

2020 Aug 19th Albany Democratic Club Endorsement Candidates Survey - Albany School Board

Questions and responses will be shared with the public. Please type your answers in another document window, eg. Google Docs, and paste them here when ready. Google Docs auto-saves and will tell you the word and character count of selected text when you click Tools/Word Count. Deadline: Monday August 17 @ 10pm.

Your name (as it will appear on the ballot) *

Melissa Boyd

Preferred email address *

pippi.boyd@yahoo.com

Party registration. *

- Democratic Party
- Republican Party
- Green Party
- Libertarian Party
- American Independent Party
- Peace and Freedom Party
- Not registered for a political party
- Other:

Your age as of Election Day Nov 3, 2020. *

41

During what years have you been a resident of Albany? (eg. someone who left and returned might put 2012-2014, 2017-2020) *

2013-2020

Your ballot designation as it will appear below your name on the ballot (usually occupation or current office) *

Attorney

List of any prominent endorsers, both organizations and individuals. (It is understood that in the first days of a campaign this list may be very short or nonexistent.) *

Peggy McQuaid, Albany Vice Mayor
Kim Trutane, Albany School Board President
Naomi Gardner, Marin Elementary School teacher
Carla Swan, Albany High School teacher

List any and all of the following: Website, facebook group, mailing list or other ways voters can reach out to or follow your campaign. (It is understood that in the first days of a campaign these resources may not be fully fleshed out.) *

MelissaForAlbany.com

Brief description of your campaign organization and finances – names of any consultants or campaign managers you will use, funds you have raised to date, and how much you expect to have to spend to win. *

I have currently raised approx. \$1,100 and I expect to spend approx. \$2,000 to win. I have not hired any consultants or campaign managers and I do not intend to.

Brief description of your history of involvement with and support for the Democratic Party and its candidates and ballot measure positions – include Democratic clubs/organizations to which you belong or which you have supported financially. Limit 10 words each item. *

Locally, I have supported parcel tax measures and democratic candidates for city council and school board. On a broader scale, I have made phone calls, gone door to door and donated to campaigns for democrats across the country.

What are your connections to the schools in Albany and what work have you been engaged with to improve the schools? Include years for each. eg. current or past parent of kids in certain schools, PTA, school fundraising groups, schools in and out of the classroom, local non-profits, community groups, etc. Limit 10 words each item. *

Marin Elementary School parent (2014-2020)

Co-founded Marin Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA) Committee (2018)

Officer, Marin IDEA Committee (2018-2020)

Officer, AUSD Black Parent Advisory Group (2018-2020)

Member, AUSD Black Parent Advisory Group (2016-2018)

Taught singing to kindergarten class at Marin (2017-2018)

Of the work you did in the previous question, pick one item to explain what was your role and how was the Albany community impacted? Limit 100 words. *

As a founding member and officer in Marin's IDEA Committee, I've worked with parents, teachers and administrators to enhance diversity in our curriculum and enrichment activities, improve student access to essential resources, and ensure that our children feel included and affirmed regardless of who they are or how they learn. The IDEA Committee has sponsored parent education nights discussing gender identity, talking to children about race, and children's mental well-being during shelter in place. We provided cultural activities during the International Potluck and lunchtime recess. And we ran a book fair providing diverse books to all Marin teachers.

What in your background - as a person and in your activities professional and otherwise - do you think will help inform your decision making if elected? Limit 100 words. *

As an attorney, I analyze complex issues, break apart big problems into more manageable ones, and work in a levelheaded way to reach compromises and find solutions. And my experience with Marin's IDEA Committee gave me the opportunity to talk to and learn from parents of children with different needs and teachers and administrators regarding how best to support those needs. We started that committee to support the varied array of identities, abilities and backgrounds of our families. I will represent the needs of all of our children and their families, while listening to and supporting our teachers and administrators.

Schools in the county are required to do distance learning to start the school year which could stretch on for many months. What would be your priorities for AUSD to help ensure distance learning goes as well as it can for all stakeholders? Limit 100 words. *

I would prioritize ensuring that students and their families, and teachers as well, have the tech equipment and access they need to successfully engage in distance learning. I would advocate to make onsite learning available as soon as possible, within government-mandated and health guidelines, to the students in our District who struggle the most with distance learning, among them children who learn differently and whose parents or caregivers are unable to be home with them and/or support their distance learning. I would encourage families to connect with each other to make new friends, provide support and build community.

What would you advocate be done in AUSD to address racism and promote inclusion for all in the schools? Limit 100 words. *

In an April, 2018 letter to the School Board, we asked for a school climate survey administered to students, faculty and school site administrators; regular updates from the School Board regarding the District's progress in implementing Albany Coming Together recommendations; that each school site report all incidents of hate acts, harassment and bullying to the District, to compile and report that data to the community; a mandatory ethnic studies class offered at AHS; and District support for teachers with culturally responsive training, navigating "courageous conversations," and assistance in implementing culturally diverse curriculum. I stand by those recommendations.

Action takes place only by the majority will of the Board. What are examples of your ability to work within a small group as a leader and influencer? Limit 100 words. *

I have been an officer in Marin's IDEA Committee and the AUSD Black Parent Advisory Group for two years. In those roles I have been called on both to set agendas and to listen to the members of our groups and communities to understand what they need and how best to support them. I am also the chairperson of my office's Minority Associates Group which similarly requires me to propose initiatives and represent associates in our local office and our firm at large, while at the same time listening to our members to learn what issues matter most to them.

Public education in California is woefully underfunded. Every dollar that the District spends in one place must be taken from another, while both would likely have positive, verifiable impacts on children if adequately funded. What guiding principles will you use to make difficult budget decisions when there are insufficient funds to cover needs? Limit 100 words. *

My guiding principle is that if the weakest member of our community cannot succeed, then none of us can. Having the chance to talk through and focus on issues of different access and ability during these challenging times has made clear now more than ever that we cannot just worry about what's happening in our home or with our children, feeling lucky if we are going to be ok. If children who learn differently aren't provided sufficient resources, they and their families suffer, but the greater classroom and their teachers suffer as well. I want to amplify the smallest voices.

What are your ideas for how best to address the achievement and opportunity gaps in our district? Limit 100 words. *

We need to listen to the families in our District whose students struggle the most and advocate for them. We cannot stop at what's good enough for the majority or what serves the highest achievers alone. We also need to continue to fund our para-educators and counselors, and outside enrichment resources as well, so that students who need additional or specialized care and attention can receive that. And we must diversify our curriculum and teaching body so that students have the opportunity to learn about and from people who look like and learn like them.

Why should Albany residents elect you to the Albany School Board? Limit 100 words. *

My family and I are committed to Albany public schools. I want to use my skills and experience to help our school district thrive. I have spent years advocating for and listening to families from all different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds, orientations, gender identities and abilities. I have spent my career learning how to analyze complex issues and solve problems with a calm mind and collaborative manner. Now more than ever we have to work together and hear each other. We have to balance the needs of our children, their parents and our teachers. I ask for your vote.

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