

1. (CHALLENGER) Tell us a bit about yourself, your background/experience, and your connection and/or interest in the Davenport Schools. What are your reasons for seeking this position?

I am a lifelong resident of Davenport. I attended Davenport schools from Kindergarten through 12th grade, at Garfield, Eisenhower, Sudlow, and North. I am raising two children who have also been educated in the Davenport schools, at Wilson, Williams, Sudlow, and Central so far. I also am a recent former employee of DCSD, having worked 4 years as Campus Security at JB Young and Smart, and 2 years as Student Support Liaison, for both general and special ed, at Hayes.

I want to be a board member because in my time working for the schools, I held positions that allowed me to be truly observant of almost all the working parts. I worked closely with administration, I spent time in many classrooms working alongside teachers, and I worked primarily one on one with students. I was able to see up close the ways the district administrative decisions impacted everyone in the buildings: who benefited and who was disadvantaged, the building-wide consequences of retaining (and often promoting) administrators who appear to care more for resume-building than for their students or staff, the idealized notion of having SROs in a friendly, relationship-building role and how that plays out in reality, among other things.

Three years ago when the district was intent on closing schools, a handful of friends and I attended every single board meeting for 8 months straight, spoke at every open forum and every Q and A session, wrote emails and letters and fought for our students to retain schools in their neighborhoods. It was a challenging and emotional fight, but we won. That's the energy I bring to the table. I want to see this district become the thing it keeps saying it is: a place for equal opportunity for all students, a safe and enjoyable work environment for our staff, and a truly supportive administration.

2. What are some major issues that you believe our school district is currently facing and how would you like the district to deal with those issues?

One major issue our district is facing is student behaviors and the collective response to them. The programs the district admin promotes (Boystown, Davenport Way, and CRVP, all just in the last 6 years) all look good on paper and sound good in theory and even are good in certain circumstances, yet aren't always practical in the moment. With more violent behaviors on the rise in both frequency and intensity, it's important to have a safe and effective way to manage those with haste. For this to happen, we need to listen to the staff at the building level and utilize their input, because they are seeing and handling these issues day

in and out and can speak to the efficacy of the programs used during times of crisis response. I have major concerns about the use of SROs as behavior management tools, and would like to rethink the way we utilize the police in our buildings.

Another issue is placement for kids in special ed. I understand that students with special needs need to be provided a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) but I'm not sure I agree with the way Davenport interprets that. There are sped classrooms with students from such a wide range of grade levels, as well as academic and behavioral needs, that the teachers cannot possibly differentiate instruction appropriately and the consequence of that is no one getting the education they deserve. This creates a volatile and chaotic learning environment for everyone in the room, and in my interpretation, doesn't follow one of the steps the delivery system of the continuum of services and placements requirement required by Iowa law (<https://educateiowa.gov/documents/administrative-rules-special-education/2019/12/05-least-restrictive-environment> page 2):

4. The provision of specially designed instruction to eligible individuals with similar special education instructional needs organized according to the type of curriculum and instruction to be provided, and the severity of the educational needs of the eligible individuals served.

I would like the district to collaborate with special ed teachers and parents and build a system around what is best for the students within the structure of the law. It feels, at the building level, that so many decisions are made based on budget and staffing instead of the education of children, and it's imperative that we turn that trend around.

Another concern is systemic racism. Part of the reason the state got involved in district operations was to ensure we stopped disproportionately disciplining students of color. Supposedly we are on the right track. I'll just say that data can be manipulated, and we still have a *lot* of work to do.

3. What is your perception of the relationship between staff and administration throughout the district? How would you characterize the leadership of the superintendent and other district and building administrators regarding engagement of staff, the DEA and the community at large?

From what I see, most of the community and most of the district staff don't trust the district administration. That there is a "good ol' boys club" in the upper

echelon of the district is basically an open secret. People at JBYOC get shuffled around to different positions or new titles to keep in the club despite the district trying to give the impression that things are changing. There also is no transparency, and many questionable decisions made - the approval of eight district directors at \$165K a pop at the end of a nearly two-year long “hiring freeze” where staff who left weren’t replaced, for one, and the sale of Lincoln School for \$30,000 when a \$270,000 offer was available, for another. Also, as I mentioned before, retaining and promoting problematic teachers and administrators is also a huge concern.

