

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



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Did you include the requested Additional Materials? Yes X or No ☐

Please email completed Questionnaire and Additional Materials to
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Your Candidacy

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

The School Board as a whole is responsible for providing policy direction for the SMMUSD and for hiring, supervising and evaluating the Superintendent who is technically the Board's only employee. While maintaining an awareness of day-to-day operations in the District, including familiarity with our different schools, what goes on in the classroom and knowledge regarding the differing needs of elementary, middle and high schools as well as the central office, the School Board's oversight is provided through its work with the Superintendent. The School Board serves as the fiduciary for SMMUSD. It oversees and approves the District's budget and expenses, ensuring fiscal responsibility while reflecting the values and vision of the District.

A Board member should be an advocate for public education in the broader community and a conduit for bringing community concerns to the School District while also representing the District and its actions to the community. An individual Board member is part of a governance team that makes decisions as a group. Collegiality and ability to work with others is crucial. Ideally, individual School Board members combine different strengths, knowledge and experience while working cooperatively as an effective team. Having heard too many stories about dysfunctional School Boards, a functional School Board has members who advocate and articulate their different points of view on issues but in the end know how to work as part of a team, with mutual respect and the ability to compromise or to accept that on occasion, a strongly held view may not prevail.

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

Among the candidates running for School Board, I have served the longest and am the most experienced with valuable institutional knowledge. I care deeply about public schools, and about SMMUSD in particular. I have been a leader on the School Board and believe that my service will continue to be beneficial to the governance of the District and ultimately to SMMUSD students and their families. I believe strongly that the District must continue its commitment to equity and to ensuring that ALL children graduate from high school prepared for success.

At this time, two of my colleagues who are running for re-election have served one term; one of my colleagues (Richard T-J) has decided not to run for re-election in this cycle so there will be at least one new Board member following the election. Three of my other colleagues are up for re-election in two years and at least two of them have said definitively that they will not be running for re-election; I believe the District is best served by a mix of Board members with familiarity with our schools, institutional knowledge and leadership experience, and newer Board members who might have different kinds of experience and ideas to bring to bear. I believe I can serve as a good mentor to new and newer Board members if I am re-elected and help provide leadership in areas of challenge.

I believe that my lived experience with our schools from elementary through high school and through my service on the School Board, my educational knowledge, legal background, policy-making skills, and proven leadership in our school district continue to be of great value as the District faces potential fiscal challenges and key policy decisions. My children went to Will Rogers, then to Lincoln Middle School and then Samohi so I have experienced two different school pathways and am familiar with different parts of our district. I have served the District with integrity and am running for reelection to continue to use my skills to ensure that our schools the best they can be. I am an honest, curious person and I believe decisions should be grounded in fact-based and civil dialogue. These qualities and commitments allow me to play a key role in working with others to move our District towards ever greater equity and excellence, promoting engaging and rigorous curricular opportunities so that all children are equipped for success upon graduation in the evolving 21st century.

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

Please see the above answer to Question #2. I am a critical thinker and a problem-solver at heart. I am a lawyer by background and also attended urban planning school. Having worked for the City in a legal advisory capacity, I have a lot of experience in governance and in public policy-making. I am proud of what I have been able to contribute to our district and believe I have more to give that will be of value. As mentioned above, my children attended SMMUSD schools from K-12, I volunteered in classrooms and in different capacities during their elementary, middle and high school years. I have seen the District's academic, music and athletic programs up close and am supportive of all of them and have been supportive of positive changes in all moving forward. I am an avid reader and keep up with current educational debates and trends, which is essential..

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

As already mentioned, I am the only person whose children attended schools in more than one pathway (there are three in SMMUSD), which exposed me to the both the similarities and the differences in school culture and in school populations firsthand. I am the only candidate with a legal background, which has proven far more valuable than I had anticipated. My approach has always been one that is grounded in facts, research and what is best for students. I care deeply about the school community and the larger community and look for ways to elevate the level of discussion when issues are controversial.

While I welcome those who are newer to the School Board and I welcome new ideas or Board members with different experiences or backgrounds, I don't view having experience or longevity as a minus; I view it as a plus. I have a long history in this community; I lived here first as a college and law student, later as a parent, and now as an empty nester. Those experiences have enhanced my knowledge, given me a broad perspective and ability to work with others to address important issues.

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).

I have sought the endorsement of the Santa Monica Democratic Club and the Community for Excellent Public Schools (CEPS). I will attach the completed questionnaires I have submitted to those organizations. Since there is substantial overlap between some of their questions and those posed in this questionnaire, please forgive my redundant responses.

