

deaeyc Early Childhood Education Candidate Questionnaire

Answers Submitted By: George “Jody” Sweeney

1. What are your views on the needs of young children (birth to kindergarten) and what specific steps would you take to address these needs?

As an Administrator in the Smyrna School District here in Kent County, I am very proud of the Early Childhood program that they have set up. Kent County Levy Court has very little responsibility to address the educational needs of young children. But, it is through our Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances that schools have been able to build additional classrooms in response to residential growth. That program allows for school districts, like Smyrna School District, to build programs like the Early Childhood Program.

2. What are your views on the ways in which we can close the education achievement gap with a particular focus on the early years?

We can continue to capture Impact Fees from the APFO's to assist schools in school and classroom construction.

3. What is the role of the state/city/federal government to provide for programs that will be addressing the socio-emotional and mental health issues young children will experience in the coming weeks and months resulting from the disruption in their lives brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic?

Kent County Levy Court has a Community Service Grant program that provides funding to agencies that address socio-emotional and mental health issues. Some are family oriented such as People's Place, some are child oriented, such as Boys and Girls Clubs and Read Aloud Delaware, and some are adult oriented.

4. What steps would you take to attract, and retain quality educators in the early childhood education field?

Humans have always migrated to areas that attract them. While Kent County does not have responsibilities to attract specific jobs like educators, it is contingent upon us to

provide for amenities like quality parks, trails, playgrounds, recreational programs, and low taxes that make them want to move here.

5. As an elected official, what would be your top 4 priorities in the first 100 days in the position?

Continue to address constituent issues with the County. Continue to address processes that are antiquated and take too long to approve. Continue to address transparency in government by putting more information online. Continue to improve County customer relations.

6. How would you improve the economy of your city, our State and/or our nation?

Continue to attract businesses to the county (3 manufacturing businesses in 2019-2020). Continue to make it easier for small businesses to startup or to expand, creating more jobs. Continue to improve the permit process to make it easier for businesses to startup or expand. Continue to fund a Strategic Incentive Fund to assist businesses who are looking to move to Kent County.