



2016 Candidate Responses to PFT Questionnaire

Candidate Name: James Santora
Party Affiliation: Republican
Running For: Representative in General Assembly

RESPONSES TO PFT EDUCATION PLATFORM:

(1 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree and Commit):

#1: A restoration agenda should be a top priority for Philadelphia education. Candidate response: **5**

Comments: I have for the past two budgets fought for increased spending and more local control to help stabilize the district. There is much more to be done.

#2: Advocating for a fair contract for our educators. Candidate response: **5**

Comments: Educators are the key to the children's future success. I can't stress enough how important it is to have a stable environment for our educators. When they were hired they anticipate financial growth as well as professional growth. Teachers will grow in the system and MoveOn and we will lose some of our most valuable resources when you do not increase their compensation. I am a firm believer in this and will continue to fight for educators.

#3: Advocating for more charter school accountability and a moratorium on new charter schools while the financial crisis goes unresolved. Candidate response: **5**

Comments: I was one of the people that worked to kill House Bill 530 which was a minimal attempt for charter reform. I believe this bill would've done more harm to our public schools than help. I will continue to advocate for charter reform and accountability as well as proper funding not excessive funding.

#4: Pushing back against privatization of our workers. Candidate response: **5**

Comments: I don't know enough about this issue but I don't believe untrained subs to be in the classroom. They should come from a pool of train teachers.



#5: Dissolution of the SRC. Candidate response: **5**

Comments: *I agree 100% the best control is local control and everybody should be at the table including the teachers, administration and local government.*

#6: Partnering with the State Legislature to implement a weighted funding formula Candidate response: **5**

Comments: *"This is the number one issue on my platform. Increasing funding to the school district they truly need it for the reasons you listed above. I have worked on the basic ed funding formula making sure that it was implemented and there's still much more that needs to be done to get to equality.*

#7: Working to find additional, recurring revenue that will help sustain our schools. Candidate response: **5**

Comments: *I am the primary sponsor on a 4% shale tax bill which one hundred percent would go to education funding in a restricted account. I also believe that this is not the only area we can find funding for schools. I believe there's other opportunities as well and we should focus on all of them.*

#8: Committing to working in partnership with the community to develop and implement 25 unionized community schools. Candidate response: **"5**

Comments: *I believe the expansion of any schools should be with in the same system that educators come from. That way everybody is working on the same playing field.*

#9: Highlighting the negative impact high-stakes testing has on students. Candidate response: **5**

Comments: *I was a post sponsor and voted for the delaying of the Keystone exams and I am working on legislation with other members to eliminate them altogether. I believe we need to have some type of testing to make sure we are all being held accountable and that we are measuring success however this should be done at the local level. There are many factors that go into success. IEP's, ELL, socio economic factors, and so much more this needs to be determined local level. I believe the testing should be created locally and submitted to the state for approval. until new unfunded mandates stop I do not believe performance should be evaluated on these types of test.*



ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:

How has your past career experience prepared you for working in the office you are seeking?

I have been in private business and served on the local council in upper Darby and two years in the legislature. All of this has allowed me to make smart decisions that help the people around me including my constituents. But being in sales in the past you need to be a good listener. My job is to satisfy their request. That is my job now as a legislator. Listen to my constituent base and satisfy their needs and requests.

Are you a proponent of school vouchers, school choice, or charter school expansion?

I do not support vouchers, I do not support charter school expansion, I do support EITC. I believe are harmful to public schools and the communities they serve. We will find ourselves with smaller school districts and overcrowding if something like this were to occur. There was a time years ago that I believe vouchers was a good solution and when I served on upper Darby council, I realize the destruction that they would cause. I believe public school is not for everyone. I do believe there are some people that cannot afford a private education and need some scholarship help and EI TC does this without touching public school funding. I believe public schools can benefit as well and have By having EIO money support programs that the public funding does not. I do believe there are some people that cannot afford a private education and need some scholarship help and EI TC does this without touching funding directed to public schools. I also believe EI TC prevents Pro voucher legislation from ever occurring. We need to keep a close eye on it and make sure we don't allow this type of legislation to get through in some type of budget negotiations.

Would you work to rescind Act 46? Why or why not?

Yes and again because I believe in local control.

RATE THE FOLLOWING PRIORITIES FOR YOUR TERM IN OFFICE

- **Reducing class size: H (high priority)**
- **Increasing support personnel in schools: H (high priority)**
- **Settlement of a fair contract that is good for Philadelphia's educators and students: H (high priority)**
- **Mandating full time, unionized certified school nurses in every school: H (high priority)**



- **Mandating full time, unionized counselors in every school:** *M (moderate priority)*
- **Mandating wraparound services in schools:** *H (high priority)*
- **Attendance and graduation improvement initiatives:** *H (high priority)*
- **Access to high quality technology and high-speed Internet access in every classroom:** *M (moderate priority)*
- **Expansion of pre-k eligibility and opportunity:** *D (disagree with this statement)*
- **Elimination of teacher seniority:** *M (moderate priority)*
- **Using taxpayer money to pay tuition for private and religious schools:** *D (disagree with this statement)*
- **Modifying or reducing pensions:** *D (disagree with this statement)*

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

I have a proven track record. I have received the support of PSEA this year because of that track record. I also believe it is important to have moderate Republicans like myself in my caucus in order to prevent harmful legislation from coming across the floor. With a 119 person majority we need to make sure we have a voice in that Caucus. I have fought to maintain pensions for all of our educators and public employees. When you make a promise you must keep it and pensions were a promise. I support EITC so it is a priority for me however I will never support an increase in EITC unless there is an increase in public ed funding in that same year. As for pre-K I do believe it is a priority however we need to get the things we already do right before we expand and try to do more. Ultimately I would like to see pre-K in all of our public schools across the Commonwealth by 2022. First I want to straighten out the issue is we have before committing to do that. Thank you for the opportunity!