I plan to seek the endorsements of the SMMCTA, SEIU, LACDP and Santa Monica Forward, assuming all choose to endorse in this election.

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

Local organizations have not yet held their endorsement meetings but in all past elections I have received endorsements from the SMMCTA, SEIU, the Santa Monica Democratic Club, SMRR, CEPS, LACDP and others. However, I have begun to obtain endorsements from individuals and elected leaders.

I am most proud of the fact that all of my current colleagues on the School Board support my candidacy. That includes Jon Kean, Maria Leon-Vazquez, Alicia Mignano, Stacy Rouse, Jennifer Smith and Richard Tahvildaran -Jesswein. I am honored that a new candidate for School Board, Robbie Staenberg, has endorsed my re-election as well.

The following is a growing list of elected and former elected leaders, in addition to those listed above, whose endorsements I have received:

Ben Allen, California State Senate
Rick Zbur, California State Assembly
Tony Vazquez, State Board of Equalization, Former Santa Monica Mayor
Ted Lieu, U.S. Congress
Julia Brownley, U.S. Congress
Lindsey Horvath, L.A. County Board of Supervisors

Caroline Torosis, Santa Monica Mayor
Jesse Zwick, Santa Monica Mayor Pro Tem
Ellis Raskin, Santa Monica City Council
Dan Hall, Santa Monica City Council
Barry Snell, Santa Monica City Council
Natalya Zernitskaya, Santa Monica City Council

Anastasia Foster, SMC Board of Trustees
Nancy Greenstein, SMC Board of Trustees
Tom Peters, SMC Board of Trustees
Margaret Quinones-Perez, SMC Board of Trustees
Rob Rader, SMC Board of Trustees

Sheila Kuehl, Former member of L.A. County Board of Supervisors
Richard Bloom, Former State Assemblymember and Santa Monica Mayor
Judy Abdo, Former Santa Monica Mayor
Rev. Jim Conn, Former Santa Monica Mayor
Gleam Davis, Former Santa Monica Mayor
Kevin McKeown, Former Santa Monica Mayor
Pam O'Connor, Former Santa Monica Mayor
Ted Winterer, Former Santa Monica Mayor
Denny Zane, Former Santa Monica Mayor
Kristin McCowan, Former Santa Monica Mayor Pro Tem
Terry O'Day, Former Santa Monica Mayor Pro Tem
Louise Jaffe, Former Chair, SMC Board of Trustees
Susan Aminoff Former member, SMC Board of Trustees

Other individual endorsers who have many titles and play many roles in this community include Nicole Faries, Shari Davis, Frank Gruber and Janet Levin, Zakiya, Debbie Mulvaney, Paula Larmore, Payal Maniyar, Sirinya Matute, Jon Baracy and Kristin Baracy, Sally and Eoin Gubbins, Joe Pertel, Neil Carrey, Area Kramarsky, Bruria Finkel, Todd Flora, Daphne Dennis and John Given, Paul Silvern and Judith Meister, Bob Myers, Linda Sullivan, Carter and Sarah Rubin, Jason Islas, Tom Larmore, Elizabeth and Richard Stearns, Dave Tillipman and Debby Maddis, Lynn Naliboff and David Pettit, Arthur Southam and Beezie Daly, Jay Gordon and Meyera Robbins, Lauri and Dennis Crane, Marilyn Speakman, John Prindle, Kevin Smith, Robbie Black, Harry Keiley, Sarah Braff, Anita Landecker, Joel Koury, Tova Larsen, Carl Hansen and Brad Ewing, Melissa Sweeney, Leslie Lambert and Tom Stringer, Linda Greenberg and Ralph Mechur.

I have raised \$8,000 so far. I don't have what I would call "main funders." Any endorsements and/or contributions I receive reflect individual support for me because I have lived, worked and been of service in this community for many years. As the above list demonstrates, I have endorsements from long-time supporters, current and past SMMUSD parents, others who have worked with me in various ways over the years.

In no case would I ever take any contribution as a quid pro quo for any reason. I do not receive donations from those who do business with the school district. To

the extent I receive organizational endorsements or donations, those are endorsements or donations I have affirmatively sought because they align with my values (such as the endorsement of this Club). With respect to organizational contributions, in the past I have been fortunate to receive contributions from labor unions, and I will certainly seek those contributions again.

7. Will you accept donations from developers and/or their paid lobbyists for your campaign?

My husband's former law partners who are my friends (and include a current SMMUSD parent and school activist) are registered lobbyists and either will or have contributed to my campaign. There may be a few others who fit that category whose contributions I will solicit. None of those people do work with the school district except insofar as they support school funding measures. I don't know a lot of developers and don't believe I am likely to receive any contributions from developers. That said, I would not reject a contribution from a developer who wants to support my candidacy. The school district does not work with developers, and as I've said, I would never accept money from anyone who does business with the district.

