

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

The biggest challenges facing our school district are the repercussions of unfinished learning due to the pandemic, and how we are to catch our children up when they return to in person learning. The pandemic has demonstrated that remote learning is not as effective as in-person learning and it is also one of the most inequitable of all the learning platforms. Studies are indicating that students returning to school this fall will probably have only 70% of the reading gains in reading and 50% of the gains in math when compared to what they would have gained had in person learning been available. For children who were struggling academically prior to the pandemic their learning gains would be even less than that. Any strategies that the district considers should include a combination of increased learning time by extending the school day or school calendar, dedicated attention to students by employing more educational assistants, and compressing or reducing current curriculum. The driver on most of these options will be dependent upon the amount of additional financial support the State of Oregon wishes to provide.

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

My definition of equity, as it relates to education, is allocating resources in such a manner so that the success a child has in school is not dependent upon their ethnicity, income status and gender identification. All children have the capacity to learn and achieve at a high level academically, however, not all children have the same amount of resources to achieve those goals. Corvallis School District has a significant achievement gap amongst its minority groups when compared to their white peers, and there has been no substantive change in this gap for the past four years in K-8. The district has intentionally and deliberately created numerous systems to support our minority students and provide them greater opportunities to help them elevate their academic achievement, but there has been little improvement. We need to review these supports and determine why they are not having the desired effect because it is our duty as a community to ensure that all students have the resources needed to achieve academic excellence.

*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?*

Within the Corvallis School District there is currently a significant achievement gap. The State of Oregon Department of Education reports that 67.9 percent of white students district wide passed the Essential Skills test in English but only 57.9 % of African American students and 37% of students who identify as Hispanic achieved the same result. The numbers are even more stark when reviewing the math scores. In 2019 it was reported that 55.7% of white students were proficient in math district wide, when compared with 34.2 % for African American students and 21.4% for Hispanic students. There has been no significant improvement of these numbers over the past five years, even though the district has been focusing on providing greater learning opportunities for its BIPOC students. I believe a review of these supports needs to be conducted to see which supports are proving to be the most effective. If a support proves to be effective, then as a district we need to expand its use and resources allocated to it. Additionally, we need to look at providing more resources in the classrooms in the form of educational assistants. A study conducted in North Carolina in 2016 reached the conclusion that an increase of teaching assistants in the classroom proved to have a direct correlation to the improvement of student achievement. Furthermore, the study indicated that teaching assistants have a greater positive impact on minority students academic achievement than that of white students. Given this information, I believe more thought should be given to expanding the role of educational assistants within our K-8 classrooms and funding this increase in personnel through the Student Success Act. Currently, most of the funds being received from the Student Success Act are being used to fund professional development of our teachers so they can learn to incorporate the tenets of culturally responsive teaching in the classroom and to fund the behavioral health infrastructure for the district. For future years of our program funding under the Student Success Act I believe we should petition the state to use those funds for expanding the number educational assistants we use in the classroom, and to have those EAs work in the classrooms with the greatest identified need.

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

The single most important thing that can be done is already being addressed by the district and that is to train its teachers the importance and practices associated with culturally responsive teaching. The school district has invested in professional development with funding through the Student Success Act to help its teachers learn to learn of its positive effect on student's ability to learn and to create a more just and inclusive learning environment.

*Question 4 continued:*

The largest minority group within the district, and one that represents the largest group of English Language Learners, are those students who identify as Hispanic. The district has invested in creating a robust Dual Language Immersion program from K-12. This has had significant positive impacts for our students, but more must be done because even with these programs there has been little substantive change in the achievement gap for these students. More time and study needs to occur to learn why the supports being provided are not having the desired effect on student achievement.

*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 of the future of education is to live in a district where the success of our students is not dependent upon the color of their skin, the amount of money their parents earn, or the gender they identify with. I want all of our students to succeed, and have the ability to read, write, think critically and do math at their grade level. My role to seeing this happen is to ensure, through policy creation and oversight, that all of our students have the resources and opportunities necessary to enjoy academic success. My role would also be to hold the school district accountable for the success of our students in the classroom and, in cases where there are significant differences in achievement, have the district provide a plan that will help to mitigate this discrepancy.