



United Way's Young Civic Leaders Candidate Questionnaire

School Budget

1. How can you commit to support students to understand their school budget and what opportunities will you create for their participation in decision-making?

There is no greater benefit to the community than preparing the next generation to be informed and engaged members of their communities. With a budget as large as LAUSD's \$7.87 billion dollars and increasing needs in all our schools, we must ensure the money is well spent in our students.

Because of my commitment to hear and understand student perspectives when decision-making as a Board Member, I established a Student Advisory Council in 2016 to empower, inform and learn from student representatives from all Board District 3 high schools, including option schools. Each month they work with me and my staff on topics of interest and ideas for policy initiatives.

The current process district wide, allows for a student at each school to participate in their School Site Council. This is an excellent opportunity to actively engage a smaller group of students and provide an in-depth understanding of their school's budget.

My proposal to engage more students district wide would be to increase the number of students allowed to participate in their School Site Councils and to work with District staff and PACE teams to develop an online platform or add additional features to the existing student portal. We know that students rely on technology and social media to stay connected so these platforms could provide budget workshops, tools to better understand the budget and a survey for students to provide feedback to school administrators on their priorities and needs.

College Readiness

2. We feel as though there are some schools that get additional preparation for entering college and university. How do you plan on ensuring comprehensive supports for programs that uphold a college-going culture at all school sites and not just some?

The District has an impressive team of A-G counselors and coordinators at each of the Local Districts to support every school in their college efforts and initiatives. Currently,

each Local District is in the planning stages of developing their Community of Schools Plan for the 2020-2021 school year. As part of this plan, Local District Superintendents are working with their staffs to better personalize services for all students. I am skeptical, however, of our ability to ensure comprehensive support for all students without fairer and more adequate funding from the state and federal governments.

The District has also partnered with the City of LA on the College Promise program. Through this initiative students now qualify for free full-time enrollment/tuition at a community college, free summer orientation to prepare for college, priority enrollment in math and English classes, academic and career mentoring among other benefits.

In my local district, my Superintendents have created partnerships with CSUN, Pierce College and Valley College so our students can now benefit from dual enrollment, summer courses and extra supports to prepare and get an early start before enrolling in a post-secondary institution. Since this strategy seems to be working, I will work with District leadership to duplicate these efforts so more students can benefit from pre and post-secondary education.

Quality Staff

3. How will you work to make sure that student voice is included in the hiring process and evaluation of an educator?

At a time when LAUSD desperately needs more teachers to lower class size and provide instruction for a broad range of programs and special needs, as well as many professional support staff such as counselors, psychiatric social workers, nurses, etc., I would welcome student perspectives and ideas about how we can better recruit and retain educators.

I would also be interested in hearing student ideas regarding how student voices could be incorporated in the evaluation of employees that is consistent with California law and the various collective bargaining agreements that have been negotiated between LAUSD and our union partners.

Mental Health

4. How will you ensure that students receive mental health supports and in doing so, which mental health themes will be most important to you?

On April 2019, The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted to allocate nearly \$10 million to increase mental health services and hire more social workers on LAUSD campuses. Funded by the Department of Mental Health, the Los Angeles County

Community School Initiative allowed the District to expand school-based prevention and early intervention services, peer support, crisis response and mental health outreach and referrals for students and families in need.

Extra supports like these allow the District to provide additional school-based mental health services that are so critical for student success in school and life. Prior to the increase in funding, the District was already working closely with the County, the Department of Mental Health, DCFS, The LA Trust, the City of LA and other agencies to provide wrap around services for our students and their families.

As a Board Member, I will work closely with our Government Relations team, our Division of Student Health and Human Services and our partners to continue to advocate for more funding and supports to fully address the mental health challenges and needs our students face.

The mental health themes most important to me are:

Bullying

The District is committed to fostering a safe and respectful school and community culture where all students and staff can lead safe, purposeful and academically fruitful lives. As we all know bullying is an aggressive and unwanted behavior that can be manifested in a variety of forms and can cause physical or emotional harm to our students. Unfortunately, the student populations that are affected the most by bullying are our LGBTQ, Foster, English Learners and our students with disabilities.

As a Board Member my job is to make sure we as a District are taking preventative measures so that no student has to deal with harm or trauma. We must ensure all students are treated with respect and have the support and resources they need to express their individuality. It is important for students to feel safe when they go to school every day. I am proud to say that Los Angeles Unified takes this commitment to ensure the safety of our students, families and employees very seriously. Through the promotion of a safe environment for all students, anti-bullying campaigns, proper guidance and support, our LGBTQ students as well as all students will know they are not alone.

Our Human, Relations, Diversity and Equity Division has created various toolkits to support our schools, they work closely with the California Department of Education, the US Government- StopBullying.gov and non-profit organizations to provide resources and assemblies for our students and families to build safer learning environments.

Tobacco Use and Vaping

Student safety is my number one priority. We know that the vaping epidemic has affected the health and well-being of many of our students. For this reason, I voted in

support of the Anti-Vaping resolution because it was a step forward in protecting the safety and well-being of our students. My colleagues and I are working closely with our government relations team and legislators to permanently ban all flavoring in tobacco products sold in California.

In my Board District 3, District leaders and the San Fernando Valley Partnership hosted a series of assemblies at various schools focusing on drug/vaping and tobacco use. They reviewed with students the health risks related to vaping/tobacco use, resources available to students both during and after school and provided examples of student-led prevention campaigns.

Homelessness

While we all know that homelessness has risen dramatically in recent years. It seems that local government policies and revenue needs have increasingly favored replacing low-income housing with housing that attracts higher income businesses and families and also benefits developers.

The affordable housing crisis has created great need for special services for our families experiencing homelessness. Last year, LA Unified identified and served over 17,000 students who did not have permanent homes. Homelessness contributes to our declining enrollment and decreasing school revenue as families are no longer able to stay in Los Angeles. The lack of affordable housing also significantly impacts our ability to recruit and retain teachers, nurses, and other specialized employees who are greatly needed.