

# Manassas City School Board

## Manassas City School Board 2018

### Description:

The School Board of the City of Manassas is comprised of seven members who are elected by the citizens of the City of Manassas. The members are elected at large, rather than by districts, meaning that all voters of the City may vote for every seat. Members hold staggered four-year terms.

Vote for 3 candidates. Do not vote for more than 3 candidates.

### Candidates (choose 3):

#### Athene C. Bell



**Party:** Independent

### Biographical Info:

**Address:** 9130 Grant Avenue Manassas, VA 20110

**Website:** <http://www.bellforschoolboard.com>

**Email:** athene\_bell@yahoo.com

**education/Degrees:** Bachelor of Arts, English, Masters of Education, Ph.D/Education/Literacy Concentration

**family:** James Rodney Bell/Spouse, James C. Bell, son, George C. Bell, son, Five beautiful grandchildren!

**experience:** 1985-2006-Teacher, MCPS 2007-2018-English Content Spec., MCPS

**Questions:**

**Q#1:** *What proposals will you offer to provide adequate financial resources for the Manassas City Schools?*

**A:** The City Council finances Manassas City Schools. The School Board must work with City Council to keep members aware of schools' needs. Additional funding opportunity resources can include the VA State Dep't of Education, the federal government most often in the form of grants, the Manassas Education Foundation, local PTO's by request, and approved school initiatives.

**Q#2:** *What are the chief fiscal challenges that affect the school system?*

**A:** Chief fiscal challenges affecting the MCPS school system include the following: 1. Salary increases for teachers and support staff 2. The construction of a new Dean Elementary School 3. The cost of textbook adoptions We must work with City Council and members of the MCPS educational community to provide adequate funding for these fiscal challenges.

**Q#3:** *What measures would you propose to enhance the education experience for the students?*

**A:** First, I believe it critical to assure that teachers have the necessary materials and relevant professional development in order to provide all students with a high quality education. In addition, it is necessary to continually support the development and implementation of new and relevant technology in order to support and prepare all students for post graduation. And finally, we must be continually be proactive with STEM and vocational education initiatives in order to meet the varied needs of all students.

**Q#4:** *How would you rate the current level of school security and what increased safety measures, if any, would you recommend?*

**A:** Currently, resource officers are located in secondary schools to provide a high level of security. In addition, all entry doors to all schools are always locked. As a result, all school visitors are admitted to the building via a buzzer which unlocks the door or through the use of an official MCPS badge issued to employees of MCPS. Upon entry all visitors are required to sign-in and out at a greeter desk and show appropriate identification. Each greeter has telephone and buzzer access to the main office for immediate communication. School security throughout MCPS must be continually reviewed and evaluated in order to assure that safety measures are dynamic and enforced maximally.

# **T.J. "Tim" Demeria**

**Party:** Independent

## **Biographical Info:**

### **Questions:**

**Q#1:** *What proposals will you offer to provide adequate financial resources for the Manassas City Schools?*

**A:** - no response -

**Q#2:** *What are the chief fiscal challenges that affect the school system?*

**A:** - no response -

**Q#3:** *What measures would you propose to enhance the education experience for the students?*

**A:** - no response -

**Q#4:** *How would you rate the current level of school security and what increased safety measures, if any, would you recommend?*

**A:** - no response -

## Kenneth T. Nixon Jr.



**Party:** Independent

**Biographical Info:**

**Website:** <http://kennynixon.com>

**Email:** [nixon4schoolboard@gmail.com](mailto:nixon4schoolboard@gmail.com)

**education/Degrees:** Bachelors Degree: Criminal Justice Associate Degree: Information Technology

**family:** I am the lucky husband of Amanda Nixon and we have a wonderful son named Elijah.

**experience:** Board Member: Regional Jail Board & CCJB Outreach Pastor: First Baptist Church of Manassas

**Questions:**

**Q#1:** *What proposals will you offer to provide adequate financial resources for the Manassas City Schools?*

**A:** The Virginia constitution places the authority and responsibility for funding schools with the Virginia General Assembly and the localities in the commonwealth. The school board has the solemn obligation to effectively partner with the local city council to establish a robust and effective budget. For the City of Manassas this budget would, necessarily, consider that only about half of the resources needed will come directly from the local government. Since the Manassas City School Board

does not have taxing authority, the school board needs to effectively advocate and partner at the state level and local level to secure increased funding for education.

**Q#2:** *What are the chief fiscal challenges that affect the school system?*

**A:** The fiscal challenges facing the school system include dealing with aging infrastructure throughout the city that need repairs, remodeling or significant financial resources dedicated to new construction. Another challenge is the city keeping up with the growing school population and the resources necessary to properly educate our children as well as hire and retain top teacher talent.

**Q#3:** *What measures would you propose to enhance the education experience for the students?*

**A:** Schools should fully embrace an innovative approach towards education. While technology is sufficiently integrated into schools as a resource and learning tool, we still have enormous opportunities to embrace a full multi-media educational approach. In other words, we should embrace interactive education that leverages the power of innovation, technology and the talent of our educators. Interactive education allows educators to capitalize on classroom discussions and bring to life scenarios, equations and complex problems. Students being able to see their questions answered or scenarios play out through multi-media platforms makes learning come alive. This type of engagement is not always possible with an educator just providing a verbal answer, story or fact-based opinion.

