



## School Board District VII Candidate Questionnaire

The Seattle School Board met in an open public meeting July 15 to develop this Candidate Questionnaire and to make adjustments to the District VII School Board Appointment process (Directors Harris, Burke, DeWolf, Geary, and Pinkham were present. Director Mack was unavailable due to previously scheduled travel). A revised timeline of key dates in the appointment process is included below. Our apologies for the delay in this process.

**Questionnaire Instructions:** Please provide responses to the following five School Board-selected questions and, additionally, choose [three questions submitted by community members](#). Include both the questions and your responses in your completed candidate questionnaire. Should you select more than three community questions, your first three responses will be considered. Because we are committed to publishing a website that is accessible to all our readers including those who need ADA accommodations and language translations, please submit your responses as plain text without graphics or attachments as only text will be posted online. **Your questionnaire is due by email to the School Board Office, [boardoffice@seattleschools.org](mailto:boardoffice@seattleschools.org), by Monday, July 29, 2019 at 9 a.m.**

1. What is your connection to the Southeast Seattle District VII community, schools, families, and students? How do you foresee growing or expanding on those connections and relationships in your role as a School Board Director?
  - a. I am a 30-year resident of the community. I have three children who have been part of the school district. My son graduated almost 4 years ago. My oldest daughter graduated a year ago. I have a second daughter who is currently in middle school. My children have attended Maple Elementary School, Mercer Middle School, and Franklin High School. I have been actively engaged in their school communities, PTAs (parent-teacher associations), and activity groups. This includes serving on the African American Advisory Committee for Franklin High School.
  - b. I have actively worked on behalf of children in the community for almost 25. My earliest efforts started in college at the University of WA when I recruited college students to mentor students at Rainier Beach High School. I went on to work with a mentoring program that supported students in over 25 Seattle Public Schools. I served as an advocate and participant in efforts to improve outcomes for children in the Seattle, such as It's About Time for Kids, Vision Youth, and other community-based efforts. I have served as a non-profit executive, philanthropist, and business leader focused on educational issues that impact education in Seattle, the country, and the world. My family owns a business that has operated in Columbia City for over 20 years and South Seattle for over 30 years; it was an integral part of Columbia City's revitalization.



- c. I have served in a variety of board roles and leadership positions for community-based efforts to improve educational, social, and life outcomes for young people in the South Seattle community. I am connected to local business owners, nonprofit organizations, and businesses. I serve as the co-char for the Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Prayer Breakfast, and I am a member of several community/civic organizations such as Seattle Rotary 4.
- d. As a member of the school board, I would expand these connections in several ways:
- i. Community conversations: I would continue the work started by Betty Patu of hosting a monthly gathering for community members to discuss issues of importance and to share critical information. It also provides a regular opportunity for new and interested stakeholders to engage.
  - ii. Stakeholder meetings: I would be proactive and responsive in meeting with community leaders and stakeholders. This would include the key stakeholders already working in the district, but it would also include identifying other stakeholders and voices that reflect more marginalized communities and interests.
  - iii. School and community engagement: I would engage in active and appropriate conversations with local school leadership. As appropriate, this would include visits to schools, parent organizations, and faith-/community-based organizations.
  - iv. Service: I would meet and exceed the commitment to serve. This includes going above and beyond participation in meetings and on committees. It includes active presence and engagement on issues in the board and community. I would build deeply collaborative relationships with other members of the board. I would always be prepared to contribute meaningfully to decisions that need to be made.
2. What is your understanding of the role of School Board Director? How do you foresee working with your fellow Directors, the Superintendent, staff, and the public?
- a. School boards receive their mandate to serve from the public, not as individuals alone. In order to fulfill the responsibilities of the office, it would require working together with other members to govern and make decisions that serve the students, staff, administrators, and the broader community. I would use the skills I've gained developing collaborations and working across diverse groups to achieve results that positively impact what we do, how we do it, and the outcomes for students.
  - b. I see the role of a director to ensure that district is responsive to the values, beliefs, and priorities of the community. This is done by ensuring accountability, overseeing an efficient and effective structural model of governance, creating listening channels, providing and sharing in community leadership, serving as an advocate for all



