

should be proud. I'm grateful our family has access to this school system. At the same time, I'm aware of the many opportunities that District 65 has to strengthen the quality and consistency of the education it provides -- specifically, to ensure that every child has the equal opportunity to benefit from the resources our district has to offer.

Over the past year the Board has acknowledged elements of what is working and what is not, and made efforts to respond. Given my experience in nonprofit leadership at executive levels, managing large budgets, stakeholder relationships, employee supervision, policy and governance, my academic studies and research, and experience in the field of education, I believe that I would be an asset to the composition and work of the board.

2. What personal qualities, training or experience do you have that would be of value as a school board member? (Please answer briefly in essay form and do not attach a resume.)

I believe that public education is a human right. I also believe that a high quality education is one that educates every child as a whole within the context of their personal talents, their family, and their community. As a former teacher, I not only hold these values--I cherish them. I understand the incredible amount of dedication and time that goes into creating an environment that makes these values possible.

As a former nonprofit leader working in community schools and out-of-school time, I also understand the complexities of marrying high-level theories with actual practice. There is immense power in connecting stakeholders to our schools. The impact of coming together on behalf of a shared future can be exponential.

Finally, as a mother of a four- and one-year-old living in Evanston who is engaged with District 65 early childhood programs, I have met and connected with hundreds of local families. I understand and share the hope we invest in our children. I realize the complex partnership we seek to create in support of our children's and our neighbors children's successes.

In me, you'll find a strategic, inclusive, solutions-oriented leader with 15 years of proven experience and commitment to education. You'll find someone who believes in the power of collaboration. Someone who's ready to tackle problems, big and small, and seeks to do so in a responsive and informed way, understanding the value of both listening and acting for our greater good.

3. If elected, what will be your top three priorities as a school board member?

If elected, the top three priorities I would champion would be the following:

- Maintaining high academic standards and rigor
- Working to build fiscal stability and sustainability

● Working to ensure a culture and climate of inclusivity

4. What should the school board's responsibility be to the community? To parents? How should voters assess the effectiveness of the board and its individual members? The role of the District 65 School Board is that of governance. The Board is a public body meant to represent its constituents in order to transparently govern our public schools in a way that optimizes the quality and impact of its education. By extension, the public schools must prepare all children academically, socially, and emotionally for the world in partnership with families and our community. I believe this is how voters should assess the effectiveness of the board -- by how effectively the schools are serving their children at all levels, and how transparently the Board reflects their decisions to the public.

5. What are the major strengths of the school district? How can we build on them? What are its major weaknesses? How can we address them?

District 65 has many strengths. A tremendous strength lies within our children and their families, our teachers, staff, and leadership, and our engaged community. Our community is diverse in many ways (racial, ethnic, documentation status, languages spoken, religious, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, and more) and this is no doubt an asset to our students' educational experience. Our children are bright, curious, and filled with creative energy. Our families are diverse, talented, engaged and committed to their children, their schools and the quality of our larger community. Our staff are talented, dedicated, and oriented towards bringing all of their talents to the fore in order to build the best educational environment possible.

The District's major areas for growth are in addressing the impact of historic and systematic inconsistency in the educational experience we provide to children from marginalized and underserved backgrounds, and fiscal stability and sustainability.

Historic and recent district data supports the understanding that students of marginalized backgrounds (particularly Black and Latino) are not benefiting in an equitable way from the caliber of education provided. Education research indicates there are institutional practices and supports (such as building capacity to offer more culturally responsive and relevant curriculum, instruction, and policies), that can be built into schooling to make real and lasting change.

The district is also facing a structural deficit that, if unaddressed, would result in tremendously difficult choices, many of which would negatively impact the schooling experience that many families have come to expect of District 65. It is our responsibility to investigate how to maintain a high quality of education, while also looking for efficiencies to ensure that we are building a sustainable budget.

In all of this, setting the tone for our beliefs, values, and commitments at the board level will permeate throughout the district. I am committed to the value of transparency and engagement. Like penguins in a huddle, we are stronger and more effective together

than separately, and we must be clear on the why, how, and what of our values, beliefs, and actions.

6. Describe your understanding of school board governance and the role of the board versus the roles of the superintendent and the administration.

The District 65 School Board is one of governance. The Board is a public body meant to represent its constituents in order to transparently govern our public schools in a way that optimizes the quality and impact of its educational offerings.

It is also the Board's responsibility to supervise and work in partnership with one another and the superintendent in order to ensure they operate as the executive leader and employee of the district. This work requires oversight and collaboration in the pursuit of our district strategic plan and equity strategy goals. It also requires an eye towards transparency of our overall work as a public body.

7. Select two major decisions made by the school board within the last four years about which you have a strong opinion. Explain why you agree or disagree with these decisions.

