

# MAYORAL CANDIDATE'S QUESTIONNAIRE

WHERE DO YOUR MAYORAL 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 health outcomes are better. By putting kids first, the Office of the Mayor in the City of Rochester can



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

Healthi Kids and the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) 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, the Mayor plays an important role supporting the whole health of every child across the city.



## Where do your candidates stand on kids?

In August 2017, Healthi Kids and PLTI sent a questionnaire to the five Mayoral Candidates of the City of Rochester to better understand their positions 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



**5/5 candidates** responded to the survey

**All Mayoral Candidates** who responded recognized the importance of kids across the City of Rochester, but had a differing approach on what “the whole health of a child” means.

**No candidate** comprehensively outlined how we can address and support both the physical and social emotional health of kids to ensure every child has the opportunity they need for long-term success.

## Vision for kids

Common themes emerged in the Mayoral Candidates' vision for a kid-friendly city, including:



### A focus on education



### A focus on neighborhood development

Candidates shared programs and ideas from other cities that could be replicated in Rochester. These ideas included:

- ☒ play spaces for every child;
- ☒ leadership development for youth;
- ☒ guaranteed youth jobs;
- ☒ supplemental funds for child care for city families; and
- ☒ restorative justice practices to the city's current programs.

**All candidates** shared the importance of bringing youth to the table to help make their vision possible.

## On supporting kids' behavioral health:

When asked about their approach to reducing the impact of trauma and hardships many kids across the city face, candidates differed in their responses, with a key division between the candidates on whether schools or the neighborhood are the center for a child.

The candidates differed in their approach, but several themes were clear in their answers:

- There's a need for early screening, intervention and prevention of mental health and/or developmental disabilities for all kids across the city;
- Restorative justice and trauma-informed practices are key programmatic efforts that would support kids across the city;
- There's a growing need to centralize service and improve access to behavioral health services at a neighborhood level; and
- Poverty is a source of trauma and more needs to be done to address poverty directly.

Only one candidate offered ideas on how these approaches could be integrated into current City of Rochester programs or policies.

## On supporting kids' physical health:

When asked for their position on supporting kids physical health in neighborhoods the candidates vastly differed in their approaches.

All candidates agreed on the need for safer, more accessible play spaces for every child, but differed in their priorities. Candidates focused on:

- ☒ The need for neighborhood play
- ☒ Developing solutions alongside residents
- ☒ Improving current facilities and programs (sports, R-Centers, parks and special use parks)
- ☒ Addressing neighborhood safety.



## Safety

When asked how they, as Mayor, would improve community relations with police to ensure parents that their kids can walk, bike and play outside safely candidates took a differing approach. Key ideas to emerge were:

- Resident-led walking/bike patrols;
- Building relationships between community and police by increasing presence and street outreach;
- Encouraging opportunities for "more eyes on the street";
- Redesigning neighborhoods to deter crime (e.g. fixing landscapes); and
- Implement Vision Zero in Rochester to reduce fatalities and injuries.



## Healthy Choices

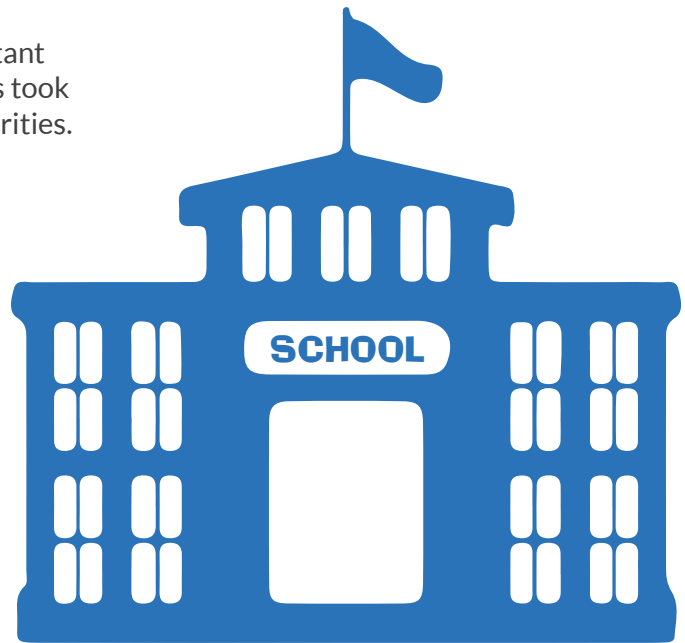
When asked how the Mayor's office could promote access to healthy food in neighborhoods, 4 of 5 candidates responded. Ideas generated include:

- Expanding Foodlink's Curbside Market;
- Promoting school gardens;
- Establishing culturally competent nutrition education;
- Better zoning to promote urban agriculture and use of vacant land; and
- Supporting community co-ops.

## On supporting kids in schools:

**All candidates** agreed community schools are an important model to build upon in the City of Rochester. Candidates took a vastly different approach on their top educational priorities. Their top ideas included:

- ✓ Expansion of Pre-K;
- ✓ Goal for all students to be at reading level by the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade;
- ✓ The need to increase out of school time programming;
- ✓ Focusing on the importance of adult education;
- ✓ Providing financial incentives to kids for passing grade levels; and
- ✓ Increasing owner-occupied housing.



## Priorities

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

### 1/5

One candidate referred to their platform for change as the key priorities

### 1/5

One candidate skipped the question

Of the remaining candidates, the top 3 policies and budget priorities emerged:

- 1** Expand funding for training and employment opportunities for teens and young adults;
- 2** Establish a mini-grant fund for resident driven projects to promote play, physical activity and healthy environments; and
- 3** Increase the budget for the maintenance of existing parks and play spaces across the City of Rochester.



### 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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