

Candidate	Matthew Lang
Office Sought	Delegate, HD 36
1) Will you co-sponsor or sign legislation making permanent the requirement in Senate Bill 1303 that public school districts provide all students who wish to access in-person learning with in person education equivalent to the commonwealth's required number of instructional hours?	Yes
2) The Virginia Department of Education ("VDOE") earlier this year proposed to phase out advanced math for certain students until 11th grade. Under this proposal, students would no longer have access to traditional specialized math classes such as Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry in middle school/early high school. Do you agree with this plan?	No
3) Do you support "test-to-stay" efforts to limit the amount of classroom learning lost due to the quarantining of healthy children, e.g., by testing children identified as potential close contacts and then letting them return to school if they test negative?	Yes
4) Thanks to the large military presence in Virginia, many local school districts receive substantial amounts of Federal Impact Aid funding. However, many service members report that these funds are just absorbed into their school district's general budget, rather than being used for supplemental programming, academic and socio-emotional supports military children are supposed to receive as a condition of those funds. How will you work to ensure that Impact Aid reaches military children and supports their highly transient lifestyle by making sure they are properly placed in Advanced, General and Special Education?	<p>It's not a secret or surprise that these schools are absorbing the military aid funds into their general budget. I remember filling in the form each year and wondering if there was a benefit to the dependent student or is it a way for the FCPS to capitalize on the military population.</p> <p>Being a veteran myself, veteran advocacy and military dependent advocacy is a big part of my campaign. I would support deeper inspection into "following the money" and seeing as to whether the money is actually being spent on educational or emotional assistance programs for military dependent students.</p>
5) Describe your philosophy for expanding opportunities for all Virginia children to have access to pre-K education.	<p>I'll preface this answer by stating that I am not in support of government funded pre-k, as I see it as another way to raise taxes without question, I am certainly in support of all children of pre-k age being able to attend school.</p> <p>We continue doing this through tax credits and assistance based on income. Investing in education is the most important investment the Commonwealth of Virginia can make. We cannot let this generation become a lost generation due to the pandemic. As Delegate, I will be a tireless advocate for programs that address learning loss and promote a rigorous curriculum that brings out the best in every child.</p>

<p>6) VDOE dismisses special education complaints without investigating them at twice the national average rate, and they are three times less likely to rule in the student's favor than the national average. How would you reform VDOE to ensure that special education students' rights were respected?</p>	<p>We have a moral obligation to care for the most vulnerable in our society. Even one complaint is too many. The VDOE has failed students on so many fronts, that it does need a structure change. Even with using COVID as an excuse, VDOE can investigate complaints to ensure that students are receiving equal treatment and education. The proverbial "kicking the can" has to stop, and VDOE needs to investigate complaints as aggressively as they would an HR issue in their offices. Without having intricate knowledge of how VDOE operates, I speak as a parent. I would expect the same level of treatment into a student complaint, as I would a criminal issue.</p>
<p>7) FCPS recently revised the admissions policy at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology to move away from admissions based mostly on academic merit and to partly consider socioeconomic backgrounds of students. Do you agree with this new admissions policy?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>8) With the rise of parent scrutiny over school systems, systems have responded by further limiting opportunities for members of the general public to participate at public meetings. How will you allow parents to have a greater voice in the public school system?</p>	<p>Public school systems, first and foremost, exist to educate our children, and are funded by the taxes that we pay. Therefore, we do have, and expect to have a voice in our school systems. Our ability to interact, should not be limited, nor restricted by time, to address a board that has been elected by us.</p> <p>The new initiatives from the US Dept of Justice are of further concern to me, as I see it as a mechanism for any school board to label those that they believe will be frustrating to them. We've seen several examples, here in Virginia, in which a school board has acted outside of their scope of work to list or label members of the community that they don't agree with.</p> <p>That said, school boards exist and perform an important job, but we must always remember that their powers do not exceed those of the electorate and taxpayer that pays for the school system and the board.</p> <p>PARENTS ABSOLUTELY HAVE THE RIGHT TO SPEAK AND BE INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION!</p>
<p>9) Do you support calling for political parties, including your own, to refrain from endorsing candidates running in nonpartisan school board elections?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>10) Is there any additional information that you would like to share with the parents in Fairfax County?</p>	<p>This is YOUR and YOUR CHILD'S school system. Always remember that you have a say in what happens, how money is spent, and how your student is educated. The current trend appears to be that an elected board acts as if it's been given a mandate, and not required to interact with the public. This has to stop. School boards should be constantly reminded that they work for the residents of the county and are accountable for their actions.</p> <p>You have done a tremendous job of holding them to task these past two years and are to be commended. Holding our elected officials accountable is how we maintain the system of checks and balances.</p>