

Dane County Democratic Party Candidate Questionnaire

Allison Sorg

Stoughton Area School District Board of Education

<https://www.facebook.com/Allison-Sorg-for-Quality-Schools-684086138321941>

Professional Experience:

Registered Nurse for 16 years

Political/Service Experience:

I have been an elected member of the Stoughton Area School District (SASD) Board of Education for 6 years. Currently, I am the Chair of Education Oversight Committee and serve on the Employee Relations and Long Range Planning Committees.

Why Are You Running In This Election?

I wish to continue to serve SASD and the community so our students are career or college ready upon graduation while being an active steward of our resources

What Are The Three Most Important Issues In Your Race?

1) We continue to face declining enrollment, which given the current State funding formula, means we have less funding. We are facing a looming budget crisis starting next year and may need to go to referendum to meet our budget shortfall. 2) Our District continues to work on diversity, equity, and inclusion to identify biases that are adversely affecting all our students, but particularly our students of color, the economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities.

What Are The Largest Environmental Concerns You Aim To Deal With In Office?

Our hope is to find ways to create more sustainable energy resources for our school districts as well as reduce chemical use in turf management and create green/garden/outdoor learning space for our students.

How Will You Use Your Position To Create More Equitable Opportunities And Help Those Living In Poverty?

I plan to meet with other local officials, particularly in our City Council, to create more affordable housing that builds stronger and more diverse neighborhoods. We have tried this before, but they declined to meet with us on a long-term basis. We are hoping some new members of the Council will provide a more positive relationship.

How Do We Address Racial Inequality?

Many districts are conducting district-wide book reads and we are no exception. We are using this as a way to learn where our biases might be and how to address them. We are also hosting community conversations that address racial inequality for discussion with School Board members leading breakout groups. I attended the WASB Convention and went to as many sessions as possible on racial equity to learn more about other practices that work for other districts. One thing I learned is to actively seek student engagement as they have a different perspective and may be able to inform us adults of new ways to address these concerns.

How will you promote restorative justice and address abusive and racist practices by the police force?

We have a committee right now focused on exactly these issues. We are currently negotiating with the City for our SRO contract and what the SRO is actually expected to do in our schools. Can we use this officer to check welfare and if we keep an SRO, how do we encourage positive relationships with students? We use restorative justice right now in dealing with negative interactions with students. This is a practice that we will continue to use in a consistent manner.

Due to the ongoing economic impact of Coronavirus, many local governments are expecting unprecedented budget shortfalls. What would you prioritize in the budget? Where would you make cuts?

We need to keep all of our STEM, DEI, ELA, ELL, support services for students. We are looking at cuts to languages, music, and some clubs, but are only in the beginning stages of those discussions. What we would need to do is find a way to coordinate with other districts to provide those offerings to create more opportunities for students, not less.

How have you elevated diverse voices in government and public discourse? How would you continue to do so if elected to this office?

We struggle with this because our community is about 92% white. When we have our community conversations, I actively invite and seek out minorities in our community and minority business owners to join us. We have supported a group in our schools that is student-led focusing on equity issues, students of color, LGBTQ issues, and students with disabilities. I want to continue to learn more about my own biases so that I can help our district figure out where we still need work and make that work effective in combating racism. We have a community FB group that I have used in the past to have conversations with the community about

these issues. I strongly believe we have to engage the community in these conversations. We are no where near where we need to be regarding this. An example: someone distributed KKK flyers to some of our rural community members last year! We have to stay open and up front about this and not be afraid to engage the community so that we can actively combat racism in our community.

What Are The Largest Transportation Issues You Wish To Work On And How Will You Address Them?

Our district is large and requires long travel times for some students who are bused. Additionally, we have one private school in our district that through Title 1, we are required to provide transportation for their students. A few years ago, we fought off a privatization plan for our school bus drivers and retain our own staff. I would like to learn more about ways to keep these drivers as well as create new jobs in our community through a possible bus driver training support program.

Any Other Issues/Topics You Wish To Discuss?

The current state of our Legislature is beyond frustrating. Our funding formula is terrible. We appear to be "property-rich" because of all the houses on the lake. But we have 36% of our kids in poverty and declining enrollment so we are struggling to fund our district education next year. And they just overturned the mask mandate. Fortunately, we have voted to retain the right to have students wear masks to school in our district.