- participants in the educational process, adopting policies that give the district direction to set priorities and achieve its goals, hiring and evaluating the superintendent, adopting and overseeing the annual budget, managing the collective bargaining process for employees of the district, and being supportive of staff and administration.
- c. Ultimately, a board member must understand the objectives and goals of the stakeholders they represent and simultaneously understand how to negotiate those in the broader governance process. As a leader, I would seek to add greater value by being able to bring together diverse and multi-faceted points of view to find synergies, eliminate blockers, and advance the vision/objectives of the work.
  - d. I also bring a fresh perspective to district governance and the opportunities and challenges the district faces. My fresh perspective is seasoned in experience and will create space for innovative and impactful governance.
3. How do you think Seattle Public Schools is doing? Do you support the District's recently adopted Strategic Plan - why or why not? What does focus on students that are "*the furthest from educational justice*" mean to you?
- a. I believe Seattle Public Schools is guided by leadership that is focused on achieving strong outcomes for students. The District overall has issues to face related to educational outcomes for all students, disparities for students of color, access to resources and supports for students, and proactive plans for leadership moving forward.
  - b. I support the strategic plan. I also believe in continuous improvement. The key is not found in the plans we develop, but in the ways those plans are executed and improved upon. As a board member, I would seek to see the plan as a living document that serves as a guide and a point of reference that is ultimately measured by the outcomes it enables.
  - c. I support focusing on students that are the further from educational justice. In my experience, there are great opportunities to develop solutions that work for everyone when we take this approach. My career has been spent working for educational, economic, and social justice for children, youth, and vulnerable communities.
  - d. I support the steps taken to creating new racial equity teams and a committee that focuses on particularly vulnerable groups. I also believe the support provided by the city is a good step forward. The key though is based on what is being implementing and new ideas being introduced in the system that come from best practices and internal learning labs that are community informed and supported.
  - e. Ultimately, parents and stakeholder groups who represent students of color, students with special needs, and students with advanced learning abilities see opportunities for improvement and development. I believe there is merit in those points of view that need to be considered and wisely acted upon.



4. How does racism affect education in Seattle? What are your ideas for implementing School Board Policy No. 0030, Ensuring Educational and Racial Equity?
- a. There are more studies and reports than can be named pointing to the disparities in educational outcomes between students of color and white students. The realities of economic and social inequality have impacts on the learning environments of students and the classroom and school experiences of students. There are systemic issues ranging from the culture around instruction and discipline to social and cultural issues that are influenced by various societal factors.
  - b. The ideas I have for implementation include the following:
    - i. Trauma informed practices for discipline: We can continue to make progress on efforts to address discipline challenges that take advantage of the latest learning on how to effectively deal with ACES (adverse childhood experiences). This must be balanced with efforts to create stronger cultural competence in teachers/administrators, opportunities for learning and training, and stronger community involvement.
    - ii. Improved access to resources: Decades of research point to the fact that instruction and access to resources is critical to reducing the achievement gap. Educational outcomes for minority children are much more a function of their unequal access to key educational resources, including skilled teachers and quality curriculum. The U.S. educational system is one of the most unequal in the industrialized world, and students routinely receive dramatically different learning opportunities based on their social status. Seattle is not outside of this reality. This is a critical issue for the district. Most industrialized countries around the world, as a point of practice, spend more money on students with the greatest financial and social disadvantages. This can be done by the district while advancing learning for all students.
    - iii. Stable leadership with adequate training and support: I am interested in the average tenure of administrators, staff, and teachers. This is important to creating traction for new programs and policies.
    - iv. Increasing community engagement efforts in schools: Education is a community-based effort that includes parents, agencies, and community leaders. We must champion models that work and seek new and innovative ways to engage that promote academic achievement for students.
5. What do you want to focus on as a School Board Director and why? How do you foresee doing that work within the constraints of the role (law, existing policy, budget, staff, and public expectations)?
- a. Boards govern at the level of policy with the decisions that they make and the ways they apply financial resources to support priorities that come from strategy and policy. They



- lead and further inspire based on the vision they provide and actions they take to achieve their stated goals. Ultimately, board members must not do the role of staff and administrators and avoid conduct that does not respect the line between governance and operations.
- b. I am particularly interested in the following: improving education outcomes for students of color; trauma informed practices for discipline; diversity, equity, inclusion policy and practice; school funding; building 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills in students for employability and life; and teacher and educator training.
  - c. I would serve by:
    - i. Having a clear vision for the district that is consistent with the vision, leadership, and direction of the board.
    - ii. Having a focus on being data-driven and outcome oriented.
    - iii. Communicating my actions to the community and supporting board efforts to do so through public discourse and written reports that speak to progress and challenges.
    - iv. Working as part of the team. I collaborate well with others and would be respectful of the other board members and the superintendent.
    - v. Utilizing good fiscal steward to support the adoption of a fiscally sound district budget.
    - vi. Focusing on the what is best for all students and for vulnerable students.
    - vii. Advocating at the appropriate levels for public education.

As noted in the instructions above, please also select and answer **three** questions [submitted by community members](#).