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.

I have been a member of the Santa Monica Democratic Club, Santa Monicans for Renters Rights, Santa Monica Forward, Community for Excellent Public Schools, and the League of Women Voters of Santa Monica for many years. I have not served in leadership as I have been elected official for 15+ years and am not eligible to do so.

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 a member of SMRR for over 25 years. I believe that I may not have been a member during the years when I worked for the Rent Control Board and for the City of Santa Monica because I was concerned about whether it was inappropriate or unwise in terms of my ability to do my job but I have been a supporter and member for many years.

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 have been doing that for a long time.

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

Yes, absolutely.

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?

I would prioritize the following:

- Continuing to focus urgently on closing the achievement/opportunity/equity gap by supporting and expanding programs and initiatives that engage all students and improving specialized programs, e.g., the District's English Language Development (ELD) programs. This is not a goal that can be achieved overnight and will always be a top priority for me. Achieving it means continuing to promote culturally relevant and inquiry-based curriculum, continued implementation of the social justice standards that our district has adopted along with the American cultures/ethnic studies requirement that has been adopted and continues to be included in curriculum more broadly. It means continuing to focus on student engagement and engaging families meaningfully to support student learning. It means encouraging more students to take AP classes and providing support for them as they do so. It means taking steps like de-tracking 9th and 10th grade English, providing proper support for that initiative and then evaluating its success. Our goal is to ensure equity and excellence for ALL students, which involves finding ways to reach all students and to endeavor to promote a love of learning in a multitude of ways from early on. The introduction of TK provides an opportunity to identify students early who may need extra attention and to allow for early intervention to provide appropriate social, emotional and academic support to help those students to succeed. This is part of aligning TK so that it enhances the existing K-12 structure.

Another way that the District is helping engage all students and close the achievement gap is to offer more cross-curricular opportunities. I believe we need to continue to help students explore career paths and better prepare them either for college or jobs right after graduation, ensuring that they graduate with academic skills and the ability to think critically, collaborate and contribute positively to an increasingly complex world. At the high school level, our district has created “academies” in various fields that are designed to introduce career pathways while using cross-curricular tools. It is vital to recognize the speed with which the job and career market is changing; we must equip students with the versatility and ability to adapt to those changes as much as possible.

- Thoughtfully and comprehensively addressing the use of AI/screens/technology in our schools, following a research-based, inclusive, collaborative process. Teachers have been trained in the use of particular technologies and resources have been made available, uniform restrictions or guidelines have not yet been adopted. SMMUSD makes policy decisions like this in an inclusive manner. The District has recently formed an Instructional Technology Working Group comprised of school site representatives from every school, District specialists, PTA, CTA and other community representatives. Three Board members are also part of the group, and the work is being facilitated by the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) EdTech and Innovation team. As SMMUSD’s more comprehensive approach is formulated, it will have to involve robust discussion and deliberation both internally and publicly, research and study, consideration of evidence, consideration of views of teachers, parents, administrators, and others. It will, of necessity, include data that continues to become available regarding real-world impacts on learning, on development of relationships and learning skills and considerations of equity.

As a related matter, I believe the district must focus intentionally on how to ensure media literacy or techno-literacy among our students. Given the wide range of seemingly endless “information” that exists due to technology, differentiating among various sources is a challenge even for many adults, so equipping students with the tools to analyze, recognize bias and misinformation and be thoughtful, critical consumers of information is key.

- Strengthening the District's communications and interactions with District families and the public. This has a number of facets. We live in an era of information overload, yet there are some who still feel they do not receive enough timely information or have enough input or opportunity to be part of what they consider important District decisions. I am committed to helping the District do a better job recognizing, anticipating, addressing and improving communications and process concerns. As a School Board member, it is important to represent the District to the community and the community to the District. As Board members, it is our responsibility to facilitate a constructive, inclusive, respectful process for decision-making where community members have an opportunity to make their concerns known and heard. I would like to find some structure for informal sessions with one or more Board members, perhaps quarterly or in some other way, akin to "Coffee with the Principal" which occurs periodically in many of our schools.

In addition, the district needs to find ways to tie the elementary, middle and high schools together in a way that helps build a culture that everyone is all part of a district, in addition to a grade level, a particular school, a particular pathway or interest group. Schools do a very good job at the site level of informing and including families and that has only improved. I believe we should maintain strong school identities while using communications and experiences to build districtwide identity as well. SMEF has done that with respect to fundraising; we need to build on that.

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?

