Candidate’s Name: Frazier L. O’Leary, Jr.

Ward: Four

1. Why are you running for this office?

I am running for this office because I spent 47 years in DCPS with one overriding passion-to help children become successful. My passion has not subsided and I would like to share my knowledge of what a school should be with Ward 4.

2. How will you engage your constituents, parents, teachers, students and the community?

I plan to be a full-time Board member. I think the job of the Board should not be limited to policy matters but should advocate for all of the shareholders in our education system. I will be that advocate.

3. What qualifications do you bring to the office of State Board of Education, including your professional or personal experience with public education in our city?

I began my journey in DCPS in the spring of 1970 as an observer in a class at Garnet-Patterson Junior High School. That fall, I did my student teaching with Brittania Capers at Garnet. After I graduated in December from American University, I began my teaching career on Jan. 4, 1971 at Garnet.

I received my Master’s Degree from St. John's College in August of 1973 and in September of 1977 moved to Cardozo High School. I retired from Cardozo in 2017.

I am one of the founders of the PEN/Faulkner Foundation’s Writers in Schools program that has matched hundred of authors with DCPS students. I am a Table Leader for AP English Literature Exam and a facilitator and consultant for the College Board and the National Math Science Initiative.

4. Under Mayoral Control of education, in effect since 2007, the State Board of Education has very limited authority over policy. Do you believe their authority should be expanded? Yes ____ No____ If Yes, in what areas?

I think that the State Board of Education should be an equal partner in the development of policies concerning all aspects of our students' academic lives.

5. Should charter schools be subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the open meetings laws for boards of directors? Yes____ No____ Please explain your answer.

There should be no difference in how the public schools and the charter schools are controlled. There cannot be preferences given to any areas of public education.

6. In 2016 the State Board of Education made important recommendations for how schools in the District of Columbia should be judged as succeeding or not, consistent with the Federal ESSA (Every Child Succeeds Act). They included putting in place a star rating for each school - 1 to 5 stars. Do you believe the metrics proposed for that rating system capture school quality? Yes__ No____ Please explain your answer.
All of the metrics used to judge schools have to be individualized. Equal education for all students can only be realized when the judges understand what each schools' strengths and weaknesses are evaluated. The judging should not take place until the evaluation of each individual school is done. As someone who spent 47 years in schools which were given labels that didn't reflect who the students, staff, and teachers really were, I think it is imperative that individual evaluation be done. A star rating system is destructive.

7. Last year, DCPS was embroiled in a series of scandals around graduation rates, leading to calls for an independent research entity to provide better analysis of how our schools are doing. Do you agree that such an entity, outside of the control of the Mayor, is needed? Yes ____ or No____ If yes, what do you think would be the most sensible model?

One of the reasons that the "graduation scandal" happened was that there was no coordination between all of the players in the system. In my last year at Cardozo, we spent many hours working with seniors to provide them with all kinds of support so that they could graduate. It was time well spent. We went above and beyond to assist them because we were professionals. I think that if all of the partners are given reasonable guidelines prior to the beginning of the school year and are all on the same page then this kind of embarrassment should never happen again.

8. The State Board of Education voted on and approved the use in DC of the PARCC test to satisfy federal testing requirements under ESSA. Only 3 states and DC are now committed to using PARCC. Some states have advocated de-emphasizing standardized testing as the measure of success in education. How do you view the role of standardized testing in DC schools?

Standardized testing should never be a final factor on an individual student's progress. Standardized testing is a valuable tool in finding out where a student is at the beginning of the year and seeing how much the student has improved at the end of the year. My students always improved their reading scores by two or three grade levels in one year but many of them were reading below grade level when they started and were still below grade level at the end of the year. If a student improved his reading level by four grades in one year, is he a failure? The PARCC kept teachers from being able to use their teacher skills.

9. Almost half of DC students now attend public charter, not neighborhood schools in the District of Columbia. We have over 200 publicly funded schools and 66 separate school systems (65 charter school systems and DCPS). Up to 20 new charter schools can open each year. Should the Council and/or Mayor have the authority to limit the expansion of charter schools? Yes____ No____ Please explain your answer.

I think that the State Board of Education should have a voice in, along with the Mayor and the City Council should be equal partners in the control of the expansion of charter schools. There needs to be cooperation concerning the direction of education in the District of Columbia. The fact that the Mayor, The City Council, OSSE, the Chancellor, The Superintendent, The Charter Board, and all of the individual charter schools' boards have differing input explains the problem.

10. Should the Council and/or Mayor have authority over charter school siting (where they are located)? Yes____ No____ Please explain your answer.
As mentioned previously, I think that there needs to be a collaborative effort by all of the players to help our schools achieve greatness.

11. The following issues are of great concern in our city. Which of these issues do you think is most important and why?
   a. Funding equity
   b. School diversity/integration
   c. Giving disadvantaged student subgroups priority access to schools if they serve less than the district average
   d. Expanding the number and support for educators of color

Of all of these very important issues, I think funding equity is the most important. There is no reason that a city with a budget surplus cannot provide technology to all students. New buildings are really nice but in 2018, there are still many students who are not playing on a level field when it comes to technology.

12. The DC State Board of Education had a representative on the Mayor's Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force. Earlier this year, the task force put forward draft recommendations related to improving outcomes for at-risk students and creating a framework for coordinating planning decisions between DCPS and charter schools. Which recommendation do you think is the most important and why?

The recommendation that I think is most important is to: identify educational challenges that need to be addressed through cross-sector collaboration. Our school system, both public and public charter schools, has schools that are beacons and schools that aren't. We need to work collaboratively to be the "rising tide that lifts all boats!".

13. How should the SBOE hold the Office of the State Superintendent of Education accountable?

The SBOE needs to be given the authority to be the prime mover in our educational revolution. With nine representatives as voices for all of the city, it can become the voice that speaks for everyone.