

# 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) \*

Veronica Davidson

Preferred email address \*

vonnieadavidson@gmail.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. \*

35 .....

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

1985-1987, 2004-2008, 2012-2020 .....

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

Educator .....

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.) \*

Many individuals, but I am not ready to formally list people yet.

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.) \*

n/a

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. \*

Still in the works

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. \*

Voted for Democratic Candidates

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. \*

Para-educator, Cornell 2008-2009

First Grade Teacher, Cornell 2019-2020

Parent, Cornell 2019-2020

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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. \*

Being in the unique position of being both a parent and a teacher I was able to facilitate more connections between the school site and families.

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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. \*

My experience running an education-based business for the past ten years and teaching in a variety of settings will influence my decision making. As a new parent in the district and long time resident of Albany, I know the value our public schools have in the community. I have a broad understanding of education models, the associated challenges, and the day-to-day needs of students, parents, teachers, and staff.

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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. \*

Offering alternatives to accommodate varying levels of need. Independent study would be an option to keep students connected with AUSD while offering some flexibility for families who have found a method/style/plan that works for their current situation. Moving to a unified platform district-wide could help with continuity, although I understand the difficulties. Also, offering more trainings for parents on the technology side, child development, and curriculum. Parents are now filling many new roles and have little experience or training providing this for their children.

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

The student leaders at Albany High School have introduced some great stepping stones with "Diversify Our Narrative" and incorporating more literature variation into the curriculums.

I am a firm believer that the environment plays an enormous role in the experience and outcome. Having more art work, subtle information, and spaces designed to promote inquisition, thought, and inclusion might support this goal.

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 make efforts to understand the history behind any situation. Gathering information and hearing from others helps avoid redundancy. I try to look at a situation comprehensively and think towards the next step. While I bring my own perspective to decisions it is always rooted in research and conversations with community members. I keep the overall well being, safety, and success of the community at the forefront of this process.

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. \*

Being a teacher and a parent I am aware of the delicate balance of school funding. My core goal is to keep children safe, secure, and happy. The school system has been put in the difficult situation of providing so many services on such a limited budget and I keep in mind that the core role of school is to educate. Cutting or limiting funding to any aspect of public education is a difficult decision, but as I stated above I try to look back at the history of the issues. This helps make a more informed choice about how to allot funds and what has led to the current situation.

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

Cornell has a "Safety Net" system in place that helps a core team monitor students who have been identified as needing additional supports or services. This is a strong model for catching needs early and keeping an eye on students as they progress through school. Staff continuity and collaboration across grade levels helps ensure student needs are supported and they have access to opportunities. One idea to reduce more gaps is to diversify the types of learning available. Reintroducing hands-on offerings can help support more learning styles and needs.

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

I will use my multiple roles in this community to promote connection and collaboration. There has been a divide between the district, school board, parents, teachers, and district staff for some time in Albany. I will work to unify these groups as many (most) cross-over and we all have the best interest of the students as a top priority. I also want to help the district improve communication with staff and families. Not providing appropriate and timely communication can lead to further (often unnecessary) challenges that take time and energy from the most critical need -the students.

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