SMMUSD's mission "Extraordinary achievement for all while simultaneously closing the achievement gap" continues to guide the district, which is committed to continuous improvement. Consistent with the mission, the SMMUSD has had many successes over the last few years. The district has done a great job increasing the number of students who successfully complete A – G requirements and are college-ready and college-eligible. I attended the Young Collegians graduation (group which is supported by SMC and SMMUSD) and witnessed firsthand the celebration of students who will all be the first in their families to attend college. The district has increased the number of Career Technical Education (CTE) offerings available and has provided professional

development in project-based learning to teaching staff at all grade levels, ensuring that implementation is occurring districtwide in a well-supported, coherent manner. Language development has been emphasized and new and improved reading programs implemented which is leading to improved reading abilities and scores. Another success involves the tremendous progress made in the ELL programs which are reclassifying English Language Learners to Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) at a more significant rate than ever before.

I believe the district has also done an outstanding job implementing transitional kindergarten (TK) in a very short period of time, even in the absence of state funding. The district has, in recent years, focused on the quality of education of early learners and implemented a Reggio Emilia curriculum, a student-centered and experiential approach.

The work begun several years ago to implement restorative justice, social justice standards, American Cultures and Ethnic Studies requirements, project-based and student-centered learning continues to grow and flourish. These are all approaches that are intended to engage ALL students and to address those who have not traditionally thrived. The district as a whole continues to explore more engaging, cross-curricular opportunities that ensure college and career readiness. The expansion of the “academies” which are located in Samohi’s new Exploration Building is another success in which students can participate in learning in ways that also enable them to tackle social and public policy issues. further the mission of the district and to promote the success of all students while addressing the achievement/opportunity gap.

Thanks to passage of significant bond measures in both Santa Monica and Malibu, the SMMUSD has returned the trust that the community has placed in us by constructing incredible new facilities that complement the great teaching and learning going on inside the buildings and on the school campuses. There are new TK/Kindergarten facilities at several elementary schools and others are in progress; Samohi’s Exploration Building is a model in its support for students and teachers; John Adams Middle School will soon have a completely new Science Building to complement its revamped STEM curriculum, to just identify a few.

As a further example of the successes of the district, both John Adams Middle School and Olympic High School were recognized by the California Department of Education for their exemplary work this year. John Adams was named a 2026 California Distinguished School and Olympic was named a 2026 Model

Continuation High School. These awards recognize schools that have demonstrated high academic achievement for all students, schools that are making progress toward closing the achievement gap for historically underserved groups and schools in Title I communities that distinguish themselves.

There will always be areas where the district can improve. As I've written in other questionnaires, I believe the district has to do a better job anticipating difficult, controversial or challenging issues in which there is great interest or in which there needs to be better communication and inclusion in discussions as we move toward decisions. I believe the district needs to look at the educational technology discussion – including communication surrounding it and policymaking -- as an opportunity to be inclusive and collaborative. This is not an easy task and the opinions in this area vary widely but that makes it more important that the process be open, and it must ensure that many voices will be heard and considered. SMMUSD makes decisions that are as important as the one involving the use of educational technology in the classroom in a deliberate manner that considers teacher, parent, student and community input as fact- and evidence-based research. While I do wish our district already had a comprehensive plan in place, whatever plan we adopt will continually evolve, since this is a field that is evolving faster than any person or institution can keep pace with. Our district does not typically take hurried or flashy actions on important issues, even when it is tempting to do so. The District has begun what will intentionally be an inclusive, research-based process that will ultimately result in a comprehensive plan for educational technology.

I would not necessarily call it a shortcoming, but I would recognize as a challenge that the district has not been able to keep up with the demand for childcare for all families that need it. The District's Director of Child Development Services is a superb employee, and she has been doing whatever can be done and continues to find additional ways to reorganize afterschool care and to hire additional outside providers to supplement what the district offers. The need for after-school care is greater than ever and finding enough staff has proven challenging. There is a shortage of childcare workers throughout the state and SMMUSD is no exception. Many districts do not offer afterschool childcare; school districts do not receive funding for after-school childcare is because it is outside of the school day, with the exception of programs like Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) that provide funding for afterschool care for low-income students. The district has enhanced its childcare options by adding nonprofit and other afterschool opportunities for students in Grades 3 – 5 while focusing the district's childcare employees on Tk-2nd grade students.

Another area in which I would like to see improvement is the relationship between SMMUSD, SMC and the City of Santa Monica. Since there are fairly new leaders in the City and the District, we need to strengthen our partnership, collaboration and communications with each other so that we can be a more effective team and can lead together on issues that affect our community. The issue involving grass and artificial turf fields and ability to provide active recreation space is a prime example where we need to work together rather than in silos. I completely appreciate the respect shown by City leaders for SMMUSD and the independent responsibilities of both institutions; I am simply suggesting that our work on behalf of the same community can be much more productive if we consciously recognize the opportunities we have together. I very much look forward to deepening that relationship as I think it is a key relationship and more attention should be focused on it.

