

Statewide & Region 7 Winner Jerry "Trey" Mitchell III

**Brunswick Academy
Lawrenceville, Virginia**



If I Were Mayor ...



I will determine our budget, address economic issues, and allocate funding to meet the needs of our city, including funding for city maintenance.

Trey Mitchell

A mayor has a very important job. If I were mayor, I would take my job seriously. As a community leader, I would oversee all aspects of our city to ensure prosperity and growth. Maintaining a balanced budget will be a top priority. I will make sure that our city spends money wisely and increases our revenue by promoting industry. I will manage our police department, fire department, as well as our transportation and housing departments. I will also make education a priority. I will participate in the events of our city to be an involved leader. I will foster a sense of mutual respect by maintaining open

communication with city council members as well as members of the community.

Upon being elected a mayor, I will conduct a meeting of all department heads to determine the strengths and weaknesses of our municipality. At this meeting, we will determine the required amount of manpower to make the departments run smoothly and continue to be productive. At our city council meeting, we will establish and prioritize our goals that will make our town a great place to live. I will meet with the members of our community to determine the concerns of our citizens. I will determine our budget, address economic issues, and allocate funding to meet the needs of our city, including funding for city maintenance. I will also promote the creation of jobs and industry for economic growth.

To ensure the safety of our citizens and our community, I plan to meet with essential persons in the police and fire departments. We will address the staffing needs and requirements, as well as equipment needs of each department. Maintaining adequate staff and ensuring proper equipment will assist in keeping the citizens of our town safe. I will encourage active involvement in community awareness activities and programs by public service employees. I will ask that they become more personally involved in our community to foster good relationships, and as a result, make our town safer.

The survival of our town is dependent upon maintaining economic growth and development. I will make this the top priority. I will promote our town to help persuade businesses to choose our town and help current businesses expand. The types of businesses that I will try to bring to our town include: restaurants, hotels, movie theaters, bowling alleys and amusement parks. When these businesses choose our town, all parties involved are winners. Our economy is perked, jobs are created, the housing industry will boom, and more people will choose our town. The result will be a cycle of increased growth, increased population and increased revenue.

If I were mayor, every citizen in our community would be my priority. Protecting our community, encouraging growth of our towns, ensuring excellent education programs for our youth, and prosperity and growth of our city are issues that will take precedence. Great times are ahead for our town!



**Governor McAuliffe, Trey Mitchell
and Lawrenceville Mayor Bill
Herrington.**

Region 1 Winner Dillon McReynolds

**E.B. Stanley Middle School
Abingdon, Virginia**



If I Were Mayor ...



Being mayor is an important job. You have to be selfless, thoughtful, and trustworthy.

Dillon McReynolds

Being mayor is no walk in the park. You can't just do whatever you want at your will. You have to approve businesses, stoplights and many other important assessments. You have to worry about the budget and town income.

If I were mayor, I would turn my town around. I would work to pass ordinances to crack down on breaking the law. Building stores and other buildings so my citizens could save travel money for more important things like food or taxes would be one of my main goals as mayor. Lowering taxes to help out the less fortunate would also be something I would strive to do. These jobs would be my main causes to be mayor.

First I will discuss my plan to pass ordinances for the good of the town. I want to increase the fines for wrong-doing to help crack down on the people who break the law. I would work to install recycling bins in every neighborhood, and have a truck take the trash to a local recycling station every Saturday. I would also work to ban illegal alcohol and drugs by increasing the police force. To add to that, I would also work to keep restaurants from selling alcohol (except for bars, of course). That is my plan to use my ordinances for the best.

I would also work to build stores and other interesting places to help the citizens save travel money. My main idea would be to build a mall that has a little bit of everything, from athletic stores to clothing stores to restaurants. I would even work to install a movie theatre there, too! The citizens of the town could go there and stay local, instead of driving to the next city or town just to go to one store. I would also stress lots of new businesses to help create jobs and increase income. These are my main plans for construction to help out the town income and the citizens.

Lastly, I would work to lower taxes to help out the less fortunate and small business. I know I can't take away taxes, although it would be nice to have no taxes. I would increase the taxes for bigger businesses with large income, thus lowering the need for more money from smaller businesses. I would use that money to build a shelter for the homeless and repair destroyed homes. This would help keep the town running smoothly and peacefully. This idea would improve the community in ways that weren't ever thought of.

