

**16. Please describe your background (education, employment, community and civic activity, labor union affiliation etc).**

I am a private sector professional with over 15 years of experience in finance and operations. I studied Economics at Harvard University and have a Masters in Business Administration from Harvard Business School. For more than 25 years, I have had deep civic and community engagement with volunteer work in youth programs, particularly ones in immigrant communities. I proudly identify as Asian American and disabled (hearing loss).

Even more importantly, I am a mother of 4 children, current and future Seattle Public Schools students. I am currently the PTA co-president at John Stanford International Elementary School (JSIS) and also serve on the SPS Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council. I have previously served on the JSIS Building Leadership Team, an official governance committee consisting of fellow parents, teachers, and staff. I am now a board director for a nonprofit called Washington Leadership Board, a non-profit organization established in Washington state law by former Lt. Governor Cyrus Habib, with a mission to deliver equity-focused leadership programs, particularly for Washington's youth.

**17. Please describe your history of involvement (if any), with particular emphasis on the last five years, in local, regional, and/or state politics.**

I regularly engage our state legislators and leaders to advocate for Washington's K-12 students, particularly for increased education funding, expanded mental health services, and gun sense legislation. During the pandemic, I advocated for priority vaccinations for teachers, childcare workers and other educators in Washington state. I provided public testimony, attended dozens of meetings with legislators, and written hundreds of emails. I have also made financial contributions to Washington State's Democratic candidates and other political causes that have inspired me.

In 2008, I left my job and worked full-time as a digital marketing manager for Obama for America (President Barack Obama's first presidential election) at his campaign headquarters in Chicago.

**18. Please describe the progress of your campaign and goals. How do you plan to win?**

I have assembled a dynamic and passionate grassroots team to help me reach as many District 4 voters for the August primary and then city-wide voters in the November general election. This team includes a best-in-class campaign strategist, treasurer, and manager, and many volunteers who are parents and caregivers who I have worked with in my volunteer and advocacy work with Seattle Public Schools and are eager to support my candidacy. We have set a campaign budget of \$35,000 and have identified donors who are going to get us there. We will win by connecting directly with voters on the issues that matter to them and energizing them to vote!

**19. What issues do you think deserve more attention from media or elected officials? How would you seek to remedy that through your campaign or when elected?**

Mental health is an essential service: It is clear that now is the time to make mental health an essential service that schools provide at every school, to all students. The benefit will be vast, similar to how many impoverished lives improve with essential nutrition provided in schools. I believe every school should have a full staff of counselors, social workers, psychologists, and nurses to serve their students. These critical functions should not be left up to teachers, and should not be left to be funded by PTA fundraising or temporary federal grants. They must be thought of as core to education.

Our working families need transportation. Our schools are a critical piece of the public infrastructure. But today, we can't even get students to school at scale. When I was growing up in an immigrant family with a mom that worked two jobs, there was no time for anyone to take me to and from school — I took the bus. Today, in my role as PTA president, I estimate 40 families in our school would like to choose hybrid learning but cannot as there is inadequate bus service. As a school board director, I will work to secure adequate funding to get all students to school.

We need adequate funding: Closing school buildings during the pandemic has amplified many of the challenges and inequities in Seattle Public Schools and Washington state's public schools overall. We must draw a direct line between the regressive tax system we have and the underfunding of Washington's public schools. Washington state spends just 3.3% of taxpayer income on schools, compared to New York State's spend at 5.4%. Media coverage of the regressive tax system does not sufficiently focus on what the revenues would enable or what the shortfalls force districts to eliminate or underfund. As was seen in the recent adoption of the Capital Gains Tax, such information will drive greater support for tax reform and adequate funding for public schools.

**20. How do you plan to involve all residents and engage all communities in the decision making process? How would you work with people who lack trust in our institutions?**

Direct engagement will be a priority to me.

- 1) I will host community meetings once a month open to all.
- 2) I will attend PTSA meetings for the schools within my district (a goal of three PTSA meetings per school per year). I will also ask to jointly attend meetings hosted by my fellow board members and schools within their districts.
- 3) I will also make myself available for one-on-one conversations with community members, through regular office hours or in their preferred format.

With every decision, I will ask myself, who is it impacting and who have I not heard from? The answers to these questions will guide me in my community engagement efforts.

Trust is earned. SPS needs to recognize that it is not merely that the stakeholders do not trust SPS. We must accept that SPS has not been trustworthy. The district continues to break

promises, does not follow through on commitments, and does not protect students and staff. We can blame “bad apples” but people leave and distrust remains. In working with those that lack trust in our institutions, I will always ask them about their experiences and will keep record of them. When a community member comes to you with an issue, it is rarely a one time occurrence and I will hope that I can convey that their whole story matters to me and I will simultaneously collect information to daylight patterns.

**21. COVID has increased existing inequities. How will you use your office to support the most vulnerable? How would you promote an equitable recovery and create opportunity for all?**

Our district will be receiving \$92M in federal relief dollars. These dollars should be prioritized for the already identified goals and objectives so that we not only have an equitable recovery but also make continued progress toward Seattle Excellence.

I will use my private sector background in finance and operations to ensure that this additional funding does not “disappear” into the broader SPS budget. As part of my desire to increase funding overall, we must ensure that we can use this money in a way that drives directly to an equitable recovery and has real “return on investment”. We will ensure that each dollar of the \$92 Million federal grant is tied to a specific project with specific goals, and most importantly, a specific leader from within the district.

We will work with the incredible teachers and staff of SPS to develop a slate of projects, and evaluate together. I look forward to hearing the ideas from the district, but based on my experience, I think the following should be included in a Covid recovery plan.

- (1) Finish our return to school plans. We still lack a real, fully funded plan to return to school that is based on science. We don't have thresholds based on community spread. We did not sufficiently support our building leaders in executing the safety improvement protocols. There is no consistency, and without consistency, there is no true safety and no trust.
- (2) Fully support families who choose to remain remote. Many families will choose to keep their children remote, and we need to respect this. These families should be prioritized for provision of a publicly funded “hotspot”, and should receive dedicated tech support in their native language. Students who choose to be remote should be enrolled in a new “virtual option school” where teachers can provide the correct curriculum. Teachers should not be asked to teach both in person and virtual classes simultaneously. Some families may choose to continue with virtual instruction indefinitely, and that option should be considered if data shows it is meeting the basic educational needs of the students.
- (3) Reduce the focus on high-stakes testing. I suggest a one-year moratorium on standardized testing. When the government officials and district leadership at various points during the pandemic required standardized testing for my third grader who was still learning remotely, I felt protective of her teacher and of her. While I do believe

progress monitoring is important, this was undue pressure on teachers and students, logistically challenging to test students remotely, and I question the accuracy and value of the data collected.

- (4) Invest in a Pandemic Policy that provides the structures and procedures we lacked. Never again should we have to “build the plane while we are flying it.” We should enlist the expert advice of medical and public health officials in the development of this policy.

Beyond this, we need to make a concerted effort to establish real inclusion for all, a concept which for me recognizes that schools are where students go to get educated, both in the skills they need for life and in their own identity. There are groups in our schools that are not being served well. The “School-to-Prison” pipeline is real and has tragic consequences for Black children and teens. I grew in a community where I was one of the only Asian Americans in my school, and I still bear the scars of intense bullying. Over the past year, I have been supporting staff and community programming at John Stanford International School on antiracism, and I have seen progress. As a School Board Director, I will scale these programs to all SPS campuses, and also make targeted investments to support all disadvantaged communities, including BIPOC, AAPI, LGBTQ and other groups that need it.

The Seattle Public School's Strategic Plan (*Seattle Excellence*) is centered on students furthest from educational justice. Its four priorities are to eliminate opportunity gaps and to ensure every student will receive a high-quality, world-class education. These are highly admirable goals but need to be matched with a budget and leadership that reflects those values

**22. If elected, how will you use your position to address racial inequality, and advance an anti-racist agenda? How specifically would you support the Black Lives Matter movement?**

My own lived experiences make me realize that many of our students feel hated and feared, and it breaks my heart. In my case, I was growing up in Asian in an auto manufacturing town whose jobs were being decimated by Japanese competition at the time.

Today's Black children suffer from centuries of systemic racism and a juvenile justice system that still discriminates against them. Asian students are being blamed for a virus that affected communities of color disproportionately. I will use my position to sharpen our collective focus to stop hate in our community and beyond and I directly engage and empower these students to bring forth solutions.

As School Board Director, I will help advance real inclusion for all in the following ways

- 1) Being a visible leader for AAPI students, especially female students. I firmly believe in being the change you want to see. This is one of the reasons I have decided to run for School Board. In its 154 year history, Seattle Public Schools has had 145 school board directors and only 4 were AAPI: Alan Sugiyama, Jan Kumasaka, Cheryl Chow, and Betty

Patu. Currently, 1 in 7 of Seattle Public School students identify as AAPI and we have no AAPI school board directors. Representation and role models matter.

