

**Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights
School Board Questionnaire - 2026**



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Did you include the requested Additional Materials? Yes

Please email completed Questionnaire and Additional
Materials to

smrrinfo@gmail.com

Your Candidacy

1. What is your understanding of the role of a Santa Monica-Malibu
Unified School District board member?

The primary role of a school board member is governance, not daily management. We are locally elected officials who represent community values by setting policy, hiring and evaluating the Superintendent, and approving the budget. That authority only exists when the board acts as a whole in public meetings, not individually. Board members also set the tone for the district, and how we treat each other and communicate publicly shapes the culture we want in our schools. As board president, a parent of a soon to be sixth grader, a renter in the Pico neighborhood, and an immigrant, I bring perspectives that keep me connected to the families this district serves, and that shapes how I listen and hold myself accountable to the people who elected me.

2. Why are you running to be a SMMUSD board member?

I am running because there is still important work to do. We must continue supporting our most vulnerable students, protecting the programs and staff that help students succeed, and delivering on our commitments to the community.

It has been an honor to serve this community, and I am running to continue that work.

3. What skills, background, and experience do you possess that prepare
you for this office?

I was first elected to the SMMUSD School Board in 2022 and I currently serve as Board President. I came to public education leadership as a parent through ELAC and DELAC, advocating for our English learner and multilingual learner

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community, which drove me to run in 2022.

Since being elected, I completed CSBA governance training, was elected by fellow board members across 30 districts to serve as a CSBA Delegate Assembly Member, and serve as a Director of the Los Angeles County School Trustees Association. I have advocated for school funding in Washington D.C. and served as board liaison to the DELAC, Special Education, Financial Oversight, Facilities, and Health and Safety committees. I helped protect Language and Literacy Interventionist positions, led the Measure QS campaign and oversight of the facilities improvements it funds, strengthened our cell phone policy, and am supporting a citizens' initiative to preserve educator positions. Addressing the overidentification of Latino students in special education and advocating for multilingual learners and students with disabilities has been central to my work.

I have visited every school in our district multiple times, and I'm always just a phone call away. I am a proud parent of a current SMMUSD student, a renter in the Pico neighborhood, and an immigrant.

4. What sets you apart from the others running to be a SMMUSD board member?

What drives me is the belief that public education can change lives because it changed mine. I was born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States with my family in the 1990s. As a child, I attended several elementary schools in Los Angeles because my family struggled with unstable housing, and I missed many days of school. My parents were always incredibly hardworking, but the high cost of rent made it difficult for our family to find stability. When we eventually moved to Portland, where housing was more affordable, my parents were finally able to provide that stability. Combined with after-school tutoring and the support of my public schools, it changed the course of my life. It is why I believe so deeply in strong public schools, supporting families, and ensuring every child has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their circumstances. That perspective continues to guide my work as President of the SMMUSD School Board, where I focus on expanding opportunity, supporting students and educators, and making thoughtful decisions that put students first.

5. List each organization other than SMRR whose endorsement you have sought and whether or not you completed a questionnaire for that organization. Provide a copy of any questionnaire(s) you submitted to any other organization(s).

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I am seeking endorsements from the Santa Monica-Malibu Classroom Teachers Association (SMMCTA), Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 99, Community for Excellent Public Schools (CEPS), the Santa Monica Democratic Club (SMDC), Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights (SMRR), the Los Angeles County Democratic Party (LACDP), the Stonewall Democratic Club, and the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO.

Out of these, only two, SMDC and CEPS, have asked for questionnaires, and both are attached.

6. Please list your main funders, endorsers, and supporters, and provide an overview of your campaign's financial progress to date.

My campaign is primarily supported by friends, family, parents in our schools, fellow elected officials, and labor organizations. I am proud to have broad community support and continue to build the resources needed for a strong reelection campaign.

7. Will you accept donations from developers and/or their paid lobbyists for your campaign? No

8. Please provide a list of all organizations with which you are a member, along with a description of leadership positions held, whether related to your civic, community or professional endeavors.

SMMUSD Board of Education — Board Member and Board President

California Democratic Party — Delegate (2025–2026)

California School Boards Association (CSBA) — Delegate Assembly Member, Region 24

Los Angeles County School Trustees Association (LACSTA) — Director

Santa Monica Democratic Club — Member

Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights (SMRR) — Member

Edison's Parent Teacher Association — Member and Volunteer

SMRR

1. How long have you been a member of SMRR? Please outline the extent of your relationship and engagement with SMRR.

I have been an active member of SMRR since 2022. As a renter living in a rent-controlled apartment in the Pico neighborhood, I have a personal appreciation for SMRR's work. I regularly attend monthly meetings, participate in calls to action, attend SMRR conventions, and have referred friends to the SMRR tenant hotline when they needed assistance. I value SMRR's commitment to protecting renters, strengthening our public schools, and building a more equitable Santa Monica.

2. Do you pledge, if elected, to attend SMRR's monthly Steering Committee meetings to provide the School Board report (in rotation with other SMRR supported School Board members)?