Being mayor is an important job. You have to be selfless, thoughtful, and trustworthy. I know I might not be best for the job. But still, I would be willing to tackle it.



Governor McAuliffe, Dillon McReynolds and Abingdon Mayor Cathy Lowe.

Region 2 Winner Andrew Middleton

**Clifton Middle School
Covington, Virginia**



If I Were Mayor ...



If I were mayor, I would invest in our future by improving our economy, education, and recreation.

Andrew Middleton

John Quincy Adams once said, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader." This quote inspires me because it describes the type of mayor I would like to be. If I were mayor, I would invest in our future by improving our economy, education, and recreation.

In order to improve our future, we have to have a stable economy. If I were to become mayor, I would listen to my people and spend money where it would benefit the most people. I would take their

concerns to our local representatives and stay after them to make sure they get done. I would encourage big and small businesses to locate here. This will also provide new job opportunities for people. I believe focusing on these economic issues is a good start on improving our economy.

Another important issue as your mayor is education. I would support the increase in technology in all grade levels. This would make school more interesting and productive. I would also support more breaks for students. Daily walks in each of their classes would help students to concentrate and decrease misbehavior. I would also let students use their cell phones at lunch and when their teachers allow them to. I think these improvements to student education would improve student success.

If I were mayor, I would invest more money to improve our recreational programs. I would keep basketball courts maintained so when the recreation league has people and kids play on them, they aren't too dusty to play on. I would also keep our baseball fields maintained so they are more fun to play on. I would add batting cages to all the fields in Covington so when people come to play – like travel teams – they will want to come back. This will keep more people in our county healthy because they will want to play sports.

In conclusion, I think if I were mayor, I could make the people in our county a lot happier. I would strive to make this a place where people enjoy living and where others want to come live, too. If I were mayor I would invest in our future by improving our economy, education and recreation.



**Governor McAuliffe, Andrew Middleton and
Covington Mayor Thomas Sibold.**

Region 3 Winner Sadie Dryden

**Parry McCluer Middle School
Buena Vista, Virginia**



If I Were Mayor ...



This movie theater would be fun for families, provide jobs, and might even help with tourism.

Sadie Dryden

Buena Vista is a small city surrounded by beautiful mountains. I love Buena Vista with all my heart, but it definitely needs some improvement. There are a lot of things I would like to bring back bigger and better. The projects I have come up with will achieve that goal. If I were mayor of Buena Vista, I would restore the school's baseball field, rehabilitate the skate ramps and tennis courts, and reopen the movie theater.

I have been considering what projects could improve this town. I understand that the baseball

field at Parry McCluer Middle School is not up to playing standards, and I think it is time to renovate it. To make that happen, I would assemble some volunteer groups to help restore it. I'm sure the local baseball and softball teams would be appreciative. It would also be fun for families to bond and spend time together. I believe that this may help children to be physically active and they may spend more time outside. I think it would benefit everyone.

Another idea I had is to rehabilitate the skate ramps and tennis courts at Glenn Maury Park. The tennis courts have weeds growing between the many cracks. There's also the skate ramps. They aren't very sturdy and they're infested with bees. I know that there are some Boy Scouts who would be happy to complete this for an Eagle Scout project. It would be a lot safer for the community.

I also know that Parry McCluer High School tennis team shares the Southern Virginia University (SVU) courts with their team. My mother is the coach of the tennis team at SVU, and sometimes it's hard to figure out what time each team will practice. The tennis courts at Glenn Maury Park would help with that situation. I have seen a lot of kids who ride their skateboards around town, and I'm sure they would be pleased to have satisfactory skate ramps.

My final idea is to reopen the movie theater. It has been out of business for several years now. Now we have to drive to the movie theater in Lexington. It doesn't sound too bad, but I miss being able to walk to the movies with family and friends. I would enlist some construction crews to put in a soundproof wall, as the movie theater is right next to the train tracks. Then the crews would do some interior work. This movie theater would be fun for families, provide jobs, and might even help with tourism. I don't mind going to Lexington too much, but I would much rather go to a movie theater in Buena Vista.

I believe all of these projects would greatly impact Buena Vista in the best way imaginable. All of the citizens and I love this city and want to make it superior. That is what I would do if I were mayor of Buena Vista.



**Governor McAuliffe and
Sadie Dryden.**

Region 4 Winner Skyla Rain

Halifax County Middle School
South Boston, Virginia



If I Were Mayor ...



