

Beth Commers

From: Ryan Williams <ryanwilliamselection@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 19, 2019 8:49 AM
To: Beth Commers
Subject: Re: BOE candidate questionnaire and site walk thru

Good Morning Beth

Thanks for the hard work you do. Here is my candidate Q&A

1. Will you abide by the DFL endorsement? Yes or No answers only

yes

2. Please give a brief bio and describe why you are running.

My experience is as a Special Education Assistant, School Bus Monitor, Associate Educator, Child Care Provider, MN Reading Corp Intervener, Volunteer, Community Radio Broadcaster, and as Health Foods Cook. I am in the process of obtaining a 5-12 Social Studies teaching license. I was enrolled in Special Education as a Student, I hope to be our first school board director with a learning disability to be the advocate for special education student that we need.

I am running to eliminate discriminatory physical restraint policies targeting children with disabilities. I am running to designate a school transportation safety director and establish a written transportation policy provision for bus monitors. I am running to ensure that the school board abides and establishes the states required policies for students that become violent, to ensure all assaults of district employees are reported by the School Board to the Commissioner of Education, to ensure that educators are made aware of previous assaults of district employees of student in their care. I am running to ensure that there are district policies in place to eliminate false 3rd party billing insurance claims of services for students with disabilities. I am running to roll back the early start times that we are not prepared for.

3. What do you see as the skills students will need to succeed as community members, in the workforce and in college readiness in the next 10 years? Where are ways in which the District can improve to help all students succeed?

Students need district support in emotional and social development. The district must keep our students safe by adopting the state required policies for the protections of students in violent classrooms. The district can better prepare students for college readiness by better partnering with Metro State University Urban Education Program to bring more college enrolled volunteers into the schools and classroom, we need a district level volunteer program.

4. Describe three programs and/or policies of St Paul Public Schools that you believe are working/effective.

Appointing a Human Rights Compliance position is the most important thing the district is working on. This positions is crucial for reversing discriminator suspensions and expostulations of students, ending discriminatory restraints of students with disabilities, and complying with the IEP requirements of our students also reversing inaccurate claims of special education services billed to students insurance providers. This is the first step to guaranteeing we are accountable to meet the rights of our students.

Social Workers are very important. Social workers provide support alternative to restraining, suspending, and expelling students. Social workers need the school boards continued full support..

The Summer meal service is a great program for our students in Saint Paul. This program increases families connections to the district. It may be a big help in retaining students enrolled in the district. This program will help students and families build trust and confidence in the district as an important service.

5. Describe three programs and/or policies of St Paul Public Schools that you believe need to be improved.

Policy 508 the policy for physically restraining students only applies to children with disabilities. This is a discriminatory practices that needs to be eliminated. It is a discriminatory practice to restrain student with disabilities for behaviors non disabled wont be restrained.

The district does not have a complete transportation safety policy. The school board must create a transportation safety policy. Specifically creating a policy for the qualifications training and duties of bus monitors. The school board must officially designate a school transportation safety director. The school board must exercise the authority to appoint a pupil transportation safety committee to take transparent action to resolve the transportation safety issues in the district. The state wide bus driver shortage is growing, SPPS must start to meet the school district transportation safety responsibilities set by the State of Minnesota.

The mismanaged construction program must receive board review and oversight. The project has gone well over budget hurting the communities. The board must take the required action to join the construction review and oversight team. It was upsetting that the board could not receive a commitment to be allowed to join the construction review team.

6. Describe the strengths you see in the Special Education program and what improvements you believe are needed. Please include a discussion of mainstreaming in your response.

Focus Beyond is a great strength in SPPS special education. It is a great service to transitions students out of the special education services. It is great to see students learning how to use the public transportation system. We must continue to support this program to meet the needs of our students.

Restraints of students with disabilities for behaviors non disabled students would not be restrained for is a practice that needs to end. The district does not have the required policy for who will take custody of a student in violent situations. This results in unnecessary restraints of students with disabilities and no time to document the restraints as required. The first step to mainstreaming students with disabilities is to fully restore their human rights by ending policies that target students with disabilities for physical restraints.

False claims of special education services must be eliminated. Special Education Assistants receive no benefit from claiming PCA services that did not happen. We must have the school board pass district level policies that guarantee Special Education Assistants time to accurately log their PCA service hours.

7. Describe the strengths you see in the English Language Learners (ELL) program and what improvements you believe are needed. Please include a discussion of mainstreaming in your response.