Yes. I regularly attend SMRR's monthly Steering Committee meetings and would be happy to continue providing School Board reports. I appreciate the expertise and thoughtful feedback shared by members, which has been valuable in my work. The meetings also help keep the School Board, City Council, and other local leaders connected and informed about issues affecting our community.

3. Do you pledge, if elected, to discuss major policy issues related to your office with SMRR leaders prior to making decisions?

Yes. I value collaboration and welcome the opportunity to discuss major policy issues with SMRR leaders.

Issues Relating to the School District

1. What are the top 3 goals you want to achieve during your term on the SMMUSD Board? How do you think you can achieve these goals?

My top three priorities for the next four years are: (1) keeping student well-being at the center of every decision, (2) maintaining the staffing and fiscal stability needed to support student success, and (3) improving academic outcomes, particularly for multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students who need additional

support, including those at Olympic High.

Achieving these goals requires collaboration. I will continue working closely with the Superintendent, my fellow Board members, educators, staff, families, and the community to make thoughtful, data-informed decisions. Together, we can protect investments in direct student services, support evidence-based interventions, secure sustainable funding, and ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed academically and emotionally.

2. What do you think SMMUSD has done well over the last few years, if anything? What do you think SMMUSD has done poorly, if anything, and what would you propose to change to address what you view as shortcomings?

Over the past few years, SMMUSD has successfully navigated significant challenges while continuing to serve students. We welcomed students and families displaced by the Palisades fires, expanded Transitional Kindergarten, improved outcomes for multilingual learners, strengthened student wellness supports, and continued investing in our schools despite ongoing financial pressures.

Because our schools are constantly welcoming new families while others move on, community engagement and communication must be an ongoing priority. We should continue engaging families, staff, and the community early and often to build trust and make better decisions.

3. With all of the stress and strife in the world and on school campuses today, what will you do if elected to help alleviate tensions that may arise and keep our public schools from being a hostile environment? Please address the issue in general, as well as address specifically the needs of our Black students, our Latino students, our LGBTQ+ students, our Jewish students, our Muslim students, our students from immigrant families, and students from any other groups targeted in the world with hate.

Every student deserves to feel safe, respected, and like they belong at school. That means creating an environment where differences are respected and every student can focus on learning.

As a Board, we have supported LA vs. Hate, Olweus anti-bullying, PBIS, and

bystander training to help create that culture. I will continue supporting all students, including Black, Latino, LGBTQ+, Jewish, Muslim, immigrant, and other students who may experience hate or discrimination. Many immigrant families are living with real fear, and I will continue working to ensure they know their rights, feel supported, and know our schools are safe places for every child, regardless of immigration status.

4. What specific steps will you take to reduce achievement gaps of students from socio economically challenged backgrounds (or otherwise)?

Reducing achievement gaps starts with being honest about what we are measuring and who we are listening to. Test scores tell us part of the story, but we also need to hear directly from students and families, especially those whose voices are too often overlooked.

I will continue advocating for strong early literacy, evidence-based interventions, and the staffing needed to support multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students who need additional academic or social-emotional support. I also believe we must use data alongside meaningful engagement with students and families so our LCAP, School Site Plans, and district decisions reflect the real needs of our community.

This work is ongoing because every year we welcome new students and families with different needs and experiences. While there will always be more work to do, I am proud that our high schools are among the best in the region and that our graduates leave SMMUSD prepared to pursue college, careers, and their dreams. My goal is to ensure every student has those same opportunities.

5. What can you point to in order to assure SMRR that you are truly committed to reducing achievement gaps for students from socio-economically challenged backgrounds (or otherwise)?

My record reflects that commitment. Throughout my time on the Board, I have consistently advocated for multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students who need additional support. I supported protecting our Language and Literacy Interventionists, expanding Transitional Kindergarten, and investing in evidence-based programs that have helped improve outcomes for multilingual learners. I have also worked to ensure resources are directed where they are needed most and that student well-being remains at the center of our decisions. As an immigrant and public school parent, I know firsthand how access to quality public schools and the right support can change a child's future, and I remain

committed to ensuring every student has that opportunity.

6. Do you pledge to support continuing SMMUSD's policy of admitting students whose parent(s) or guardian(s) are employed in the district, even if they do not live in the district? Why or why not?

Yes. I strongly support continuing this policy and would oppose changing it. Our teachers, staff, and other employees who work within our district boundaries are an important part of our community, and allowing their children to attend SMMUSD helps us attract and retain great employees. It also strengthens the diversity of our schools and enriches our community.

7. Education in California (and beyond) is changing a lot. What does the future of education at SMMUSD look like to you? What will you do if elected to facilitate your vision for the future of education at SMMUSD?

The future of education at SMMUSD is one where students are active participants in their learning through project-based learning, real-world experiences, and opportunities to discover the joy of learning.

One of the most memorable experiences I've had as a Board member was visiting a photography class at Santa Monica High School where a student co-taught a lesson on drone photography alongside a longtime teacher. It was inspiring to see the student's expertise and the teacher's humility in recognizing that students also have valuable knowledge to share. That experience reinforced my belief that learning is most powerful when students are engaged, curious, and given opportunities to lead.