The leadership of the superintendent and other district and administrators leaves much to be desired. I want to see support for teachers and staff from the district administration. The people in the thick of educating the children know the most about what is happening and what is best. They deserve the utmost respect and yet, often, their voices are ignored or silenced. And I don’t mean “support” like jeans on Fridays and a night at the River Bandits. I mean support like showing up to the buildings - not to collect data or observe whether teachers are teaching to standards, but to witness the lived experiences of the staff and students working together each day. To understand the need for more paras and smaller class sizes and the resources to do their jobs well - and not at their own expense. To step into the teachers’ shoes for a day at each building at least once a year - get in there and teach, so they’re reminded of what and for whom they are making decisions each day. And to consider what doing education well and meaningfully could and should look like - and then to make it happen.

I want to see district and building administrators have “stake in the game” in that they should be required to live in Davenport and for their own school aged children to attend Davenport public schools. If none of their decisions affect their own children or their own community, where is the incentive to do what is in their best interest? How can we trust that they are doing the right thing when their own loved ones aren’t affected by the decisions they hand down?

As far as engagement with the community - the district promotes the things that are going well, as it rightfully should. However, it also seems to gloss over community concerns, leading to confusion, misunderstanding, and distrust. This can be fixed with transparency and a willingness to admit fault and to do better.

4. Do you think a teacher’s or employee’s pay or evaluations should be tied to student scores on standardized tests? What elements do you believe should be part of a teacher’s or employee’s performance evaluation?

Absolutely not. Standardized tests do nothing to prove academic ability, talent, or interest in any subject, and anyone who has ever gone through school should know that already. I believe performance evaluations should be based on the ability to connect with students, to meet them where they're at (both academically and socially/emotionally) and engage them in their preferred learning methods as much as possible. They should be based on the ability to provide trauma informed teaching, culturally responsive teaching, and making children feel welcome and wanted in their classrooms.

5. Do you support or oppose maintaining a comprehensive master contract for all employee groups that includes all legal items that were previously included in the contract under the pre-2017 collective bargaining agreement?

I support it. Contracts protect employees from being taken advantage of by their employers.

6. How important is planning time for teachers in improving student learning? Do you think that teachers in the Davenport School District have enough, too little, or too much planning time at the elementary, middle and high school levels?

Planning time is imperative. Teachers are overwhelmed. They often have to give up their prep periods to sub for other teachers or to attend meetings. They are expected to take work home and spend nights and weekends planning and grading. It's ridiculous. No other industry expects that of its employees without exceptional compensation for their time. No one has enough planning time at any grade level, on the whole.

7. Do you support or oppose a future ballot initiative to renew the SAVE (Secure an Advanced Vision for Education) fund 1¢ sales tax for infrastructure needs of the Davenport Community School District (DCSD)?

I support it wholeheartedly. I'd especially like to see it utilized in the elementaries and middle schools on the west side of town.

8. Tell us the current status of your campaign and future plans and strategies including any groups or efforts you are affiliated with a vested interest in the outcome of the school board election.

I have an EIN and bank account for my campaign, and a treasurer who is taking care of the financial end of things. I've received several generous donations. I've given my business to a union shop to create yard signs. I've promoted my

campaign on social media. I have committed to an interview with a board member of District Wide Davenport. I am also hoping for union endorsement.

9. As we look to the future, do you support or oppose following CDC (Centers for Disease Control) recommendations for students and staff health and safety for in-person learning environments?

Schools are expected to provide education and a safe environment for staff and students, and those with the highest levels of postdoctoral education throughout the world have said time and again that the science shows that masks and physical distancing reduce transmission of Covid-19. Public schools perform public service to the community and therefore should always follow public health and safety measures as put forth by the CDC and the WHO.

10. Why do you think the Davenport Education Association should support you?

I am passionately devoted to the children of Davenport and their education. I have advocated to keep schools open and to keep librarians in schools. I promote culturally responsive and trauma informed education. I have experience as a school employee and as a parent and will bring the wisdom gained from those experiences to the table. I will advocate tirelessly for our students.