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.

Recent years have definitely brought about stress and strife that impact students and school environments. The ongoing issues related to our LGBTQ+ students, attacks on immigration and threats from ICE to members of our community who have students, the numerous issues that culminated in Black Lives Matter, continuing Middle East conflict and impact on both Jewish and Muslim students and their families, and even the ignorant targeting of Asian families following Covid have and will continue to concern me and will continue to be addressed by SMMUSD.

The district partners with PTA, the City, SMMCTA and SEIU (the unions that represent teachers and classified workers in SMMUSD) in recognizing the importance of providing support for those who face hostility in a variety of areas. The District participates in LA vs.Hate and its programs and shares its overall purpose. The district and leaders in PTA and SMMCTA and others have led bystander training for students, parents and adults. The district's actions in this

regard were recognized in an article in EdCal, a weekly statewide newspaper published by the Association of California School Administrators.

The district addresses these issues in an ongoing way by focusing attention on school climate. SMMUSD is committed to creating a welcome and inclusive environment for all students. The social justice standards and American Cultures and Ethnic Studies courses aim to promote understanding and rejection of hostility, hate and targeting of students or adults on the basis of gender, birthplace or immigration status, ethnicity or race. In other efforts to address this and related concerns, the SMMUSD has adopted an anti-bullying program called Olweus along with restorative justice practices (RJ) throughout schools which, in instances involving certain racial or bullying incidents can be part of addressing and repairing harm done when incidents occur. At elementary schools, assemblies addressing hate and discriminatory and related undesirable behaviors in age-appropriate ways are addressed in varied and creative ways. Our schools do not shrink from making clear that respect for others and standing up against hate and discrimination are values the school district stands behind.

The district has adopted numerous resolutions and promoted discussions in classes to elevate understanding about discrimination and hate toward various groups of students or peoples from various places and how to prevent and stand up against it in all forms. Many student clubs or affinity groups exist at various levels of schools and not necessarily uniformly throughout schools. At Samohi, there is a Black Student Union chapter and clubs that support Latino/x students, Muslim Students, Jewish Students, Asian Students and LGBTQ+ students. Circle of Friends is a group at Samohi that was formed to provide support for students with special needs many years ago. McKinley Elementary School has a Rainbow Club comprised of 4th and 5th grade students who support LGBTQ+ students, families and allies.

In addition, the district supports various affinity groups for adults, including the African American Parent Support Group (AAPSSG, Black/African American Parent Advisory Committee (BAAPAC),) Puente, Asian American Pacific Islander group (AAPI), a Jewish parent group, and other groups who seek to provide support for various people in our community in opposing hate and hate-related incidents. There is a Special Education District Advisory Committee (SEDAC) which exists for a number of reasons but one is to prevent the type of incident that has generated this question with respect to students with special needs.

In terms of communications, when certain incidents occur, e.g., immigration activity has been threatened, or a racial or other disturbing incident has occurred, our district communicates its concern and support to the school community and provides whatever support it can to those who need it.

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

In my tenure on the School Board, SMMUSD has taken many initiatives designed to address achievement/opportunity gaps.

Years ago, we were fortunate to employ Dr. Pedro Noguera to conduct an equity audit and continue to implement many of his recommendations, which are aimed at increasing engagement and closing the achievement/opportunity gap along with other initiatives which predate and have come after those recommendations and augment them. Dr. Noguera emphasized that for these initiatives to succeed stake time, requires consistent leadership and coherent implementation across the district. He also emphasized that most approaches that are good for the larger population of students will help those who have been historically disadvantaged or marginalized. Our goal is to ensure equity and excellence for ALL students which involves finding ways to promote a love of learning and reaching different students in different ways. Addressing the achievement/opportunity gap takes many forms, sometimes in the form of particular targeted improvements to a particular program, sometimes in the form of overall initiatives that improve engagement and outcomes for all students.

We have recently initiated and are in the midst of substantial improvements to our TK/preschools where students now receive free education beginning at age 4 rather than waiting until they are eligible for kindergarten. This means that the District can play a significant role in ensuring that all students are ready for kindergarten and hopefully gaps can be prevented early on. Early education has long been a concern of those who want to address the achievement gap.