As a Board member, I will continue supporting innovative teaching, career pathways, technology, the arts, and hands-on learning experiences that prepare students not only for college and careers, but for a lifetime of learning.

8. Do you support SMMUSD building housing affordable to its workforce, including both teachers and non-teachers (such as maintenance workers, food services workers, crossing guards, etc.)? If so, what will you do if elected to assure that it happens?

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Yes. I support exploring workforce housing for teachers and other school employees. Measure QS included funding for a feasibility study, and I have attended CSBA workshops and spoken with board members from districts that have successfully developed workforce housing.

If reelected, I would support completing the feasibility study, surveying staff to better understand their housing needs, and working with the Board, district leadership, and community partners to develop a shared vision. Workforce housing is a complex challenge, and meaningful community engagement will be essential to moving the conversation forward.

9. Do you support the citizens' initiative Parcel Tax measure that will appear on the November ballot? If not, why not? If so, what do believe is/are the strongest argument/s in favor of the Measure?

Yes. I support the measure because it provides a stable, locally controlled funding source to protect the teachers, staff, programs, and services our students depend on. Replacing the approximately \$12 million the district currently receives from the City is critical to avoiding cuts and maintaining a high-quality education for all students.

Strong public schools are one of the reasons Santa Monica is such a desirable place to live, and investing in our schools strengthens the entire community. The measure also includes important accountability provisions: funds stay local, cannot be used for administrator salaries or new construction, and are subject to public oversight and regular reporting.

I also support continuing a strong partnership with the City while ensuring our schools have the resources they need to help every student succeed.

10. Voter approved 2022 Measure GS contemplated that an additional 5% transfer tax on sales of properties for \$8 million or more would go to providing additional funds for our public schools, for emergency and ongoing income support programs, for the preservation or creation of deed-restricted affordable housing, for right to counsel, and other programs aimed at preserving existing tenancies of and units serving lower and moderate income households. The first \$10 million collected goes to our public schools, as does 20% of anything collected above \$50 million. But on June 22, in Sacramento AB-736 was gutted and amended so that, if passed, it would cap the total transfer tax rate

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for all commercial and multi-family property in such a way that only 0.9% would go into the purposes outlined in 2022 Measure GS. Given that a City Council commissioned report in 2022 found that 93.4% of the total value of all transfers of \$8 million or more during the prior decade came from commercial and multi-family properties, AB-736 if passed will decimate the funding for homelessness prevention and affordable housing that 2022 Measure GS otherwise could provide, and will preclude the potential for the public schools to receive more than \$10 million per year (and could threaten even that in some years).

a. Do you support AB-736? Why or why not?

No. I do not support AB 736. I supported Measure GS in 2022 because I believe Santa Monica voters should be able to decide how to invest in our community. As someone who experienced housing instability growing up, I understand the importance of affordable housing and homelessness prevention, and I am concerned about efforts that could reduce funding for those priorities.

b. Do you support any other changes to Measure GS (if so, specify the changes)? Why or why not?

At this time, I do not support other changes to Measure GS. I believe the voters approved the measure with a clear purpose, and I would want to carefully evaluate any future proposed changes before supporting them

c. Can SMRR count on you as an ally to oppose efforts that threaten continued funding of the homelessness prevention and affordable housing programs contemplated by Measure GS, even if funding to the public schools would remain unaffected? If so, what can you point to assure SMRR that you truly are such an ally?

Yes. You can count on me as an ally. Housing stability and homelessness prevention are good for public education. Students learn best when they have a safe, stable place to live, and families are better able to support their children's education when they are not facing housing insecurity. I will continue to support policies that help keep families housed because stable housing and student success go hand in hand.

State Ballot Measures

1. Do you support the Howard Jarvis measure (or any substitute for that measure) to require a two-thirds vote on any and every form of new local tax? Why or why not? Will you actively encourage your supporters to vote the same way as you on this measure?

No. I do not support requiring a two-thirds vote for every new local tax. I believe local communities should have the ability to make decisions about local funding through a majority vote, particularly when it comes to investing in essential public services such as schools, public safety, infrastructure, and affordable housing. Yes, I will encourage my supporters to vote the same way.

2. Do you support the measure to require that any ballot measure imposing a new super-majority vote requirement must itself pass by that same super-majority in order to become effective? Why or why not? Will you actively encourage your supporters to vote the same way as you on this measure (assuming it appears on the ballot)?

Yes. I support this measure because if an initiative proposes requiring a two-thirds vote to pass future measures, it should itself be required to earn that same level of support. Yes, I will encourage my supporters to vote the same way.

3. Do you support the measure to condition the right to vote on new voter identification requirements? Why or why not? Will you actively encourage your supporters to vote the same way as you on this measure?

No. I do not support voter ID requirements because I believe voting should be as accessible as possible for eligible voters. California already has safeguards to verify voter eligibility, and I would rather focus on increasing voter participation than creating additional barriers. Yes, I will encourage my supporters to vote the same way.