Bilingual Educational Assistant are an important strength for students being mainstreamed in our Schools. Immersion sites and programs allow for our English Language Learners to be mainstreamed as equals and use their additional languages as an asset. Dual Language schools are a great support method for our English Language Learners to transition to mainstream schooling and classes.

We need to bring in more multilingual support for our students. There are plenty of future educators in our local universities and colleges that need volunteer hours as they earn their degrees. The district must create a system to better place future educator volunteer where their strengths can be used.

8. How can the St Paul Public Schools create and maintain a positive school climate/culture where all students and employees can thrive? Please include a discussion of Restorative Justice practices, School Resource Officers and Implicit Bias in your response.

We can eliminate the newly created unwanted learning lead position. We need to use that \$3,000,000 on social workers or Check & Connect position to better support our students in crisis. Social workers and Check & Connect positions are better to server our students in crisis than School Resources Officers and Learning Leads. Social workers and Check & Connect positions are much more affordable than School Resource Officers and Learning Leads.

We need to model restorative justice for our students, we must come together as a community to end the discriminatory restraint policies of students with disabilities. We must make the need repairs to the damage caused by focusing physical restraint policies on our students with disabilities. We need district leadership to learn how to use restorative justice before we can expect it of our students.

9. Describe what you see as a positive working relationship between the school board and the superintendent.

The school board creates the policies for the district when needed or required. The school board is designated district responsibilities by the state, such as the school board's is to report each physical assault of a district employee by a student within 30 days. 121A.53 REPORT TO COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

The board is to assist district leadership by creating a safe transportation system for our students. The boar passes transportation safety policies. Each board shall designate a school transportation safety director to oversee and implement pupil transportation safety policies, 123B.91 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUS SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES.

The Board is responsible for knowing the safety situations of SPPS students ans staff. MN legislature as has a great description of the boards relationship and roles in the district. 123B.09 BOARDS OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS. The care, management, and control of independent districts is vested in a board of directors, to be known as the school board..

The board must superintend and manage the schools of the district; adopt rules for their organization, government, and instruction; keep registers; and prescribe textbooks and courses of study.

10. A budget is a moral document that reflects our DFL and community values. What values do you believe our St Paul Public School budget should reflect and how would you exercise fiduciary responsibility of the St Paul Public Schools budget to ensure that the budget we envision is realized? Please include your proposals for exercising review of capital budget project bidding and contract process especially as it relates to current sizable overruns.

The schools budget should reflect the needs of our students over micro managing our staff. Our Schools need Social workers, Check & Connect staff, bus monitors, multilingual Educational Assistants and other support staff. The budget should not spend millions of dollars annually on new Learning Leads to micro manage our teachers when our students need more support staff that work directly with students. We should eliminate the upcoming learning leads spending and use that money for direct student support.

The board should have been allowed on the review and oversight team for discovering what went wrong with the overspending of the mishandled construction costs. Transparency and action require our democratically elected district leaders to be knowledgeable of how the tax dollars are spent. I propose the board pass a policy provision that allows board directors to join any budget oversight team or committee in the district.

The board must focus on the rights of our students to help protect the budget. False claims of special education services have hurt the trust of families in the district, by protecting families from false service claims the board can prevent parents from opting out of 3rd party billing. With the high costs of special education the board must take transparent actions to keep these important revenue source

The board must eliminated the policies that focus physical restraints on students with disabilities. Discriminatory restraints will make families leave the district for charter schools that will over bill the district. State and Federal Government are starting to look and resolve misuse of physical restraints. The board must prevent and eliminate discriminatory restraints to avoid possible litigation costs.

The board must start to meet District Transportation Safety Requirements. There is a growing shortage of bus drivers in Minnesota. The best way to retain our bus drivers is to fully meet the safety responsibilities of our bus drivers. The more dangerous it is to transport students the more it will cost to pay bus drivers. Bus drivers do deserve to be paid well for there service but we also need to provide students and bus drivers with safer conditions.

The board needs to bring back the focus to the needs of our students. Bringing back the focus to student needs will save the district a lot of money.

On Fri, Jun 7, 2019 at 8:45 AM Beth Commers <bethcommers@donjek.com> wrote:

Hi All,

Attached is the DFL's candidate information questionnaire. Directions for submission and deadlines are at the bottom of it.

Also, we will do a walk-thru of Washington Tech this coming MONDAY, June 10th at 5pm. You are welcome to join and/or send a rep. We will meet at the main entrance at 5pm sharp. If you will be late, please send me a text before Monday at noon and we will arrange to meet you to help you join up with the group.

Best,

Beth

Beth Commers

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