The District continues to promote a climate at every school that welcomes ALL children and families. Our district has adopted social justice standards and the more deeply these standards are embedded in our classrooms, the more SMMUSD is experienced as a welcoming place where all students and their families feel respected and included. Decisions around curriculum and instruction continue to ensure that changes do not come at the expense of any particular group of students and that the curricular opportunities offered

are available to all students.

I believe that the District should continue to meet students where they are, to use culturally relevant materials and curriculum, and to ensure that adult connections are made with each and every child in our district. Our counseling programs are being better utilized to ensure that they serve the needs of ALL students. Our district has continued to affirmatively pursue hiring of staff who are ethnically and racially representative of our student population.

While emphasizing culturally relevant and inquiry-based curriculum, our district has successfully implemented social justice standards that the School Board adopted several years ago along with the American cultures/ethnic studies (ACES) requirement that we have adopted as well. While adopted in 2018, the requirement was instituted in full two years ago. Another more recent change that is intended to address the achievement/opportunity gap is the de-tracking of 9th and 10th grade English, which was initiated by Samohi English teachers and approved and supported fully by the School Board. The goal was to break down barriers between honors and non-honors English, to promote learning for all and from each other, and to support those who were traditionally not given the encouragement and the grounding to then go on to pursue AP English and other opportunities. I supported and continue to support efforts like this to break down unnecessary barriers and promote greater opportunities for those who have not had them before. I was part of the presentation about this initiative along with teachers and our superintendent at the California School Boards Association (CSBA) a couple of years ago.

We continue to add more inquiry-based/project-based/student-centered learning into our curriculum and the District opened and continued to support a small project-based learning high school located on the Samohi campus. Teachers are more and more involved and engaged in concrete ways to support students and are actively engaged in developing projects and ways of involving their students. Teacher involvement and buy-in is key since they are the ones who obviously have the greatest ability to excite students to learn and succeed.

The district also has created greater supports for students who do not necessarily have the resources at home to prepare for college, including the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program and Young Collegians (a local partnership between SMMUSD and SMC). Some of the changes we have implemented are clearly bearing fruit. As an example, the number of English Learners who were “reclassified” this past year far exceeded the numbers of students who did so in previous years.

One example of a program which has been substantially revamped and improved and is leading to measurable better student outcomes is the ELD program which serves English Learners. At the end of this school year, I attended a celebration of students who have transitioned from English Language Learners (ELL) to Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP). The celebration was a moving and meaningful reminder of how schools can improve student outcomes and how important targeted focus can be for students who need it.

SMMUSD continues to promote engaging learning experiences, innovations in education that resonate with students, and differentiated instruction, which means that teachers can address students who are at different levels of proficiency/mastery and they can meet students where they are. I believe strongly that student outcomes can continue to be improved whether a student is already succeeding or a student is behind his/her peers. The district has implemented Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), education-ese that is easy to stumble over. MTSS contemplates Tier 1 instruction (when teachers present lessons to the entire class), then adds Tier 2 instruction (more targeted instruction for small groups who require additional attention) and Tier 3 instruction (individualized intervention for students with challenges that require it). The District employs instructional coaches to support teachers as they implement this approach. Post-Covid, the District was able to offer significant amounts of outside-of-class tutoring opportunities and some of those continue to be available through grants which are often targeted to those who have been historically marginalized or socio-economically challenged backgrounds.

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)?

I think my record of service on the School Board speaks to this. I have strongly promoted and supported adoption and implementation of social justice standards, an American Cultures and Ethnic Studies requirement, project-based learning, AVID, Young Collegians, and so many initiatives directed at reducing the achievement gap for students for socio-economically challenged backgrounds.

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. Years ago, permit students were welcomed into the district because as an LCFF (state funded) district, funding was dependent on enrollment (and "average daily attendance") and more students meant greater funding. However, the SMMUSD is now a basic aid district and enrollment does not impact funding, whether it increases or decreases. This has led some to argue that we should not continue allowing students to permit into SMMUSD. Since basic aid districts do not receive funding based on "average daily attendance," some basic aid districts (notably Beverly Hills) have chosen to stop accepting permit students because they consider it a drain on their resources.

In SMMUSD, accepting permit students has allowed us to offer a perk to our employees and to those who work in our cities or have long-term connections to the school district. Thus far, we have chosen to continue to accept student permits though the district will continue to monitor the financial impact of this policy going forward. I support continuation of these practices because, as already mentioned, it is a perk for our employees, who do not get paid enough to be able to live here. It allows them the option of enrolling their kids in the schools they work in if they choose to do so. In addition, I believe it builds goodwill in the larger community of which the district is a part as we are supported throughout the City by other institutions, businesses, and alumni of our schools. I strongly support continuing current permitting practices.