Instructors in training would make it easier for students to get the one-on-one time they need. It would also help people train for jobs in the field of education.

Skyla Rain

South Boston is a great place to live, however, there are some things that can be changed. If I were mayor, I would change some things about the education system and also about the way we treat the environment. I would use my position as city leader to make needed, positive changes.

Our environment is so pretty. If we want to keep it that way, then we need to be more careful how we treat it. Under my administration, littering policies would be enforced. I would create more recycling boxes around the city to

ensure an increase in the amount of waste recycled. I would create more community service groups to help clean up the environment. I would also get more volunteers for community service groups. Each group would be assigned to a different issue in improving our beautiful environment.

As mayor, I would also look at our educational system and see what changes I could make on the city level to improve student performance. Adults are always saying how students need to take education seriously. I think that students need more one-on-one time. But how are we going to get the one-on-one time we need if our teachers are trying to help 24 more students? As mayor, I would allot funds to be used by our schools to hire I.I.T.s (instructors in training). Instructors in training would make it easier for students to get the one-on-one time they need. The teachers wouldn't be so stressed out trying to help everyone. It would also help people train for jobs in the field of education. With this in place, schools could be more challenging and offer a fun learning experience for students. The students would have better grades if they understood and enjoyed the lessons more. A better understanding leads to better grades, better schools, satisfied teachers and excited students. Better schools would draw more businesses and jobs to our city and this would mean more money coming in for other city projects and improvements.

As the mayor, I would try to relate to every person in the city. If we can work together and listen, this would make everything better for everyone and, as a team, we could make this a greater place to live.

A mayor is a very important job and I'm sure it is very stressful. It will take a lot of time and energy, but in the long run, it is definitely worth the sacrifices and time. As the mayor, I would work to make South Boston a great place to live and grow up.



Governor McAuliffe, Skyla Rain and South Boston Mayor Edward Owens.

Region 5 Winner

Liv Scappa

Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School
Falls Church, Virginia



If I Were Mayor ...



Today's modern cities have adapted to meet the demand of their citizens to stay connected and to be at the forefront of technological advancements.

Liv Scappa

Great cities are able to differentiate themselves by providing a way for their citizens to feel connected. Oftentimes, city and state funding overlook the importance of technological advancements for the betterment of their communities. The City of Falls Church provides a good foundation for what makes a great city. Today's modern cities have adapted to meet the demand of their citizens to stay connected and to be at the forefront of technological advancements.

There are a number of opportunities for us to step out and provide new and innovative solutions for things like transportation, new environmentally friendly energy sources, and cutting back on the demand for traditional means of our energy. HUD, DOT, EPA, and other agencies have made millions of dollars available in funding to support the implementation of projects that provide sustainable communities. Funding is available for a variety of uses including community planning, research, and capitol infrastructure investments.

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Technological hubs around the world such as Dubai and Tokyo are emphasizing the rapidly changing needs of their citizens including things like free internet and solar powered buildings. As Mayor I would ensure we implement a new school of thought on presenting innovative, infrastructural changes to our city. Some ideas include, electric public transportation, solar powered pedestrian roadways, and solar powered markets.

Electric batteries for public transportation would be immensely less expensive than gas in the long run. Battery prices have dropped over 60 percent in the last six years. Also, electric transportation emits 40 to 60 percent less greenhouse gases than buses running on petroleum. We can implement electric transportation across our government and school systems, such as school buses, government vehicles, and police cars.

Looking at another technological powerhouse, Seoul, we see that solar powered bike paths have jolted the nation. It has attracted over 150,000 riders to produce energy. This concept can easily be implemented into Falls Church City's extensive bike paths. A miniscule stretch powered a home for a year! Just imagine what we can achieve in our small city! We could easily power our homes for years just by encouraging riding on our solar powered bike trails.

My final goal is to implement solar powered farmer's markets. Our city spends thousands of dollars supplying energy to vendors. It would be simple to carry out portable solar batteries. Every week our city holds a large farmer's market and if we carry out this concept, we could save thousands of dollars and potentially use that saved budget on other resources.

There are many good cities out there, but our citizens deserve the best. In order to give them that, we need to recognize the importance of the advancements in technology that are readily available to us by our local startups and software companies. We should explore transportation, finding new environmentally friendly energy supplies, and cut back on the demand for traditional energy sources. These advancements are possible as proven by other model cities. We just need the right leader to get us there.

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Governor McAuliffe, Liv Scappa and Falls Church Mayor David Tarter.