I have a great deal of appreciation for the work of the school board members that have come before me and with which I work alongside now. It is a significant commitment of time, intellectual energy, and emotional energy to work on behalf of our community's greater good. I am proud and appreciative to work with my colleagues, all of whom have a wealth of talents.

That being said, my background is in both education and community engagement. I believe in the power of bringing people together (of all backgrounds) in a formal and transparent way, and to assist in making informed decisions and policy that incorporates assets and needs as identified by the community writ large. For example, I appreciated that, when the Hispanic/Latino Achievement report released in January 2017, it was reviewed by and informed by a committee of parents and community leaders. I can imagine that the compacted math discussion (January of 2016), the Black/African American Achievement Report (April 2016), and the JEH Early Childhood report (January 2017) could have equally benefited by such parent and community input.

I believe in the power of including a diversity of voices in a transparent, ongoing and proactive manner for the sake of confirming and challenging beliefs, so to ultimately generate decisions that represent the best of what we all have to offer.

Part III – Student Achievement and Assessment

8. If elected, describe how you will contribute toward enhancing student achievement. How should the district address the needs of students in the top and bottom quartiles of the achievement spectrum? How should the district address achievement disparities by

race, ethnicity, or other demographic differences?

I believe that an high quality and rigorous education should educate the whole child academically, socially and emotionally. In fact research has shown that academic performance alone is not a predictor of later life success, but executive functioning and social and emotional health, resiliency, sense of belonging and community are necessary as well. That being said I believe the district should tackle the needs of children performing at all levels in a way that is responsive to our greater academic and social and emotional goals with the aim to provide holistic education that is also responsive to learner needs.

In regards to disparities by race, ethnicity and other demographic differences, I believe that this is a larger institutional challenge that can be addressed with a look at our district practices and policies and the development of responsive professional development and responsive adjustments to our policies and practices. I believe this process of training and policy/practice review as with any institutional value be adopted throughout our system from the board-level to the school.

9. What role should standardized testing have in assessing students, teachers, and instructional methods?

Standardized tests can play a useful role in providing baseline data regarding student proficiency in certain curricular content areas. There a great many ways that standardized assessments cannot represent all that a child knows, however. Standardized assessments are not always the best measurement of a child's holistic progress, for a variety of reasons including (i.e. varying learning styles, cultural relevance, etc.). For that reason I'm an advocate for utilizing multiple methods for assessing learning and teacher and/or instructional method effectiveness (i.e. the use of formative and summative assessment, project-based learning, etc.). I, of course, intend to adhere to the legal requirements that our schools must follow in regards to the inclusion of standardized assessment in teacher evaluations. However, I believe it should be but an aspect of our evaluations and should be based on student growth targets (targeted progress from the beginning of the year to the end) rather than a singular measure of proficiency (and singular goal measuring every child's ability to reach or not).

Part IV – Student, School & Parental Partnerships

10. Explain your vision for student, parent and school partnerships. How do these differ from Cradle to Career and other community partnerships?

I believe that parents are their children's first and most influential teacher. I believe that the education of a child is a partnership between the school and the family. It should be one mutual trust and respect.

At the same time, it is our collective responsibility to create a culture and climate of

partnership and inclusivity. For some there are barriers to the fullness of that relationship, and I'd love to explore strategies to make sure that our school community is as rich as it can possibly be to benefit all children.

11. What is your vision for the partnership between District 65 and District 202? Which areas of collaboration are most important and why?

The current data-sharing agreement between District 65 and District 202 is exciting. It presents an opportunity to create strategic and data-informed alignment between the two districts, and has the potential for incredible impact in our collective effectiveness. I also appreciate the joint meetings and joint reports as a platform for the continuation to mobilize this important work.

Part V - Budget

12. How will you influence fiscal efficiencies at the school district?

My work in the field of nonprofits has afforded me knowledge and experience working with complex budgets. Leading such work during the economic downturn of 2008 afforded me the opportunity to exercise the skill of identifying efficiencies while protecting the larger mission, through leveraging partnerships and collaborations, prioritizing work, scaling back where required, and incorporating internal and external voices and experiences to inform decisions. In seeking efficiencies my first and primary priority will be to protect the quality of educational experience for children (with the guide of our strategic plan and equity strategy) and to do so in a way that emphasizes transparency and incorporates stakeholder voices and experiences as much as possible.

13. If budget cuts are necessary, which areas deserve priority and why?

I am eager to dive into the particulars of contingency plan proposals as they are presented to the board to ensure we are thorough and proactive over the next few months. If cuts become necessary, which I ideally they do not in any draconian way, my largest priority would be to maintain a safe and high-quality educational experience for the children and families of our district (keeping in mind our goals in our strategic plan and equity strategy), and to do that in the least disruptive way possible. My hope would be that cuts be made as far away from the school building as possible. Lastly, I would hope to make timely decisions that are informed by an inclusive seeking out of community input.