

Dane Dems Endorsement Questionnaire

Thank you for seeking an endorsement from the Dane County Democratic Party. You do not need to answer all of the questions below, but please answer all of the ones you feel are pertinent to your campaign. We will ask more detailed questions and followups during our interview, if we choose to have one, so feel free to answer these questions as briefly or thoroughly as you desire. These answers will be shared in full with our membership before they vote on your endorsement.

Email *

vote4badri@gmail.com

Candidate name *

Badri Lankella

Position you are running for (include municipality) *

MMSD School District Seat #6 (City of Madison)

Campaign website

badrilankella.com

Professional Experience *

Father of two High school students currently enrolled in Vel Phillips Memorial High School, kids went to MMSD public schools all their life, actively involved in kids PTO and coached various school clubs such as 4H, Lego Leagues, soccer, etc., actively involved in all school family activities.

Completed education in Civil Engineering, Computer Engineering, and masters in business administration. Over 25 years of experience in administration in various private and public sectors. Last 20 years working at the Wisconsin State Department of Natural Resources as Architect helping the public connect with the state government.

Political/Service Experience *

- Serving on various committees and boards for non-profit organizations and the city of Madison.

Over 20 years of experience in organizing and coaching regional contests at North South Foundation and currently serving as regional director for the north south foundation.

- Last 3 years serving on the Transportation Policy and Planning Board, Joint Campus Area Committee, and a few subcommittees for the city of Madison.
- Last 5 years serving as Treasurer and board member of a Neighborhood association in West Madison
- Until last year also served as an Executive board member for Dane Dems
- Ran for City Council District 7 in 2019.

Why are you running for this seat? *

I strongly believe in community service and giving back to the community. Serving on the school board I saw an opportunity to contribute and make a positive impact on future generations. Over the years, being engaged with my children, and communicating with teachers and the administration, I have learned about the many wonderful qualities of our school system, and have identified areas for improvement.

With my experience successfully serving in boards and administration for over 20 years, balancing budgets, and creating collaborative and competitive organizations am the best fit for the needs of the current board of education.

Education is the top priority in our family and we have always been involved in educational volunteer work where ever possible. In the past, my city council run has more MMSD issues, from transportation to equitable and competitive educational institutions for the city of Madison.

I took up my first task by joining the transportation board for the city and working on various projects for public safety along with kid's safety, vision zero, green streets, BRT are only a few examples.

The second task now is to make sure educators and the education system are not vilified by the political system. This is a time when we need to provide more resources to our educational system. There is staff burnout and turnover if this issue is not handled now, it is going cause more dropouts from schools which are going cause more funding dropouts and it is going continue to deteriorate until there is no turning back.

I want to put every effort to reverse this trend and make MMSD the top school district in the nation that everyone wants to send their kids to. I want people to migrate to the city of Madison because we have the best schools in the nation.

What are the three most important issues in your race? *

1. Collaboration

We've got a divided board, disconnected relations between administration and staff, the political division is vilifying educators and the whole education system which is creating more disconnect from the public. I've got a proven record of community building and bringing people together to accomplish common goals. We can only succeed with collaboration, I'll make sure we'll have more collaboration with MMSD moving forward.

2. Competitive

We are in a downward spiral with staff turnovers, staff shortages, funding shortages, and dropping enrollments with migration out of the district. We need to work on attracting the best educators and providing proper funding to programs that will bring students and families back to our district. We need to be competitive in every aspect from educators, staff, programs, and pupils. I have got a proven record as regional director and administrator of non-profit organizations in retention of the best resources and making these organizations the best in the nation.

3. Capital

MMSD not managing capital and budgets properly, budgetary challenges need to be evaluated, there are decisions made that are not satisfactory to anyone and we keep hearing more decisions are coming. I want to use my administration experience to make sure the right calls are made to provide all staff resources we need, all program needs are met and make sure MMSD is listed as the best school in the nation

What are the largest environmental concerns you aim to deal with in office?

1. Clean Water
 2. Solar Homes
 3. Global Warming
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How will you use your position to create more equitable opportunities and help those living in poverty?

1. Create Affordable and Accessible Housing
 2. Providing Quality Health care
 3. Free Vocational Training and Transportation
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What will you do to address racial inequality?

1. Strengthen legal enforcement on racial and ethnic discrimination
 2. Reduce residential segregation
 3. Special consideration to minority and Women in Education, Job training and Employment
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How will you promote restorative justice and address racially biased policing?

I believe in restorative justice, it existed within our society for ages but keeps transforming with time. Five key principles of Restorative Justice never changed, and they are very crucial in addressing issues and keeping a people-first approach. Restorative justice allows the impacted parties to talk about what happened, how they are feeling about it now, the impact it had on everyone, and ultimately what can be done to make it as right as possible. The restorative approach can help school communities avoid the need for exclusionary discipline and reduce repeat offenses.

5 R's of Restorative Justice

Relationship: The principle here is that, if ever there is a need for Restorative Justice, it's because a relationship has been harmed in some way. The aim is to help repair this harm, giving the harmer a safe space to take responsibility and make amends.

Respect: This principle refers to how respect allows for a safe experience for everyone involved in the Restorative Justice process. In this case, respect involves listening to the other person's perspective, whether we agree with it, and behaving in a way that allows the RJ process to play out safely for everyone.

Responsibility: The Responsibility principle refers to how the harmer and the harmed must take responsibility for their part in the harm if there is any. Each party must be honest with themselves and look deeply to see if they did have a part in the incident, even if they were the harmed person.

Repair: The Repair principle refers to how the harmer is supposed to repair as much harm as they can, whilst still acknowledging that it may not all be able to be repaired. The repair carried out by the harmer should be able to resolve feelings of anger and revenge from the harmed and help the harmer to regain feelings of respect for both themselves and others.

Reintegration: The final principle, Reintegration, refers to how the community should allow the harmer to accept their part in the harm and reintegrate back into that community with trust.

How will you improve the public health of our community in your position?

Invest resources to implement health and safety guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to keep students and educators safe;
Improve ventilation in schools, purchase personal protective equipment, and obtain additional physical space (e.g., mobile classroom units) to promote physical distancing in classrooms;
Hire additional school personnel, including nurses and custodial staff, to help schools provide healthy environments for learning;
Implement strategies to meet the social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs of students hit hardest by the pandemic, including through evidence-based interventions and critical services; and
Provide for physical distancing and safety protocols on school buses.

What are the largest transportation issues you wish to work on and how will you address them?

Currently serving in the Transportation Policy and Planning Board for city of Madison and Joint Campus Area Committee as Transportation Member for UW Madison.

Helping implement Vision Zero, Green Streets, BRT, and many more transportation improvement projects.

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

As a community volunteer and leader, I've elevated diverse voices from several communities within the city of Madison for over 20 years. As part of my existing board memberships in other organizations, I do listen to their issues and understand their concerns. Hosting community gatherings with students and families is crucial in gathering voices from the community. As a BOE member, I'll expand the community outreach programs to constantly communicate with families about issues. Listening to and identifying the root cause is the first step. A diverse team of teachers, students, parents, and community-based organizations that includes many voices broadens your perspective and lends legitimacy to recommendations for change

Any other issues/topics you wish to discuss?