**Q#4:** *How would you rate the current level of school security and what increased safety measures, if any, would you recommend?*

**A:** I would rate the city as being good. However, if better is possible then being good is not enough. Better is possible! We must evolve our thinking when it comes to the topic of school safety and security. This means we must understand the need to balance physical security / safety needs with emotional and mental needs. A balanced approach would require not only looking at how we secure the physical campuses but also how we address the human needs of the students that are being educated in our city. This means investing in more mental health counselors, school psychologists and school resource officers. This also means establishing a collaborative approach that ensures all facets of education (physical, emotional, mental) are healthy, safe and secure.

## Peter B. O'Hanlon



**Party:** Independent

### **Biographical Info:**

**Address:** [www.facebook.com/PeterOHanlonForSchoolBoard/?fref=hovercard](https://www.facebook.com/PeterOHanlonForSchoolBoard/?fref=hovercard)

**Email:** ohanlon.peter@gmail.com

**education/Degrees:** Three years of college, primarily in Organizational Management. Trained as a Federal Auditor.

**family:** Married to Anne for 34 years. I have 5 children ages 19 to 32, all products of Manassas Schools

**experience:** 26 years with children in our schools. Active in PTAs, parent volunteer. Two years on School Board.

### **Questions:**

**Q#1:** *What proposals will you offer to provide adequate financial resources for the Manassas City Schools?*

**A:** Yearly, the Superintendent prepares a zero-based budget which they present in a series of meetings to the School Board for review. The board carefully reviews the budget, before passing it and forwarding it to the City Council. It is the City Council which provides resources. I will continue to advocate for the schools in ongoing discussions with the City Council.

**Q#2:** *What are the chief fiscal challenges that affect the school system?*

**A:** The majority of the budget, about 80%, is directly tied to personnel costs. The chief fiscal challenge is to remain competitive with neighboring jurisdictions to attract and retain the most qualified teachers and support staff.

**Q#3:** *What measures would you propose to enhance the education experience for the students?*

**A:** 1. Increased attention to student behavior, to help eliminate distractions in the learning environment. 2. Increased retention of teachers, increasing the experience level. 3. Ensure all students graduate with knowledge, skills and abilities to allow them to succeed in the college, trade or career of their choice.

**Q#4:** *How would you rate the current level of school security and what increased safety measures, if any, would you recommend?*

**A:** I rate the current level of school security as outstanding. The Manassas City Schools works closely with the Manassas City Police to ensure we are providing the safest possible environment for all students. I would only recommend that we continue to work with the local experts and review recommendations provided by school security experts.

## Sanford S. Williams



**Party:** Independent

**Biographical Info:**

**Address:** 9310 Saffron Hill Ct

**Website:** <http://www.facebook.com/Sanford-Williams-for-School-Board-343991926397/>

**Email:** williamswwjd5@gmail.com

**education/Degrees:** Cornell University, B.S. Engineering & MBA; University of Virginia School of Law, J.D.

**family:** Wife: Dr. Anastasia Williams; Children: Kiara,UVA/JD '15; Sanford,Wake Forest/MD '19; Nia,UVA/BA '21

**experience:** Attorney, Federal Communications Commission; Manassas City School Board Member - 8 years

**Questions:**

**Q#1** *What proposals will you offer to provide adequate financial resources for the Manassas City Schools?*

**A:** By law, the School Board is not a taxing authority, so it is unable to independently procure financial resources. Financial resources for Manassas City Schools (MCPS) come primarily from the Federal, State and Local Governments, with the Local Government being the largest single source of revenue. Since resources from the Federal and State Governments are not really negotiable,

proposals to obtain resources are practically limited to procuring adequate financial resources from the Local Government. My proposal is to work with the Manassas City Council to obtain adequate funding which benefits our students, without unduly burdening the taxpayers of the City of Manassas.

**Q#2:** *What are the chief fiscal challenges that affect the school system?*

**A:** The chief fiscal challenges affecting the Manassas City School system are: 1) Funding a new Jennie Dean School; 2) Funding initiatives to enhance student achievement; 3) Funding unfunded mandates from the State and Federal Government; and 4) Funding appropriate and competitive compensation for our staff.

**Q#3:** *What measures would you propose to enhance the education experience for the students?*

**A:** 1) Instill a culture of high expectations with a focus on student achievement, discipline & compassion; 2) Be cognizant of the impact of mental health, wellness & food insecurity on learning & address each when possible; 3) Ask Teachers, they know what students need; Ask Students, their voices are important, Ask Families, they know what they want for their children; 4) Provide beneficial STEM, Computer Science & Fine Arts opportunities; 5) Involve the community, local colleges & universities, they are a plethora of untapped resources; 6) Expose students to diversity & history through field trips; 7) Work with businesses to see what skills they seek in employees, and make sure our graduates possess those skills; 8) Expose our students to a diverse group of people in & out of the classroom. We live in a multicultural world and should provide role models who can reinforce that our students can achieve their dreams; 9) Hire great leaders; 10) Universal Pre-K for all students.

**Q#4:** *How would you rate the current level of school security and what increased safety measures, if any, would you recommend?*

**A:** I believe the current level of school security is the best it can be with the resources we have. In recent years, during my tenure on the School Board, MCPS has undertaken many measures, including an enhanced school visitor ID system, fingerprinting requirements and background checks for volunteers, and increased background scrutiny of staff. I don't know everything and I am not a school security expert, so I would educate myself on current state of the art school security measures and continuously work with staff and law enforcement to seek the best and most efficient safety measures we can implement to protect our students, staff and the MCPS community.