

BERKELEY SCHOOL BOARD Questionnaire

**GREEN PARTY OF ALAMEDA COUNTY
2018 ENDORSEMENT DECISION**

Please email your responses to GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoo.com . In the subject line, please include "Berkeley School Board ".

We prefer that you convert your answered questionnaire into a .pdf document, so we can post it directly to our website. Or simply include your responses in the body of an email, and we will do the conversion.

If it is not possible for you to email, please snailmail your responses so we receive them by 8/23/18, to:

Berkeley School Board Questionnaire
c/o Green Party of Alameda County
[2022A Blake Street ~ Berkeley , CA 94704](#)

Name: Julie Sinai

Phone: 510-332-6251

Email: julie@julie.vote

Website: www.julie.vote

Current occupation: Chief Strategy Officer, LifeLong Medical Care

Motivation

Why did you choose to run for this office?

As a long-time Berkeley resident, parent of two BUSD graduates, and experienced policymaker, I pledge to ensure all Berkeley students graduate ready to take charge of their education, their career, and their future. Preparing students for today's world requires a full-throated commitment to literacy, math, science, technology and career exploration. I will focus on strengthening BUSD's curriculum, professional training, and use of data by doing what I do best: harnessing the expertise and resources of our region's world-renowned colleges and universities, community organizations, local governments, businesses, labor, teachers and parents/guardians. With an unwavering commitment to eliminate the opportunity gap, I will promote rigorous program evaluation and ensure fiscal responsibility.

Qualifications

Please give a brief summary of your background and qualifications for being a School Board Director.

For 30 years I've demonstrated passionate, results-oriented leadership in nearly every arena impacting our children's lives - child development, K-12, afterschool care, Higher Education, healthcare and employment services, the Berkeley School Board (appointed 2013-2014) and City of Berkeley Mayor's Office (2003-2011). I have deep experience building coalitions and partnerships across jurisdictions and with broad cross sections of the community including parent groups, grassroots advocates, business, labor, non-profits and public sector institutions.

Priorities

What do you believe are the major issues facing the District? What are some specific tasks (e.g. specific legislation, policies, et.) you intend to accomplish while in office?

- **Ensuring every student graduates ready to pursue their education and career path.** That means we have developed effective strategies and programs to eliminate the opportunity gap and we continue to strengthen our literacy program while putting new energy into math, science and technology. When students graduate skilled and competent in all these areas they will have greater opportunities to secure a path to a rewarding career with a living wage job. I plan to harness the expertise and resources of our region's renowned colleges and universities, our local businesses and community groups to provide support in the classroom, with internships, and with teacher professional development and externships.
- **Competitive compensation packages for BUSD's teachers and staff.** Our teachers and staff cannot afford to live in Berkeley. We are losing skilled employees and are challenged with recruiting new teachers and staff. We need to ensure our employees can live in the town they work. I plan to work with stakeholders across the district, city and region to 1) provide good compensation packages, 2) address teacher/staff housing, and 3) advocate at the state level for resources.
- **Financial Strength.** Thanks to Berkeley voters, BUSD has benefitted from parcel taxes for instruction, libraries, arts, supportive services and facilities maintenance and bond measure for facilities development. Many of our facilities were retrofitted and renovated more than 25 years ago and need to be upgraded. The Facilities Bond and the maintenance parcel will be up for renewal in 2020 and we have to prepare for a robust campaign. While revenue from the state has stabilized, the District's share of pension costs will continue to rise, canceling out any increase in revenue. The Board made difficult decisions this year and will have to grapple with a structural deficit in the coming years. Through program evaluation, data analysis and budget review, I will ensure fiscal responsibility.

What specifically do you think the School District can or should do locally to fight climate change? To reduce the District's carbon footprint to zero?

- Address climate change and environmental education into the curriculum
- Reduce our carbon footprint by installing energy efficient systems and solar in new construction
- Ensure the facilities master plan includes standards for sustainable building and transportation,
- Ensure the school bus fleet runs on clean energy.

The Berkeley City Council may need temporary facilities for meetings during Council Chamber refurbishment. Are you in favor of allowing the City Council to use School Board Facilities to hold meetings when not being used by the School Board? Do you think the City should pay for this use?

