



Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire

*The following questions present an opportunity to learn more about your views on key community issues and your vision for your 2023 DISD School Board Race. **Please complete and return no later than 11:59PM on Friday, May 19th, 2023** All candidate questionnaires will be published on our website. Late questionnaires are unable to be accepted for endorsement evaluation.*

1. What are the top 3 issues facing your district?

The top three issues are 1) improving student outcomes and closing opportunity gaps 2) declining enrollment and 3) funding/budgetary issues

2. What are the top 3 policy priorities you plan to advocate for in the first 90 days of your term?

I believe that the current board is doing a good job of focusing policy conversations on improving student outcomes. I will be listening and learning, and while doing so, I want to make sure that we are continuing to invest in early childhood education, identifying and rewarding great teachers and supporting strategic compensation to help close gaps, and supporting the district in appropriately increasing the quality of instructional materials so that our students are graduating college and career ready.

3. The cradle-to-prison pipeline disproportionately impacts the Black community. Students who have difficulty in our schools are at a greater risk for arrest and incarceration. How have you contributed toward the reduction of negative interactions between our students and the criminal justice system?

In the scope of my work over the last decade, I support the district's efforts in creating alternatives to suspension and promoting restorative practices, as well as identifying and addressing disparities in discipline. At United to Learn, we supported social and emotional learning as a pillar of learning, where educators and students practice skills and tactics to help self-regulate and readiness to learn. The greatest weapon we have to fight inequity in public education and we need to relentlessly sharpen and seek improvements to it.

4. What can and have you done to disrupt the cradle-to-prison pipeline in Dallas?

There is a strong connection between early low literacy skills and our country's high incarceration rates. For over a decade, I have focused my efforts on improving student outcomes by working to bridge related resource gaps in schools so that kids and educators have access to the environment, training and tools needed to improve literacy skills.



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With respect to #3 and #4 above, I am committed to listening, continuing to learn and supporting the many ways DISD and our community are working to reduce negative interactions and disrupt the cradle-to-prison pipeline.

5. Dallas Black and Hispanic students are, on average, less likely to be selected for gifted programs and take AP courses than their white peers. They are also more likely, on average, to be suspended and expelled. What are your plans to reverse these trends?

Regarding increasing Black and Hispanic enrollment in gifted programs and AP courses, I support the 2019-20 policy change which automatically enrolls students who score well on state exams in advanced mathematics, reading, science and social studies to “opt out” from opt in. I also would like to see innovative thinking how to offer APs more broadly and communicate the value of taking APs to students and parents to increase access.

Regarding suspension and expulsion, I support a District culture of respect and dignity, promoting restorative practices and creating alternatives to suspension.



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6. What will make your tenure on the board different from your predecessor's (if you are an incumbent, your previous term)? Specifically, what aspects of the previous three years would you like to see change/have done differently? What are your priorities going forward?

My priorities going forward are continuing to focus on and improve student outcomes from the early years all the way through to college and career readiness. I also want to see the district maintain the Teacher Excellence Initiative, identifying and rewarding great teachers, and supporting quality teacher preparation pipelines like the partnership with Dallas College and others. School safety, parent and community engagement, data driven innovation and fiscal oversight are also priorities.

7. How, if at all, does socio-economic status (housing, education, poverty, and transportation, for example) contribute toward student achievement?

Children living in poverty are 3.5 times more likely to experience repeated trauma than their affluent peers. Economically disadvantaged students can face greater hurdles including higher mobility due to housing insecurity, food insecurity, limited access to healthcare, lack of access to reliable transportation and related issues. These additional stressors can impede a child's readiness to learn.

8. How do we remedy the historical and systemic injustices experienced by Black Americans, specifically black students, in Dallas?

Ways to remedy injustices for Black students in Dallas include using data to identify gaps and setting goals to close those gaps, supporting equity investing in programs like ACE, advocating for additional investment in historically marginalized communities in bond elections, advocating for restorative discipline practices and finding alternatives to suspension.

9. As Dallas develops, affordable housing and effective transportation continue to be pain-points in communities of color. The impact of poor transportation infrastructure and frequent mobility from poor housing has an adverse impact on Black students outside of school. How can DISD further support students experiencing homelessness, who are underhomed and/or frequently forced to change campuses due to housing-related issues? How can DISD transportation better serve these students who depend on it exclusively to bring them to and from campus?

We should continue to offer and improve the wraparound services our schools can offer, including onsite laundry, food pantries, free meals for all students, and improving our counselor to student ratio so our counselors and teachers have more availability to identify issues and provide support where needed. I support the idea of DART offering students free passes to ride their buses and trains, and I believe our transportation department can continue to improve the efficiency of its services and routes. As the adults in charge of this system, it is our duty to find and meet our students where they are in life – through absolutely no fault of their



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own. I support wrapping our arms around the kids that need us the most and I'm open to discussing ideas that do that.

10. Black students, by the numbers, are performing lower academically compared to their peers. Which efforts from the past few years have had a positive impact on Black student achievement? What do you plan to do going forward to increase Black student achievement?

As previously mentioned, I support restorative discipline practices that remove the harmful stigma of being a "difficult student" that can be disproportionately applied to Black students as well as the opt-out policy for our honors classes. I also want to ensure that all of our students, especially our Black students, are exposed to leaders from their community and experiences beyond their own neighborhoods. When students see success in someone that looks like them, that spark can create a fire. When we provide kids from all walks of life with exposure to opportunities and a world beyond their current circumstances, it gives them an opportunity to dream big. Beyond this, we need to continue to invest in programs like ACE that put our best teachers in front of the kids that need them the most. We need to provide wraparound services to support students in difficult circumstances, and continue to innovate, create and maintain flexibility in how we support students at school.



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11. Economic access and opportunity have continued to be issues politicians have campaigned on but have failed to completely deliver for the Black community. What can Dallas ISD do to increase postsecondary readiness to ensure greater access to jobs, training, and other opportunities to ensure greater economic progress in the Black community?

Our P-TECH partnerships are a great example of how we can create more seamless pathways from education to career for students. Continuing to grow and improve that program allows more students to graduate with the skills necessary to step into a career and economic mobility for themselves and their family. We also need to foster a college-going atmosphere in our schools so that all students know that's an option for them if college is the right fit for their goals. Promoting the Dallas County Promise and the enormous wealth of scholarship and grant opportunities available to our students should be a top priority in all of our high schools.

12. Parents, teachers, and students are often pitted against each other in conversations around student achievement. This is NOT beneficial for Black students. Which of the aforementioned groups has the greatest impact on Black student achievement? Why? What can be done to bring these groups together to support a stronger educational future?

We know that beyond parents, the quality of teacher in front of each student has an enormous impact on their life. Especially for our students who are working to overcome so many other barriers, we must have an excellent teacher in every classroom with our disadvantaged students. With TEI we can identify which teachers are most capable of improving outcomes for kids, we can reward them to make sure they stay in Dallas ISD, and we can deploy these lifesavers to the schools and kids that need them most. Eric Hale is a great example of this. He changes lives every day in his classroom not just through his curriculum and classes but in the way he supports students and families. Teachers want what parents want: the best for the children they are charged with caring and providing for.

13. Broadband internet, especially since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic, has become increasingly key to access education, the economy, and community. Many residents lack reliable access in a city where technology is available and the industry is thriving. What are your plans to increase affordable access to broadband internet for Black communities?

The State of Texas has made great strides in supporting the expansion of broadband following COVID with the historic passage of HB 5 in the 87th Legislative Session. That progress has continued this session with HB 9, which the Senate just passed. Dallas ISD needs to continue to work with the City and County to identify areas that remain underserved by this expanded access and utilize the statewide resources available to provide broadband to those communities.



