

Dane County Democratic Party Candidate Questionnaire

Maia Pearson
Board of Education seat 1
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Professional Experience:

I am the Wisconsin Director of Rise, Inc. a student led non-profit fighting for student basic needs and tuition free desegregated 4 and 2 year universities colleges. Previously I was a Revenue Agent at the Wisconsin Department of Revenue and to the my work at the department, I worked at the Boys & Girls Club as the Accountability Manager and in other roles.

Political/Service Experience:

I was raised in an activist household, where advocating for your community was the norm. I served on the Wisconsin National & Community Services Board as the student representative in 2009; co-founded a grassroots group to ensure South Madison did not become a food desert. In 2020, I ran a grassroots campaign for Madison Board of Education, seat 6. I am a member of the South Metropolitan Planning Council, the Vilas Master Plan Resident Resource Group, a City development steering committee, representing the voices of Burr Oaks and Bram's Addition neighborhoods. I've serve as the commissioner for the MLK Jr. Humanitarian Award and a Executive Committee Member of the City of Madison Police Civilian Oversight Board.

Why Are You Running In This Election?

My running for school board has not changed since last year. My reasons for running continue to be:

- (1) Advocate and ensure that the education system is equitable and safe for students and their families, and teachers. That the board and district reflect the students and families it serves.
- (2) Seek more and diverse investment of the community in our schools.
- (3) I am running because I want to change the narrative about our students as underachieving by focusing on the incredible work of teachers in our district who help students master the content and their own learning process.

What Are The Three Most Important Issues In Your Race?

I believe the most important issues in my race are: (1) Covid 19, virtual learning, and returning to in person instruction. (Over all safety for students and teachers)

- (2) Achievement/Opportunity gap and reimagining our schools in an equitable way.
- (3) Application of the funding of our passed Referendum

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

My goals around the environment have not changed. I want to make sure that we are accountable for our goals we set as a district. We have a chance, due to the pandemic, to really reimagine all aspects of our schools.

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

This issue is not a theory, it is an ongoing lived experience for me. Therefore, I bring a common sense approach to addressing equitable opportunities and poverty.

How Do We Address Racial Inequality?

I believe that we must take a multifaceted approach. Racial inequity shows up in our education systems, in the economy, and in almost every system with in our state and country. To proactively address racial inequality all systems have to be addressed. We have to analyze our own culture, before we can understand another.

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

The district took the first steps by removing officers from our schools.

We must ensure to find a restorative justice initiatives that have practical applications. There are a couple of excellent restorative justice initiatives in Madison with excellent results. Student-led justice initiatives can have a much greater impact than something that is not a part of the school and student community.

Safety is improved with trust and communication among students, community members, and schools. The more we work together, the better outcomes we have.

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?

At this time, we have yet to see the impacts of Covid 19 on our budget, however I have concerns of budget inefficiencies.

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

I believe that as an elected official, being a servant leader is important. A servant leader is committed to the growth of people and building community.

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

As stated last year, I wanted to work on how we can limit the distance in which children are traveling to get to school. Transportation is an equity issue that our city must address, for example: rapid transit.

Any Other Issues/Topics You Wish To Discuss?

I do not have any at this time. Thank you.