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 is changing. It is becoming increasingly student-centered and hands-on. It is moving toward more project-based learning (which some would say is merely a continuation at a higher level of something many teachers have done for years.) It is emphasizing not merely test scores but portfolios and other means for students to demonstrate subject mastery. Instead of revolving around a teacher in front of the classroom, it is becoming more individualized and smaller group-oriented. It is more focused on "deeper learning," promoting the ability to collaborate and giving students the tools to be critical thinkers.

Technology is also changing education, and it is not yet known how that will evolve. Certainly, technology helps teachers individualize and differentiate instruction for students who are at different levels of need. It also has detrimental effects if relied upon too early and too frequently. There are those who want to slow it down; there are those who want to speed it up; there are those who want to limit it in a variety of ways. What it will look like will be determined and then will continue to evolve. Education has a tendency to embrace certain initiatives in a faddish way only to reject them later.

What I cannot see ever changing is the importance of the relationship between teachers and students, and students and peers. Additionally, the relationships between other adults and students on a campus is fundamental to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where all students feel they are valued and that everyone is there to ensure that all students are successful and part of the school community. Relationships are paramount to civilization's survival and creating empathy, respect for one another, the ability to participate with one another in a democracy, are all part of what education must deliver. When educational technology is used and planned for, the starting point must be a healthy respect for the needs of human beings to know how to build healthy relationships with others.

In the increasingly polarized world in which we live, the future of education has to include civics education laced through all grade levels along with media literacy. It is important that schooling encourages and equips students to participate in civic life and that students learn how to differentiate fact from opinion, fact from fiction and feelings. We need to facilitate students in becoming a generation that can deliver us in a positive way from the polarization we have come to expect and communicate with each other in a healthy, respectful way even while holding onto significant differences.

The ideal learning environment engages students and finds ways to connect with each of them. It recognizes the value in ensuring that students contribute or have a voice in creating that environment particularly as they get older. The purpose of education is to cultivate healthy, growing and engaged children who are ready to learn, love, work and serve the common good. The optimal environment facilitates the development of a democratic citizenry who are lifelong learners. That is best accomplished by ensuring that learning is joyful, relevant and promotes their participation in their own learning.

No one person gets to determine the future of education in our district. We work within a district, with six other School Board members, with the Superintendent and administration, and with teachers, other staff members, parents and students to determine what the future of education will be. I will certainly assert my perspective, but I will be learning and working with others to help define a vision which produces healthy human beings who are ready to think critically and engage in the world with other humans with empathy and respect.

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?

Our city desperately needs housing that is affordable to people who neither qualify for what is technically considered “affordable” under the law nor can they afford the rents and ownership opportunities that are out of reach to most people. The SMMUSD has an opportunity and an obligation to explore workforce housing that would serve its workforce and perhaps the workforce of other institutions in our city. A number of districts have either built workforce housing or are in the process of doing so. We can and will continue to learn from their successes and failures. Money was set aside in Measure QS, the 2022 bond measure, for exploring the possibilities for workforce housing in SMMUSD. Arguably, the best site for that would be the former district office site at 1651 16th Street where the district offices used to be located, which is currently leased out on a relatively short-term basis. The site is adjacent to transit and across from Memorial Park and is no longer used for district purposes, which makes it ideal. When the district moved its central offices to 4th Street, this idea surfaced but has not yet been fully explored.

The first step is to survey the workforce – both teachers and non-teachers – to determine whether they would be interested in housing at this or on any other district site. As a preliminary matter, it makes sense to consider whether a workforce housing project on this site (or elsewhere) offers an opportunity to partner with the City or SMC. Additionally, different approaches to building housing on District-owned land will need to consider the fact that the land is a revenue-generating asset thus decisions will have to be nuanced as they will impact District revenues. This has been a consideration in other districts as well. SMMUSD has sought consultants to assist as the prospect for building workforce housing moves forward but has not pursued the path of hiring anyone as information is still being gathered that will help inform any School Board decision.

The District has been moving forward on this front, albeit slowly. Another competing interest involving the 16th Street site has re-emerged as the result of the discussion about the dearth of field space and whether to install grass or artificial turf. When the City had greater revenues, there was a strong desire expressed from the City to purchase the 16th Street site from SMMUSD, close 16th Street and extend Memorial Park. The recent resurgence/recognition of the continuing and growing need for field space has inevitably re-raised the question about potential use of school district or city-owned sites for temporary or permanent field space, and once again, the 16th Street site has been identified in discussion.

