

2020 AISD Trustee Candidate Forum on Magnet Education

sponsored by The Parents and Friends of the Liberal Arts and Science Academy

Candidate Written Responses

October 11th, 2020



Four of the nine seats on the Austin Independent School District school board are up for general election on Nov. 3, 2020.

- **District 2:** Adolphus "Andy" Anderson, Ofelia Maldonado Zapata, & John McKiernan-Gonzalez
- **District 3:** Kevin Foster
- **District 5:** Lynn Boswell, Jennifer Littlefield, & Piper Stege Nelson
- **At-Large Position 8:** Jared D. Breckenridge, Mike Herschenfeld, Noelita L. Lugo, & Leticia Moreno Caballero

A runoff election will be held on December 15, 2020, if no candidate wins a majority of votes cast in the general election.

We are very fortunate to have these candidates attend our forum! However, we are limited in how many questions we can ask within a reasonable time frame.

In order to provide the most information to our community, we requested all candidates provide a brief biography and answer two questions. The following are their responses.

Written Questions

Biography. Please include a brief bio that we can include with the written questions below to be distributed at the forum to all attendees.

Question 1. Why are you running for an AISD Trustee Position?

Question 2. Why do you think you are the best candidate for families with children in magnet programs?

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Written Questions | 1 |
| Trustee District 2 – Andy Anderson | 3 |
| Trustee District 2 – Ofelia Maldonado Zapata | 4 |
| Trustee District 2 – John McKiernan-Gonzalez | 5 |
| Trustee District 3 – Kevin Foster | 6 |
| Trustee District 5 – Lynn Boswell | 7 |
| Trustee District 5 – Jennifer Littlefield | 8 |
| Trustee District 5 – Piper Nelson | 9 |
| Trustee At-Large District 8 – Jared D. Breckenridge | 10 |
| Trustee At-Large District 8 – Mike Herschenfeld | 11 |
| Trustee At-Large District 8 – Noelita L. Lugo | 12 |
| Trustee At-Large District 8 – Leticia Moreno Caballero | 13 |

Trustee District 5 – Lynn Boswell

Lynn Boswell is an experienced and passionate advocate for Austin’s public schools, families, educators, and students. She has a law degree from UT and works as a documentary filmmaker. She is also the mom of an LASA senior and a 2017 LASA graduate who’s now a senior in college. As president of the Austin Council of PTAs (2018-20), Lynn worked closely with families, teachers and other employees, and community groups as a collaborative leader, careful listener, and creative problem solver. ACPTA won a National PTA award for diversity and inclusion in 2020 and a national advocacy award in 2019. The ACPTA has also offered support and advocacy during the Covid-19 pandemic. Lynn’s volunteer service in AISD began in District 5 with the Casis PTA and includes experience on the District Advisory Council. She is an effective voice for progressive policies that improve the lives of children and families, through the city of Austin’s Juvenile Justice Workgroup, the Travis County Census 2020 Complete Count Committee, and Just Fund It TX, which advocates for increased school funding statewide.

Question 1

I’m running for AISD Trustee to ensure that Austin schools reflect Austin’s values. Nothing matters more to Austin’s future than what happens in our schools.

My own children have enjoyed a fantastic education in AISD – with excellent academics, hands-on learning, a range of extracurricular options, talented and caring teachers, and campuses that value relationships with students and embrace families as partners. As a five-year board member and past president of the Austin Council of PTAs, I have spent time on more than 80 AISD campuses, talking with families and educators, and seeing first-hand what works and what AISD can do better. AISD has powerful strengths and deep inequities. We need to build on what’s working and address what’s not.

- We need to focus on advocacy at the state level to increase school funding, decrease AISD’s recapture, fight the proliferation of charters, push back against high-stakes standardized testing, and demand that TEA allow our community to decide what’s best for AISD during Covid.
- We need to support an equity audit to give us a shared understanding of what the issues are, so we can work together to figure out how to address them.
- We need to expect and support high academic expectations for all students, beginning with a strong and accessible Pre-K program and continuing through graduation. Support needs to include strong extracurriculars and a focus on mental health. Students on every campus are capable of great things and need the opportunity to reach their potential.
- We need to see all families as partners with something of value to give.
- We need to work to retain and attract families by working with our community to strengthen neighborhood schools and by strengthening programs like magnets, Dual Language, Early College High School, CTE and other options that keep families in AISD.

Question 2

I am a magnet parent, with personal experience of being deeply involved at both our neighborhood elementary school and also in two schools with magnet programs. I am running to serve all students in District 5 and district-wide. Magnets are one part of our district – a part that I support and understand well. I also recognize that magnets are just one among many excellent options that AISD’s students and families have. CTE, Dual Language, Early College High School and other choice programs are one of AISD’s strengths. And I recognize that within AISD, neighborhood schools are an option, too – something that families are actively choosing. I am running to ensure that every AISD school is a choice that families are excited to make.

I have direct experience with magnets through both of my children – a son who graduated in 2017 and a daughter who’s a LASA senior this year. Both of my children chose Kealing’s magnet for middle school, and both chose LASA for high school. Their interests and needs are very different. And it has been an excellent experience for both – socially and academically.

I also have experience as a Kealing PTA board member, a LASA CAC member, and a mentor in LASA’s application mentor program. I have seen both Kealing and LASA evolve with time – with admissions changes designed to increase access and equity, and with a growing list of specialized options in AISD at both middle school and high school for students who want something different from their neighborhood schools.

I have strong relationships with magnet parents and teachers, and dozens of magnet students and graduates. I have equally strong connections to students, educators, and families who are deeply committed to their neighborhood schools. I am ready to serve both, celebrate both, and strengthen both.

ZOOM INFO FOR POST FORUM QUESTIONS:

<http://bit.ly/LYNNforAISD-magnetzoom>

Notes:
