

SCHOOL BOARD 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 that have access to healthy school meals, daily physical activity, social-emotional supports, and quality care at the building level, 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:



a healthy school community can improve academic success, increase graduation rates, improve attendance, and provide a solid foundation for learning.

Where do your candidates stand on kids?

Healthi Kids, and the Parent Leadership Training Institute engages 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 Rochester City School District. From advocating for 60 minutes of in-school physical activity, to better school food, expanding the community school model and promoting the social-emotional development of kids – a School Board Commissioner plays an important role supporting the whole health of every child across the district.

In August 2017, we sent a questionnaire to the six School Board Commissioner candidates for the Rochester City School District to better understand their position on supporting every child across the district.

The questionnaire had ten questions and asked the candidates about recess, health education, supporting social-emotional learning, and family engagement. A final question asked each candidate to prioritize ten distinct policies, programs and budget asks on a scale of 1-10.



Overall response



Six School Board Commissioner candidates
responded to the survey

Each candidate had a differing approach on what the “whole health of a child” means and what role the School Board plays in ensuring kids thrive. It was not clear to Healthi Kids or PLTI if candidates could comprehensively share how children's physical and social-emotional health fits into the strategic direction of the district to support academic achievement and student success.



On supporting kids' behavioral health:

All candidates supported trauma-informed practices at the school building level. The majority of candidates agreed that staff need to be trained in this model in order to support the social-emotional health of kids across the district. Specific ideas from the candidates include:

- ✓ Additional mental health staff and social workers in buildings;
- ✓ Expanding the community school model with co-located services; and
- ✓ Continuing to build upon the new Code of Conduct.

On supporting kids' physical health:

The majority of candidates recognized the importance of recess, but many were unaware the current policy of 20 minutes of daily active recess was not being enforced at the building level.

3/6

Three of the respondents identified they would, as School Board Commissioner, work directly with schools to understand the barriers to implementation.

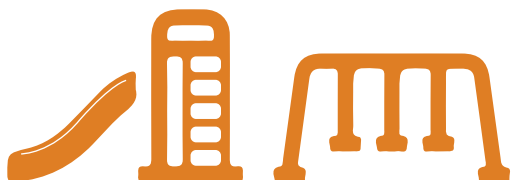
5/6

All but one candidate agreed that recess should not be taken away as a form of punishment for behavior or academic reasons. However, the candidates identified needs to:

- Clarify the current recess policy to administrators and staff;
- Provide teachers the tools for other modes of intervention; and
- To keep building upon the current Code of Conduct.

3/6

Three candidates advocated for additional needed resources for the Department of Health, Physical Education and Athletics and/or the Department of Nutrition and Food Serves to help support the delivery of physical activity, health education, and healthy school meals across the district.



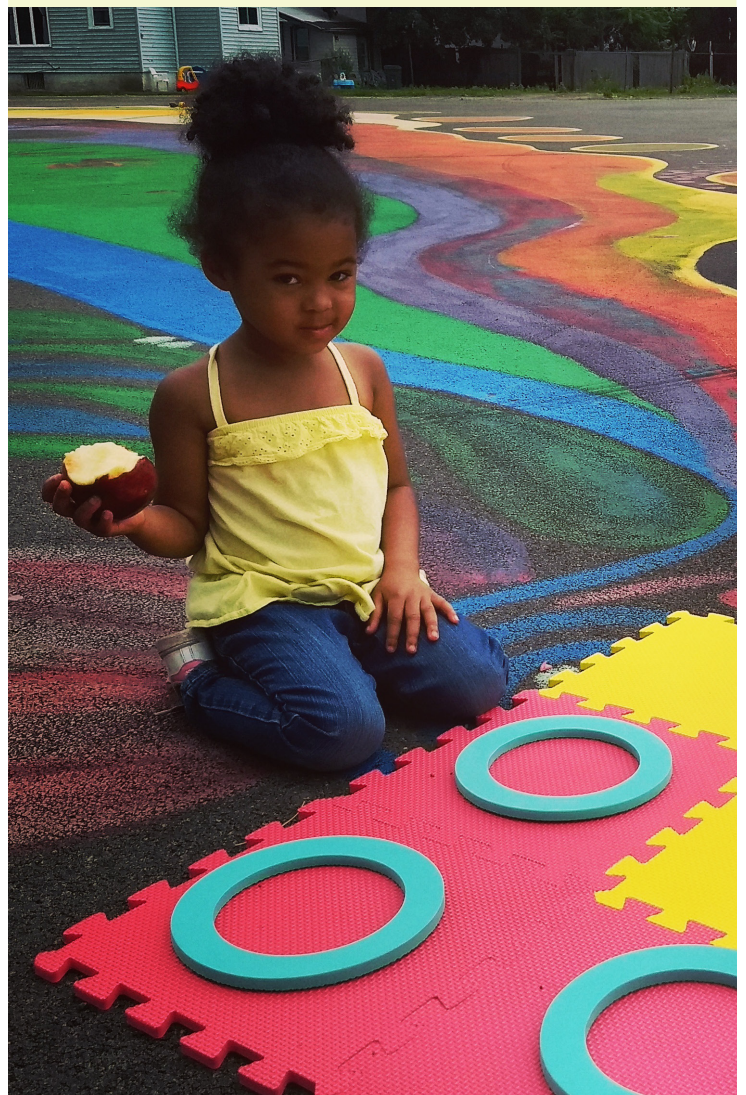
On leveraging existing community resources:

None of the candidates offered a comprehensive plan to leverage existing community resources to support the social-emotional health of kids in the Rochester City School District.

4/6

Four candidates shared their ideas for advancing kids social-emotional health, these include:

- ✓ Establishing community resource centers at each school;
- ✓ Supporting existing programs and funding opportunities;
- ✓ Establishing support plans for each family; and
- ✓ Establishing relationships with local businesses that promote nutrition.



On family engagement:

6/6

All candidates recognized the need to rebuild trust and relationships with parents who want to be active in their school community.

2/6

Two candidates identified the need for the district to go where parents are (i.e. meetings at their homes, local community centers, or libraries).

2/6

When asked how they would, as School Board Commissioner, support the Office of Parent Engagement (OPE), two candidates outlined a hands-on approach by sharing they would continue to attend events and work alongside the office to identify and remove any barriers.

1/6

One candidate identified the need for OPE to be fully staffed and properly funded.



Priorities

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

- 1 5/6 candidates responded to the question. The three policies, programs and budget priorities weighted with the most importance from the candidates are: Increase funding for culturally appropriate and trauma-informed professional development for all social workers and teachers;
- 2 Create policies to ensure diversity in the workforce across the district (i.e. from building level staff, teachers and those at Central Office); and
- 3 Ensure all Pre-K to second grade classrooms have access to and implement a play-based curriculum.



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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