YES, I'm in favor and I believe the District and City have (or should) negotiated a fair price.

How do you think issues of homelessness in Berkeley impact the schools? Do you have suggestions on solutions to Berkeley homeless issues? Is there a role the school system can play in easing the homeless crisis?

The most effective solution to homelessness to provide permanent, supportive housing. There is an extremely challenging balance between securing funds for long-term housing and spending resources on emergency housing to get people inside as soon as possible. There is no easy answer to finding a balance, but it is critical that we secure funding for long-term solutions. Homelessness has a huge impact on the lives of hundreds of Berkeley students and their families. When I was an appointed member of the School Board in 2013-14, I worked together with the Mayor and City Council to share the costs of a homeless services coordinator at Berkeley High and to support Youth Spirit Art works. If elected, I will continue to partner with the city to secure resources and services for families who are facing homelessness in the district.

Do you have issues or concerns regarding the interactions between Berkeley Police and students? If so, do you have suggestions for solutions?

It's very important that members of the Berkeley Police Department work to forge positive, respectful relationships with our students, especially our students of color. We need to find opportunities to break down barriers for officers and students to get to know each other and learn from each other. The Berkeley Police Officers Association has begun that process by partnering with the new Law and Social Justice Academy at Berkeley High School. I don't support employing more police officers on BUSD campuses.

What are your positions on the three Berkeley Ballot Measures?

\$135M Affordable Housing Bond?

Support – especially if it addresses workforce housing for teachers and staff

Police Commission Charter Amendment?

Not on the ballot

Amending the Rent Control Ordinance to Cover Newer Buildings?

This is a very complex measure and I need to study it more.

Endorsements

Who are you endorsing for the Senate, for Governor, for AD15, and for the Berkeley City Council?

I am focused on the School Board race and with the exception of one city council seat, I am not endorsing in these races.

Who has endorsed you?

Berkeley Federation of Teachers

Berkeley FireFighters Association

Alameda County Building and Construction Trades Council

IBEW Local 595

Operating Engineers Local 3

Carpenters Union Local 713

Sheet Metal Workers Local 104

Robert Reich, former U.S. Secretary of Labor

Senator Nancy Skinner

Assemblymember Tony Thurmond

Supervisor Keith Carson
All 5 School Board Directors – Judy Appel, Ty Alper, Josh Daniels Karen Hemphill, and Beatriz Leyva-Cutler
Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguin
Berkeley City Councilmembers Linda Maio, Susan Wengraf, Ben Bartlett, and Lori Droste
Peralta Community College Trustees Nicky Gonzalez Yuen, Karen Weinstein and Julina Bonilla
City Auditor Anne-Marie Hogan
AC Transit Board Director H.E. Christian Peoples
Former Senator Loni Hancock
Former Mayor Tom Bates
Santiago Casal, retired
Angela Gallegos-Castillo, Community Engagement & Leadership Consultant
Mansour Id Deen, President, Berkeley NAACP, Executive Director Inter-City Services
Rev. Mike Smith, Pastor McGee Avenue Baptist Church
John Steere, Environmental Planner
Carol Zabin, Director Green Economy Program, UC Berkeley Labor Center
Partial list – to view my growing list of endorsers go to www.julie.vote/endorsements

Anything Else

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?

My entire career has been dedicated to working for economic and social justice in the public and non-profit sector. I have worked to increase access to education, health care, and employment for people who face significant barriers resulting from institutionalized racism, incarceration, mental health challenges, poverty and immigration status. Having worked in the School District, Berkeley Mayor's office for 9 years (2003-2011) and having been an appointed member on the school board in 2013-14, I have the experience needed to work with fellow Board members to weigh the issues, make the difficult decisions, hold the administration accountable and to ensure the voices of our students, families, teachers and staff are elevated to inform policy and direction.

I would be honored to have the endorsement of the Green Party.

Are you a member of the Green Party?
Registered Democrat

Pledges - Have you signed either of the following pledges?

A. For democracy: <https://movetoamend.org/candidate-questionnaire>
Yes

B. For peace: <http://www.peacelegislators.org/pledge-form/>

Yes

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Greg Jan
Green Party of Alameda County

(Please RSVP now, and respond to GPAC-VoterGuide@yahogroups.com by Thursday, August 23).