollars at work.
- **c. Open enrollment to balance population amount schools;** Anything to reduce class sizes is something I am will to look at seriously. If the parents get the children to the new school and the new school has the space, this is a great way for parents to have choice.
- **d. Distance-learning for in-school and home-schooled students;** Distance Learning is another form of choice for parents. High School students wanting to take electives that are not offered at their school because of lack of interest should be able to take the class through distance-learning.
- **e. Adjustments to class sizes; and/or** Average class sizes are over 25, which means closer to 30 in the core classes and often greater than 30. This is why we need to get that average class size down to recover losses in student test scores.
- **f. Other approaches that may compliment the education today's Loudoun County children are receiving through LCPS.** More collaboration is needed with colleges and community colleges.




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


Chamber Position: The Chamber supports: strong business-education partnerships to develop training programs for specific industries; stronger focus on college and/or career readiness for students earlier in their K-12 education experience; and emphasis on ensuring digital literacy by our students, to better preparing students to effectively enter the workforce.

 **DEBBIE ROSE:** As part of the strategic plan process, LCPS needs to review its curriculum philosophies and policies. LCPS is already moving towards a more project-based learning model. This will offer students more opportunities to develop content competency while learning to collaborate with others on projects. This will provide students with the skills necessary to be successful in the workplace and world economy. In addition, LCPS should consider more blended learning to set high expectations for all students.

 **RYAN MYERS:** Not everyone is going to college right out of high school, so a bigger focus should be on vocational training. Careers in heating & air, and auto body painting & repair are all areas where people are needed constantly.


7) How can Loudoun County Public Schools best improve its professional development training and evaluation procedures to ensure all LCPS personnel meet the standards required of their peers and demanded by this community?

Chamber Position: The Chamber supports the development of a well-constructed and fair system to ensure all involved in the education of our children are regularly evaluated and receive feedback on how to improve based on measurable standards, outcomes and innovation beyond simple standardized test scores. The Chamber also strongly supports compensation being tied to evaluation, achievement and outcomes for educators.

 **DEBBIE ROSE:** LCPS provides a significant amount of professional development for staff. This is an area where more data collection of the utilization and effectiveness of these programs should be done. The SB should initiate a process to review the current offerings, collect and analyze the data, and engage the stakeholders (teachers) to determine what improvements could be made. With respect to teacher evaluation, I do support performance-based pay. Peer review would need to be a key component to this system.


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This could only be successful if developed in collaboration with all the stakeholders. While I do not believe teacher evaluations should be tied primarily to SOL scores, I do think SOL result trends should account for a small portion in a teacher evaluation cycle.

 **RYAN MYERS:** The evaluation process has been changed to include standardized test scores recently. This process needs to be evaluated, but we don't have enough data to see if this process is working. Development of the staff has long been a strong suit of the LCPS.

8) 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?

Chamber Position: The Chamber supports consideration of services currently provided by school system employees that may be outsourced to provide greater efficiency, cost savings, competition and business opportunity in the private sector; consideration of consolidation of County and school functions to achieve increased efficiencies and cost savings; aggressive efforts to access all existing but untapped revenue sources to support current state and local funding, including t grants, programs, and initiatives that provide opportunities for additional funding to support educating our next generation; continued and increased partnerships with non-profit organizations and foundations in both funding and programming given the demonstrated success of such programs and the geographic access to additional potential partners; and continued and greater use of school-business partnerships as a way for businesses to provide valuable resources of time, energy and funding to support the schools.

 **DEBBIE ROSE:** LCPS is already doing this with much of its purchasing. Going forward, transportation is one area where more evaluation should be done to find efficiencies. Maximizing the use of walk zones, bus routes, fuel, routes, and vehicles used for transporting students can be one way LCPS makes good use of resources while still providing a high level of educational services.


 **RYAN MYERS:** Transportation costs for a school system can wreck the budget very easily. Now that renewable energy costs are coming down, the LCPS needs to ask when we replace buses, whether diesel is right for the future.


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



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Chamber Position: The Chamber supports consideration of consolidation of County and school functions to achieve increased efficiencies and cost savings.

 **DEBBIE ROSE:** This SB and the BOS have improved the effectiveness of the Joint Committee of both Boards with respect to this effort. There have been efforts to share resources, systems and purchasing. I support efforts to continue finding ways to maximize collaboration wherever possible and allowed under VA law.

 **RYAN MYERS:** The county's Department of Parks and Recreation makes an excellent partner for the school system. I would like for the county and school system to work together on transportation issues: maintenance, natural gas, and training of drivers

10) Please briefly describe what best qualifies you to hold the office for which you are running.

DEBBIE ROSE: I believe a good leader is one who listens, learns, informs, collaborates, and can make informed decisions. I feel that I have demonstrated these leadership qualities throughout my tenure on the School Board. I spend a considerable amount of time meeting with my community to learn about their concerns and desires regarding LCPS. I seek out community members who have expertise in certain areas to help be better understand them. I do my best to inform stakeholders about the issues facing LCPS so that they can provide valuable input. My FB page regularly reaches thousands. I work to bring together stakeholders to address issues. In doing all this, I am able to make decisions that understand my community and focus on what is best for students. I consider it an incredible honor to represent my community and county on the School Board.

RYAN MYERS: I am a big supporter of the public school system in general. I am a Certified Financial Planner and have been self-employed for over 20 years, so I know that money has to be spent wisely. I also know you have to invest resources to be successful as well. I want to bring this investment approach to the school board.

11) What is the chief factor that differentiates you from your opponent(s) (if you have one)?

DEBBIE ROSE: I have been an involved citizen, taxpayer and parent since moving into this county and the Algonkian District in 2006. As an elected member of the LCPS School Board, I have done my best to be a good leader by listening to my community, learning from all stakeholders, building coalitions to address issues, and using that deep level of



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understanding about the community to inform the important votes I cast. I am not aware of my opponent having attended a school board or PTO meeting prior to his announcement in the last three and half years. Also, I am not aware of any calls or emails from him expressing positions on any of the important budget, technology, curriculum, discipline or strategic plan issues facing the School Board. He is relatively unknown in our local community. That speaks volumes regarding his ability to be a leader in our community.

RYAN MYERS: I think the current Algonkian School Board member has lost touch with the community. She is not advocating for issues in our district and has not voted for investment in the LCPS over the whole term.

12) Is there any other personal or professional information you would like the business community to know about you that is not already covered?

DEBBIE ROSE: I work part-time for ACT/ The App Association. ACT represents more than 5,000 app companies and information technology firms in the mobile economy. I am responsible for assisting ACT's efforts to promote the interests of small innovators by monitoring and analyzing intellectual property initiatives and legislation, working with Congressional and Administrative offices and other IP and tech companies and associations. This expertise has helped me highlight concerns regarding student data privacy, STEM education, and implementation of technologies. Also, I am married to Randy Rose and we have three children who attend LCPS. As a family, we are actively engaged in our community through networking, church, baseball, softball, piano, hockey, flag football, running, biking, and swimming. We are strong supporters of our local economy!

RYAN MYERS: I have been an adjunct professor at the University of Virginia and at Howard University. I have also served on the Real Estate Appraisers board for the state of Virginia.

Campaign Committee Information:

Candidate's Name (as it will appear on ballot): Debbie K. Rose

Campaign Manager: none

Campaign Address: 20452 McGees Ferry Way, Potomac Falls, VA 20165

Campaign Phone: 703-444-3368

Campaign Website: <http://debbierose.org>

Campaign Twitter: none



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Candidate's Current Occupation: Intellectual Property Fellow at ACT I The App Association

Candidate's Political Experience: Current Member of Loudoun County School Board, Algonkian District

Candidate's Business Experience: CEO of Rose Family Household

Campaign Committee Information:

Candidate's Name (as it will appear on ballot): Ryan A. Myers

Campaign Manager: Ryan A. Myers

Campaign Address: 47474 Sharpskin Island Sq., Potomac Falls VA 20165

Campaign Phone: 703-773-6475

Campaign Website: <http://www.electryanmyers.org/>

Campaign Twitter: NA

Candidate's Current Occupation: Certified Financial Planner / Financial Advisor

Candidate's Political Experience: Candidate for School Board in 2007

Candidate's Business Experience: 26 years in financial services