

# CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE'S QUESTIONNAIRE

WHERE DO YOUR SCHOOL BOARD  
CANDIDATES STAND ON THE PHYSICAL,  
SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF ALL KIDS  
IN THE CITY OF ROCHESTER?

## Why focus on children's health?

Kids are critical to the future of any city. The most important thing that we can do is give all children, no matter what their zip code, a healthy start. Kids who have access to healthy food, who walk, bike or play every day, and who have strong social-emotional skills are healthier, do better at school, engage better in teams, and are more likely to grow up to be engaged and active adults and citizens in the community. In fact, studies show that when cities invest in kids – overall outcomes are better. By putting kids first, the City of Rochester can



**promote healthier more vibrant neighborhoods, foster economic development, lower crime rates, and support community building.**

## Where do your candidates stand on kids?

Healthi Kids, and the Parent Leadership Training Institute engage parents as leaders and partners for change to support positive outcomes for all children.

Healthi Kids and PLTI parents care about the physical and social-emotional health of all children in the City of Rochester. From safer places to play, healthy food access in neighborhoods, providing safe and accessible transportation alternatives, and promoting the social-emotional development of kids – City Council plays an important role in supporting the whole health of every child across the city.

In August 2017, we sent a questionnaire to the fourteen City of Rochester City Council candidates to better understand their position on supporting every child across the city.

The questionnaire had ten questions and asked the candidates about their vision for kids, schools, how they plan to get kids active, and their ideas to promote healthy food access. A final question asked each candidate to prioritize ten distinct policies, programs and budget asks on a scale of 1-10.



## Overall response



**12/14 City Council Candidates** responded to the survey.

**All candidates** who responded recognized the importance of kids across the City of Rochester.

**Each candidate** had a differing approach on what “the whole health of a child” means.

**No candidate** shared a comprehensive approach to how City Council could play a role in supporting both the physical and social-emotional health of all kids to ensure every child has the opportunity for long-term success and improved health outcomes.



## Putting kids first

When asked how as a City Council member they would put kids first in local policies, programs and budgets, candidates' answers varied. Many of the policies focused around:

- ✓ Education (e.g. community schools);
- ✓ Youth jobs and recreation opportunities;
- ✓ Improving access to childcare;
- ✓ Improving access to healthcare; and
- ✓ Including kids in the decision-making process.

14/14

When asked what financial resources they would make available to support a kid-friendly city, all candidates supported funding for kids programming but differed in what it looked like. Some candidates focused on increased funding for R-Centers, Rec on the Move and local libraries; while others focused on the need for youth employment opportunities and advancing extracurricular activities.

2/14

Two candidates provided a view of how they would support additional funding for kids. These ideas included "right sizing the budget" to find efficiencies; capping city council and city staff salaries, and leveraging existing resources in the community.



## On supporting kids' physical health:

When asked how they, as a member of City Council, would ensure every child, in every neighborhood had a safe and accessible place to walk, bike and play, candidates shared four general themes:

1. Improving current infrastructure of green space;
2. Promoting a more walkable and bikeable city;
3. Examining current recreation programs and auditing green space; and
4. Improving neighborhood safety.



The majority of candidates identified the best way to increase healthy food access across the city was through expanding community gardens and urban agriculture. Many supported amending current land use and zoning policies to promote this expansion.

## On supporting kids' behavioral health:

Many young people in the City of Rochester have experienced trauma at an early age. When asked what policies or funding they would introduce to reduce the causes of trauma and/or support trauma-informed interventions the candidates all agreed that addressing trauma is important for our youth to succeed. They shared several ideas including:

1. Preventing trauma through improved public safety, community policing, and environmental changes;
2. Increasing training opportunities for all adults who interact with young people to ensure they are using trauma-informed approaches that allow for understanding and healing;
3. Expanding the mental and behavioral health workforce to ensure all children and families have access to social workers and professional services; and
4. Reaching children when they need it most by responding to traumatic experiences quickly and effectively.

## On addressing neighborhood and traffic safety:

Studies by the Healthi Kids Coalition have shown that neighborhood and traffic safety are two of the most commonly cited barriers to kids being active in their neighborhoods in Rochester. When asked what they

would do as a city council member to improve neighborhood and traffic safety the candidates' responses fell into five general themes:

1. Improve police and community relations through community policing and reinstating a Civilian Review Board, and conducting listening tours with community members;
2. Engage and empower community members through efforts such as neighborhood watch, PAC-TAC, and adults monitoring of places where kids frequent (i.e. parks and playspaces);
3. Fully staff and resource emergency and environmental services;
4. Lower the speed limit in residential neighborhoods in the city to slow down traffic; and
5. Educate all road users on the current policies and "rules of the road".

Candidates offered several ideas in both of these areas including neighborhood beautification, smarter road

design to calm traffic and the promotion of walking and biking.



## Priorities

Candidates were asked to prioritize 10 policies, programs and budgetary asks on a scale of 1-10.

Of the 11 candidates who responded to the survey, the four policies, programs and budget priorities weighted with the most importance from the candidates are:

- 1 Increase funding for all city youth workers to participate in professional development and training on cultural competency, trauma-informed practices and accessible/adaptable play;
- 2 Create a policy that lowers the residential speed limit to 25 mph;
- 3 Create a policy to direct 1% of the city's annual budget towards resident-driven neighborhood improvement projects; and
- 4 Set a city-wide goal that every child will live within a ¼-mile walk to a safe and accessible place to play.



### About the organizations

The Healthi Kids Coalition is a grassroots community coalition and initiative of Common Ground Health that advocates for healthier more active kids in the City of Rochester and Monroe County. Our change agenda calls for healthier food in schools, 60 minutes of in school physical activity, safer places to play, walkable, bikeable, accessible communities, and healthy foods in neighborhoods.

The Greater Rochester Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) supports and trains parents to become leading advocates for children. The PLTI Alumni Group seeks to improve the lifelong health, safety, and learning of children through systems change by supporting parents who lead in the Greater Rochester community.

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