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14. What areas for partnership do you see with other organizations, governmental bodies, or community stakeholders that could benefit Black students?

I believe there is a long history of more privileged communities trying to determine what is best for minority and disadvantaged communities. I want to ensure my efforts to support equity are centered in the beliefs and desires of the variety of communities and neighborhoods that our schools serve. One of my first orders of business will be to spend time with each of the other 8 trustees to learn more about their district and the communities within them so that my votes and decisions not only serve District 2, but appropriately and effectively support students throughout Dallas ISD. We need to remain open and flexible to partnerships with the City – the largest summer and afterschool care provider in the area – the County, who provides vital health and community programs, and the wealth of business and community groups that each have their own niche.

15. The increased emphasis on Pre-K has been encouraging when looking toward the future of education in Dallas; however, the students who have already moved on from Pre-K or did not attend are the students you will be responsible for as well. What are your plans to increase the achievement of students already in the school system?

Our students cannot wait. It is unacceptable to think that any of our students, from PreK to senior in high school, is beyond the point where our talented and skilled teachers and schools cannot help them. I want to ensure that we are focused on literacy, numeracy and proficiency + in all grade levels to ensure that our students are ready to read to learn. I want to ensure that we continue to provide support and tutoring for those that have slipped through the cracks and never made it to that milestone, whether they're 4th graders or high schoolers.

16. Without creating new schools, new programs, or conducting new studies, how can we improve the quality and performance of our current neighborhood schools?

We need to highlight and promote our neighborhood schools in the same light that we do our choice schools. It's not an overstatement to say that neighborhood schools are the foundation of our community and the fabric of our neighborhoods. During my time working with SMU and with United to Learn, we worked to bridge resource gaps for neighborhood schools to ensure that private philanthropy was effectively and efficiently applied to the schools that need it. I support continuing to advocate for organizations to help fill in these gaps and support and amplify the great work underway in our neighborhood schools.

Belief Statements



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To what extent do you agree, or disagree, with the following statements? Please include a detailed explanation of your response.

1. There is a history of Black people being disproportionately denied access to educational and economic opportunity in Dallas.

AGREE. This is inarguable. You can go back to any number of the low points in history in Dallas and see the intentional oppression of Black students in their ability to access a high-quality education. From slavery to segregation to economic segregation, we have historically provided lower quality options to the children who need it most.

2. Ensuring equitable access to a strong education and postsecondary opportunity is a primary responsibility of a DISD Trustee.

AGREE. Every child – EVERY CHILD – is a gift and deserves the resources they need to create economic mobility in their future so they can live with dignity and provide for their families.

3. Socio-economic factors play a significant role in educational achievement.

AGREE. Students that come to school with difficult circumstances at home, whether they are unsafe, hungry, hurt, scared or unhoused, have a hard time learning. On top of that, summer slide is real. Additionally, students whose parents are working multiple jobs may have less parental involvement at home and at school. The list goes on. There is no doubt that socio-economic factors play a role in educational achievement BUT it is also possible for schools and our educators to provide effective interventions to overcome many of these things if given the necessary resources and support. Every child is capable and deserving of learning.

4. The future of a city and its communities depends on a high-quality education system.

AGREE. The 140,000 kids in our school district are our future neighbors, workforce, business and community leaders. We, as a society, cannot afford to let this opportunity to ensure they are informed, capable citizens to pass us by.

5. Equity, as a focus area, continues to be part of the ongoing conversation around policy and advocacy. Please define equity and how the term guides your thinking on policy decisions.

Equity means that regardless of where you start in life, every child deserves the same opportunities and the differentiated resources it takes to get achieve that access. It does not matter where our Dallas kids come from, we owe each and every one of them the opportunity and access to a quality education.

Thanks for completing our questionnaire. If there is anything else you'd like to share with voters about yourself or your campaign, please use the space below to do so:



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