

1. *What do you think are the biggest challenges currently facing our public school and what are your plans to address them?*

Currently, I believe the biggest challenges facing our public schools are the existing pandemics of inequity that our COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated. To address the racism, classism, ableism, and more that is built into our schools, we need to:

- 1) empower and center student voices safely and systematically at every level;
- 2) actively seek equity throughout our system with a specific, clear focus on racial equity; and
- 3) prioritize health, humanity, and well-being by increasing mental and emotional health supports within our schools.

2. *What is your definition of equity and what is its importance in education?*

*Equity can only be equity when racial equity is explicitly centered and named as we seek equity for all groups that have been marginalized. Also, for equity to be equity, we must recognize systemic barriers and inequities that have been intentionally created and then intentionally work to remove and reimagine them.*

*For me, equity means centering humans: in policy, practice, and culture. That means anti-racist choices, seeking and listening to counterstories to dominant narratives, and valuing all voices while giving particular weight to those historically and currently unheard.*

*Equity is critically important in education. Public education has a painful history (and present) as a source of inequities, but it also contains the beautiful promise of supporting and welcoming all students to become critically thinking, engaged adults with the knowledge and skills to continue to help strengthen and improve our society in whatever way fits their unique skill and will.*

3. *Describe the achievement gap in your district and what you think can be done about it. How could the Student Success Act Funds be used to address this gap?*

From the data visible to the public, the opportunity gap is apparent in Philomath School District graduation data: while 92% of white students in the district graduate within four years, only 72% of students with disabilities, 83% of Hispanic or Latin@ students, and 85% of students receiving free or reduced lunch do so. We can better support our students and close this opportunity gap.

In terms of using Student Success Act funds, we can follow the focus on educators analyzing data to look at more specific data in a disaggregated manner with an equity, strengths-based lens, honing and improving existing data practices.

*Question 3 continued:*

The Student Success Act Funds can also be used to address this gap by providing currently underserved students with more opportunities and support to let their critical thinking and leadership potential shine within the district. We can increase support for:

- Mental health and wellness
- Culturally and/or racially specific safe spaces for students (in a way that meets students' needs, possibly in collaboration with other nearby districts)
- Input on decisions from students and families (in a respectful, safe, meaningful way)
- Partnerships with racially- and culturally-specific community groups
- Trauma-informed practices
- Restorative justice.

All of these fall under the Student Success Act and would ultimately strengthen all in the district.

*4. How can schools address the learning needs of students from other cultures and languages?*

By intentionally welcoming all students and offering culturally specific spaces and working to overcome implicit biases and provide high expectations and high support for all students, we can support students from varied cultural and linguistic groups. It is imperative that the adults in the district prioritize putting in the time and effort, in a consistent and culturally responsive way, to connect with and seek input from families and students from other cultures and languages to ensure their needs are being met.

We cannot wait for parents or students to speak up -- we must proactively seek the connections and information we need to effectively do the job of educating all students.

*5. What is your vision for the future of education in your community? What would be your role as a school board member in realizing this vision?*

My vision for the future of education in the Philomath School District community is for our schools to continue to be community hubs with all the more vibrancy, intention, and variety as all students and families are welcomed and empowered. We center and listen to the voices of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, as well as others historically unheard: our students, our families, and our staff. Each student, family, and staff member feels safe, welcomed, and empowered.

I imagine all Philomath School District students with strengthened critical thinking skills, cultural competency, and equity awareness. I see us having difficult discussions and conflicts in a healthy, respectful way. I envision resources and supports for communities of care so that all are supported in their well-being.

It's a vision of Philomath School District's communities moving forward, together!