6. Why do you want to serve on the school board? What is your personal and professional motivation?
  - a. My heart's desire is to deepen engagement with the community and to advance outcomes for all students. I am motivated to utilize my skills to see the achievement gap closed and greater opportunity for all students to succeed and attain even higher levels of academic success. I am strong believer in public education. I am a graduate of public institutions at the high school and collegiate level. I have a love of education. I am a life-long learner. I have worked for over 25 years to support student outcomes and success. I believe education is a pathway out of poverty and toward a more productive future for all students and the community at large. I believe employability is the car that gets students down the pathway. We need to better prepare all students for a world that is digitally transforming. I have managed a successful professional career, and I seek truly to serve. I have no professional motivation in taking the office.
  - b. I hope to bring my demonstrated competencies to bear as follows:



- i. Fiscal competence: I have skills governing and managing at a level that is commensurate with the role. My experience working in organizations with infrastructure and scale that is commensurate with the budget of SPS will add value to decision making and fiscal outcomes.
  - ii. Passion and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion: I have worked to bring together diverse teams in service to vulnerable communities. As demonstrated by my resume, these teams and efforts have resulted in improved outcomes for those being served. I am a person with deeply held beliefs who can engage meaningfully and openly with others who have differing or similar beliefs. My beliefs, which are based on a strong commitment to equality and affirming human dignity, propel and motivate me to work for the equity and inclusion of others. We cannot promote a world where difference is diminished in the pursuit of agreement. Our differences do not need to divide us. Rather, we can leverage our varied perspectives to find innovative solutions to the challenges we face. This commitment is demonstrated in various efforts in which I am engaged. This includes being part of the diversity and inclusion leadership team in my business group at work. This has included working with others to provide training, to develop strategy, and to lead recent efforts to develop the first diversity and inclusion podcast.
  - iii. Educational advocate: I have focused on skilling efforts for students and teachers that strengthen education and improve employment outcomes for students. This is demonstrated in my work experience and community service. I believe this experience can provide insight and direction that contributes to board decision-making.
  - iv. Community-based: I have a long and deep history working in District VII. I will expand community engagement efforts by broadening the base of stakeholders and creating opportunities for greater engagement. Ultimately, I know how to connect with people. I listen, create consensus on priorities, and take appropriate action to produce results.
  - v. Continuous improvement: I seek to build on what works, foster a growth mindset, and make improvements in critical and priority areas. Ultimately, this means supporting and challenging views and actions in a healthy way that work towards the agreed upon shared goals.
7. Southeast Seattle has the largest concentration of diverse (ethnic and linguistic) learners in the district. How will you ensure their unique needs are prioritized at the district level?
- a. Ultimately, the goal is to close the achievement gap for all students. This means being aware, interested, and focused on the issues, opportunities, and challenges faced by students at a holistic level.



- b. I will seek data that informs and supports policy and fiscal decision-making on behalf of these diverse groups.
  - c. I will raise awareness of the distinct needs and issues faced by these groups.
  - d. I will ensure policy and fiscal decisions are reflective of prioritized goals.
  - e. I will engage in board processes and stakeholder relationships that improve my understanding.
  - f. I will create the appropriate listening channels for input on direction and decisions.
8. How will you ensure racial and income equity in your decisions as a school board member?
- a. Understand the data that underlies financial decision-making;
  - b. Align resource decisions with strategic priorities for educational justice;
  - c. Ensure schools are funded sufficiently and that taxpayer dollars are being used effectively to benefit all students. The efficient use of all resources opens the door to the possibility to grow resources for our most vulnerable students and the programs that support them.
  - d. Active participation and presence in school board meetings, community conversations, and stakeholder gatherings to hear the ideas, issues, input, and concerns of community members.
  - e. Bring my experience and point of view to bear in every instance to achieve improved results for students.

## Updated District VII Appointment Process and Timeline

- **July 29 (NEW):** Completed candidate questionnaires are due by email to the School Board Office, [boardoffice@seattleschools.org](mailto:boardoffice@seattleschools.org), by Monday, July 29, 2019 at 9 a.m. The responses from these completed candidate questionnaires will be shared publicly on each individual's webpage.
- **August 5 (NEW):** School Board holds a public special meeting (Work Session) on the School Board District VII Appointment Process from 4:30-6:00 p.m. in the Board Office Conference Room at the John Stanford Center. During this meeting, it is anticipated that the Board will select questions for the August 7 forum.
- **August 7:** Public Candidate District VII Forum at Rainier Beach High School from 6 - 9 p.m. All candidates will have the opportunity to share why they are interested in serving on the Seattle School Board.
- **August 21 (NEW):** Public special board meeting to select the three finalist candidates from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at the John Stanford Center.
- **September 11 (NEW):** Public Candidate District VII Forum from 6 - 9 p.m. (Location is to be determined). During this forum, the three finalists will be invited to answer questions from the community.



- **September 18 (NEW):** School Board vote on the applicants during the Regular School Board meeting, which begins at 4:15 p.m. at the John Stanford Center auditorium. The applicant that is selected will be sworn in during the Regular Board meeting.
- **Please note that the previously published process steps for August 14 and August 28 have been replaced by the above timeline. Updates are being made to the School Board website.**