2) Addressing specific concerns that are keeping families of Color out of our buildings.

When I examined the data for students choosing hybrid instruction and remaining remote, a disproportionate percentage of Black and Asian students chose to remote. Our Black and Asian students do not feel safe in buildings, or perhaps they lack the resources to get their kids to and from school for a two-hour school day. I believe that in person education is the most effective type for almost all students, and our families of color must have the option to attend it free of fear.

3) Fully commit SPS to implementing ethnic studies. Back in 2017, Seattle Public Schools adopted a resolution in support of Ethnic Studies, a curriculum program for all grades and content areas focused on the experiences of people and communities of color with an emphasis on indigeneity. Four years later, we are still waiting for that promise to become a reality.

Meanwhile, individual schools like John Stanford have taken matters into their own hands. In 2019, with support from the BLT and PTA, our amazing faculty voted to redirect its budget and curriculum to adopt ethnic studies. This year the staff also collectively decided to adopt the Black Lives Matter at School Year of Purpose. It's an inspiration that our campus has adopted this, and an indictment of the district that other schools are still waiting.

I deeply admire the dedication the JSIS staff has to the BLM movement, even in a year of tremendous upheaval. The learnings my third and second grader have been bringing home reveals the real progress that can be achieved. I will work to get ethnic studies implemented and funded.

**28. How has the pandemic changed your perspective on educational equity? What will you propose to address the educational consequences of the COVID pandemic? What specific policies will you seek to ensure that all staff and students can safely return to in-person school safely during the COVID pandemic? How will you work to bridge the digital divide both now and after return to in-person education?**

The pandemic has amplified inequities that already existed in our public school system. Understandably, we are eager to return to "normal," pre-pandemic existence but the pandemic has spotlighted that "normal" was not working for many of our students who are most vulnerable.

Building on my response to Question 21, the following is my plan to address the educational consequences of the pandemic. This is how we will allow all staff and students to return to in-person school safely, and bridge the digital divide:

- 1) Finish our return to school plans. We still lack a real, fully funded plan to return to school that is based on science. We don't have thresholds based on community spread. We did not sufficiently support our building leaders in executing the safety improvement protocols. There is no consistency, and without consistency, there is no true safety and no trust.
- 2) Fully support families who choose to remain remote. Many families will choose to keep their children remote, and we need to respect this. These families should be prioritized for provision of a publicly funded "hotspot", and should receive dedicated tech support in their native language. Students who choose to be remote should be enrolled in a new "virtual option school" where teachers can provide the correct curriculum. Teachers should not be asked to teach both in person and virtual classes simultaneously. Some families may choose to continue with virtual instruction indefinitely, and that option should be considered if data shows it is meeting the basic educational needs of the students.
- 3) Reduce the focus on high-stakes testing. I suggest a one-year moratorium on standardized testing. When the government officials and district leadership at various points during the pandemic required standardized testing for my third grader who was still learning remotely, I felt protective of her teacher and of her. While I do believe progress monitoring is important, this was undue pressure on teachers and students, logistically challenging to test students remotely, and I question the accuracy and value of the data collected.
- 4) Invest in a Pandemic Policy that provides the structures and procedures we lacked. Never again should we have to "build the plane while we are flying it." We should enlist the expert advice of medical and public health officials in the development of this policy.

Our pandemic response was not great, but ultimately, we are winning. Many different collective actions are working in tandem, including social distancing, mask wearing, vaccine distribution, all building upon each other.

Transformation on equity will require similar collaboration and steady, incremental progress. There will be no single leader that solves inequity in education. There will be no single program or plan that solves inequity in education. We need to be working toward a "flywheel effect" where instead of relying on a single action or person, we relentlessly push and push until we begin to build momentum. We will achieve one breakthrough, then another, then another until we achieve the transformation we desire. Urgency is needed, but so is persistence.

**29. What policies or changes will you seek to ensure that all students— regardless of their gender, race, class, disability, or ethnicity—receive an education that enables them**

**to reach their fullest potential? What would you do to advance anti-racist and indigenous curriculum? What do you see as your role in disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline?**

As the child of immigrants who arrived with just \$500 in their pockets, I grew up as one of very few Asian American children in a place where my family had little support beyond themselves. Nonetheless, due to the quality of the public education I received, I was able to become the first woman in my family to graduate from college.