Region 6 Winner

Maha Laiq

Taylor Middle School
Warrenton, Virginia



If I Were Mayor ...



The Town of Hearts program interfaces with local businesses to identify their hiring needs by matching potential candidates and prepares the candidate through coaching and mentorship.

Maha Laiq

My back is pressed against the cold hard metal bench while my exhausted bare feet are buried deeply in the brown rough mulch. I watch my headstrong sister persistently trying to reach the rock plastered on the wall possibly hoping that the rock will magically get powers and move towards her hand. She stretches out her tiny fingers a little more and finally gets a hold onto the rock. I focus my attention towards the equipment and notice that it's old and boring. In my

mind, I imagine a fun park that has new equipment with vibrant colors. I imagine a park with a song constantly being played on repeat. What song am I thinking of? Well the chorus of the children's laughter. I don't just stop there. I think about how I could approve the town of Warrenton in general.

If I were mayor I would work hard towards making Warrenton the best town in the United States to raise a family. Warrenton is a great town already, but I have a few ideas that could make it better. The town parks need an equipment upgrade to make them attractive for year-round activities. I would make facilities where families can spend quality fun time enjoying ice skating, working out, bowling, miniature golf and fishing. All parks and recreational facilities would be paid for by the residents of Warrenton. Non-residents wishing to use our parks would be charged a usage fee.

Businesses wishing to establish commerce in Warrenton would be offered benefits commensurate to the number of Warrenton residents they employ. Businesses would be encouraged through additional benefits for closing the gap by hiring disadvantaged residents. Low or no income residents would be required to meet a tough standard for benefits eligibility. The town administration will be held accountable to the highest standards for closing the gap.

Residents that have fallen into tough times or are homeless would be offered enrollment in the Town of Hearts program. This program would offer food, shelter, clothing and employment assistance. Once a resident is back on their feet, they would be required to payback the Town of Hearts program. The Town of Hearts program interfaces with local businesses to identify their hiring needs by matching potential candidates and prepares the candidate through coaching and mentorship.

Yes! This is what I would do if I were mayor! My eyes stare back at a dreadful monster who doesn't seem to leave me alone and somehow is everywhere. This monster wasn't like those old-fashioned monsters who had vicious snakes for hair, razor sharp black nails, and red piercing eyes that reflected pure malevolence. This monster was worse – its name was reality. Sadly, I had been daydreaming and now I was exposed to the dreadful world. It felt so real though and now, instead of mayor, I was just a girl in the seventh grade. Life was so unfair! On the bright side, at least I have a few ideas for my "If I Were Mayor" essay.

Region 8 Winner Terrence Massenburg

**Churchland Middle School
Portsmouth Virginia**



If I Were Mayor ...



The first thing I would do if I were mayor is help people recycle and reduce waste.

Terrence Massenburg

If I were mayor there would be many things I would do to make the city of Portsmouth better. As mayor I would help people recycle and reduce waste. Another thing I would do as mayor is teach people how to become safer online. The third thing I would do as mayor is listen to the city's needs and wants.

The first thing I would do if I were mayor is help people recycle and reduce waste. The reason I would like to recycle is because most places are filled with waste and are contaminated. This is important because landfills are associated with pollution risk to soil, air and

water, odors and increased traffic from heavy trucks loaded with landfill-bound waste. In 2015, Virginia solid waste management facilities received and handled 15 million tons of waste.

The second thing I would do if I were mayor is teach people to become safer online. If you are safer online, then the number of child predators and cyberbullies will decrease because safety is my top priority. The reason I would like to decrease cyberbullying is because people are starting to kill themselves because of this and it's not just in Portsmouth. Child predators are a major concern to me because they lure children with puppies, candy, ice cream and kids are falling for it.

The third and final thing I would do as mayor is take time to listen to the city's needs and wants. Once every two weeks, we will have a town hall meeting to discuss your needs and wants. The reason for this is because not everyone gets to share their ideas so this is the place where you can. Everyone's comments will be heard even if you're homeless or poor.

We can change the city and turn it into a better one if we work hard and contribute. Recycling and reducing waste is a good way to help your community. The decrease in cyber bullying and child predators is my top priority because parents need to know that their children are safe. Everyone's needs will be heard and you get to share your opinions. I would do my best to make sure this is the best city ever. And that's what I would do if I were mayor!



**Governor McAuliffe and
Terrence Massenburg.**