It is undeniable that our city has both a shortage of workforce housing and a shortage of park/field space, placing competing demands on the future of “surplus” public lands. I hope that discussions going forward can recognize that both concerns are legitimate and serious and avoid the tendency to divide ourselves into dueling camps. If money were no object, I would think we should conduct a process that contemplated a range of ideas regarding how the space starting at the eastern edge of Memorial Park and extending to 17th Street might potentially be able to be used: It might be optimal to use it entirely for workforce housing but it might be able to accommodate considerable workforce housing and some park space, or alternatively, workforce housing or park space only.

If re-elected, I will ensure that the discussion moves forward with respect to building workforce housing. I have outlined the first steps toward that above.

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?

I support the measure. I endorsed it early and have been an advisory member of the committee that led the campaign to qualify the measure for the November ballot. I strongly support it for two reasons. First, it provides a guaranteed and stable funding source for the District of \$11,000,000 annually, which is credited against/replace the \$12,000,000 in funding currently provided in accordance with The Master Facilities Use Agreement (MFUA) which will expire on June 30, 2027. If the District were to lose this funding, it would be very damaging and would mean significant layoffs of many teachers and other staff. Second, it is a critical component of the City’s realignment plan insofar as it frees up City funds currently used to fund the MFUA and allows them to be directed toward other

City priorities and address the City's budget deficit the resolution itself which can be found online. As for the Joint Use Agreement (aka the MFUA), I anticipate that in the event the parcel tax passes, some iteration of the Agreement will be adopted or extended to continue to formalize City and District commitments and practices and joint cooperation and responsibilities.

I believe the strongest arguments in favor of the measure are that it will provide a source of revenue that guarantees **current** funding (it does NOT provide new funding) on which the school district relies, regardless of the economic circumstances of the City and regardless of who happens to be serving on the City Council. I believe this community values and supports our schools and that this straightforward argument will resonate.

For those who are not as attuned to the needs of the schools but are aware and supportive of the City's attempts to address its challenging financial circumstances, I would argue that this measure offers an opportunity for the City to be able to direct its limited resources toward other City priorities and reducing its deficit spending while also creating a permanent and reliable source of funding for the schools, which the City and larger community support as well.

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 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?

GS was adopted by the voters and is established law. I have not been involved with or supportive of AB 736 which I understand is not going anywhere. In general, I am a major supporter of funding for homelessness prevention and affordable housing, having begun my career in Santa Monica working at the Rent Control Board. As a School Board member, I advocate mainly with respect to education issues, I have an ongoing interest in housing dating back to the earliest part of my career. I care deeply about this community and want us to find approaches and means to address the tremendous existing housing needs in the region and in our city. If we fail to do so, we will continue to lose our diversity and young people and families will continue to struggle to find homes in Santa Monica or the greater region.

I am aware that there has been some discussion about the possibility of a nonprofit exemption. My understanding is that SMRR leadership initiated a discussion that has ultimately resulted in a solution to the nonprofit concern that does not involve amending GS and will make amendment unnecessary. While the ultimate solution has evolved, it represents successful recognition of a glitch and successful problem-solving, an approach which I believe should be followed more broadly where possible.

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

Voters adopted GS and we need to honor and respect that vote and not look for amendments unless they serve an essential purpose.

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. While I did not take a position on Measure GS because I had concerns at the time, I certainly did not oppose it and I support the underlying goals wholeheartedly. I have lived in Santa Monica for many years, some of which

were spent working in City Hall supporting housing programs and other progressive initiatives. My values have never wavered: I unequivocally support funding for homelessness prevention and affordable housing and for schools, of course, and have always done so.

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 strongly oppose the Jarvis tax measure and any substitute measure. I believe the threshold for raising taxes and fees should be lower, not higher. I believe new taxes and tax increases should only require a majority vote, regardless of who sponsors them. Raising the voting threshold to 2/3 will undermine progressive local government. Yes, I will actively encourage my supporters to oppose this measure.

- 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)?**

If there is such a measure that is still alive, I completely support it as it makes good sense and is internally consistent. A simple majority should not be able to change the requirement from a simple majority to a 2/3 vote. If 2/3 of the voters believe there should be a 2/3 vote to approve tax measures, I would still think that the move away from a simple majority is a bad direction to move in, requiring a 2/3 vote to make that happen would at least be fair and not anti-democratic. I would actively encourage my supporters to vote to support it.

- 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 this measure. I share the concerns of those who believe that this measure is unnecessary and anti-democratic. The measure is aimed at a hypothetical problem of voter fraud, including voting by noncitizens, which is not supported by evidence. Sources I trust, including the League of Women Voters,

argue that the measure is an attempt to make it harder for people to vote who are seen as a threat to certain interests. It would have particularly adverse impacts on low income and non-white voters. Yes, I will actively encourage my supporters to oppose this measure.