

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

One of the biggest challenges currently facing public schools is the potential of the transition back to in-person learning relying on the “what was” before the pandemic as a gauge and measure of success. I am interested in focusing on the systemic barriers and potential bias in assessment that may be present that determine how far behind students are when they return. Understanding where the students are on an individual basis is important as a baseline to see where they are. However, the responsibility of them getting caught up should not rest solely on the students. I am ready to advocate for structural changes and budget decisions that help the students in most need as well as ensuring strong support of mental health in the transition back to in-person is a focus.

Another set of challenges facing our public schools are systemic issues such as racism, homophobia, transphobia, and misogyny that lead to high levels of bullying. My youngest daughter’s arm was broken two years ago during her first year of school by another student that was bullying her. In Kindergarten. A year and a half ago, I lost a nephew to suicide as a result of bullying he faced in school in another district. It was his freshman year of high school. Unaddressed bullying leads to a lifetime of scars, some of which I also carry. Part of why I advocate so hard for students is because I know what it feels like to be bullied. LGBTQ+ youth especially still continue to face bullying at significant rates, especially when racial identity is factored in. I am currently advocating for a stronger bullying reporting system in our district so data is shared out more broadly and not left in the individual schools. I am also asking for the nature of the bullying to be documented. The bullying reporting system currently used isolates data and is not reported out in a comprehensive way. Strengthening this will help identify areas we can work on to address policy and operational responses to bullying. My hope is that we will be able to have a better picture of the areas that students are being targeted the most and think through ways to address this more systematically.

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

Equity is when all people have access to what they need to reach their goals regardless of their identities and income levels. It is when barriers to access are removed in order for them to be reached. Sometimes this means there is an allocation of resources going to those who need them the most. Equity is important in education because it helps create stronger support for all students to dream of futures with less worry of if those dreams can become reality. It helps students learn about community care and about each other. Equity is a tool in helping us reach more just futures.

*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?*

This is hard to answer because the data we rely on is not reliable itself. Corvallis School District is a predominantly white school district and data on students of color are not measured in ways that help us see the full picture of where students are. The reason the data is not reliable is because if a student picks more than one race, they are lumped into the multi-racial category which can cause the numbers of students of color in other categories to go down. Black, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander students numbers are often less than the required number to be reported for individual schools leaving those categories with an asterisk which ultimately erases them for the data. We need data to be separated out (disaggregated) in the multi-racial category in order to measure achievement properly. With the data we do have, students of color are testing at lower rates than white students. Student Success Act Funds can be used to help support specific programs for institutionally underserved students that have been shown to be effective in other districts. They can also be used to help develop a metric tool to evaluate where the students in our district are that meets the needs of our community and works for state reporting purposes. The testing in itself that is used to evaluate student learning is also a problem. I am confident our district can find a way to overcome these barriers through an equity lens that supports all of the students in our district with a strong emphasis on focusing the support on the students that need it the most.

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

I have been advocating for several years for the federally funded Indian Education Program to be part of our district, which has proven in other districts to help increase graduation rates of Native American students and bring a stronger sense of cultural understanding of Native peoples. This program being brought to our district can be used as a model of creating locally developed programs that support students from other cultures as well. I would also like to see disaggregated data used in our assessments of student achievement so we have a more accurate picture of needs for students of color. That will help give us a better starting point than relying on regulatory race reporting data. A cross analysis of other factors such as gender identity, income levels, English Learner, and students with special needs in combination with racial and ethnic demographics would give an intersectional view of where we are to better address the needs and help us develop a plan that supports students of all cultures and languages.

*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 our community is for our local schools to be places where all students can feel they can be their whole selves in their learning process. Until that happens, there will always be inequities in the ways in which students experience education which has historically shown to lead to inequities in educational outcomes. Cultivating a sense of respect for all identities and backgrounds benefits all students and creates strong futures for our community and beyond. As a school board member, I have a responsibility to advocate for students that have been historically and institutionally underserved. Our district made a commitment to be an anti-racist school district and I am committed to ensuring we choose action in upholding this transformational statement. This means all of our policy and budget decisions must be evaluated to ensure they are not upholding systemic racism and that resources are allocated in an equitable manner.