As noted elsewhere in this questionnaire, I will take the following actions to ensure that all students reach their fullest potential, advance anti-racism, and disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline:

- 1) Increase funding for the schools overall, and specifically for populations furthest from educational justice (see my answer to question 19). We need more resources to invest in the communities that need them with tailored, targeted solutions.
- 2) Implement ethnic studies district wide (see my answer to question 23). My kids attend John Stanford, one of the schools with the highest proportion of students and faculty of color in the district. I've seen this program work and it needs to be scaled.
- 3) Invest in mental health as an essential service (see my answer to question 19). We cannot adequately address racism if we do not address the mental health crisis. There are significant disparities between BIPOC communities and white communities in their access to quality mental health services. Research shows that 50% of those incarcerated have mental health needs and issues. This is seminal to breaking the school to prison pipeline.
- 4) Implement common sense, humane reforms. Further, I will seek to continue work of the current board on ending isolation and restraint tactics used by educators. We must end this for all students, but especially for our special education students. A disproportionate number of special education students are BIPOC and devastatingly, BIPOC special education students are at greatest risk for entering the school to prison pipeline.

**30. What should schools and school districts do to support the physical and mental health of all students; including LGBTQ+ students and students with disabilities? Please provide specific examples. Also, what actions would you take to remedy student access to and pay inequity among school nurses, paraeducators, and school office staff?**

I am a Disabled American who has suffered from hearing loss since an early age, and I am now the parent of a child who suffers from a similar condition with the added complexity of epilepsy. My daughter is an amazing, strong and passionate learner who will go on to do great things. She is receiving excellent support from SPS teachers and staff, far beyond what I got when I was a kid. She's getting this because I'm advocating for her at every turn, and because her needs are well understood and accepted.

We should be proud of how we can accommodate students like Elise, but also need to make sure that all students who need such accommodation get what they need, even when those needs are complex and perhaps not universally accepted.

As director, I would

- 1) Ensure all students have their basic needs met: continue investing in nutritional support, including over weekends and school breaks, double down on Internet access and provide native-language technical support
- 2) Make special provisions for students experiencing homelessness, as SPS must do its part in combating this growing emergency. This will include being more flexible on transportation, setting up remote learning facilities in shelters, and ensuring teachers are trained on how to support such students
- 3) Establish mental health as an essential service. It's shameful that in many buildings we have to ask parents for donations to support counselors and nurses. This leads to low pay and instability of employment that makes it impossible for them to do their jobs. These critical positions must be fully funded and paid well.
- 4) Make diverse hiring a priority, including teachers with LGBTQ+ backgrounds and people with disabilities. Just like for our BIPOC students, our LGBTQ+ and disabled students need to be exposed to positive role models

**31. What would you do to advocate for ample and equitable funding for k-12 education including special education, school nurses, counselors, mental health professionals, and paraeducators?**

Investing in equity, transportation and public health will require more funding. I believe our community is ready to make that investment. In my capacity serving on the superintendent's parent advisory council and as a PTSA president, I have spent many hours advocating, in partnership with other parents and stakeholders, in local and state forums for ample and equitable funding for K-12 education services. I will utilize my platform as school board director to drive urgency to our funding needs.

We need to pursue all sources of funding, starting with the following

- Additional allocation of Federal COVID-19 relief funds and other grants to fund pilot programs where needed
- Philanthropic funding to fund pilots where federal funds are insufficient
- Lobby with the state to change the formula for allocating funding, especially transportation funding
- Once programs are demonstrated to be successful, we can begin to explore a revised an increased local school levy with increased funding for equity and mental health

**32. Has the disruption of regular schooling and introduction of distance learning in the last year caused you to re-evaluate any aspect of traditional instruction and the structure of schooling? Are there changes you would like to see implemented?**

The pandemic has exposed many aspects of inequity in our schooling system which we now must address. At the same time, it has shown us how our teachers and staff are able to rise to



the opportunity of using technology in new and innovative ways. I will never cease to be amazed by how quickly our teachers pivoted, and how readily our students adopted.

Going forward, I would like to see the following changes implemented

- Creation of a virtual option school for students and families who wish to remain remote, temporarily or indefinitely
- Greater investment in transportation, addressing the root cause why many families have been unable to return to in-person
- Creation of a public health emergency plan, so we are not caught flat footed next time
- Creating some high school virtual classes, so students can attend desirable classes from other schools across the district
- Investing mental health as an essential service, to assist with the recovery from Covid and beyond