

CANDIDATE FORUM

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MOBB UNITED
 MOMS OF BLACK BOYS UNITED
 FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

 OUR SCHOOLS... OUR EXCELLENCE!
 Demanding Excellence in Education
**Candidate: Chrisdelyn Kelly Lyles, District 4****On Candidate Backgrounds, Roles and Responsibilities of the Board and Education Issues and Needs**

1. What do you see as the role of the school board and how has your background prepared you to fulfill this role? The role of the school board is to support policies that cultivate a quality learning environment for our students, as well as, oversee the budget by financing resources that invest in the education of our students and add to the value of our teachers. In addition, the

the School Board has the responsibility to hold our Superintendent accountable for improving and maintaining a system that provides quality education to all students. For over 15 years, I have served as an educator, most of those years were right here in our district. This opportunity afforded me a frontline view of the needs of both our students to learn and our teachers to be valued.

2. What are the top two challenges facing public education in our city? lack of highly certified teachers in every classroom and the adoption of the Zero Tolerance policies.

3. What are two needs that you consider priority for the school board to address? more resources, training, and pay for our teachers; more high quality programs for Pre-K3 and Pre-K.

4. The School Board only has authority as whole. What skills or traits do you possess that will contribute to the effective operation of the board as a whole? The key to ANY group being successful is respecting all members involved while staying focused on a unified goal. I have had the privilege of working with numerous teams, over the years, to stimulate a successful learning environment for our students using this one principle.

5. What responsibilities, if any, should school systems assume for addressing societal challenges such as poverty, homelessness, racial disparities and mental health? Our school system should provide ANY resources available to assist our students and their families with issues that stifle a healthy learning environment.

On Specific Issues of Interest to the Urban Congress on African- American Males, Moms of Black Boys United for Social Change, and The Power Coalition

6. Currently of the 18,000 students sent to alternative education sites, 85% of them are African American and 66% of them are male. What is your opinion on the disparities that exist in our school system's alternative education and discipline practices? It is extremely disheartening the large number of minority students, which in fact comprise of the majority of our district, losing instructional hours as a result of the consequences determined by Zero Tolerance policies. The alarming number of students being suspended and expelled reflects disconnect the system has to the communities in which we serve.

7. Do you oppose or support zero tolerance policies that exclude children from the classroom? I oppose ANY policy that supports students' loss of instructional time.

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8. If elected, what specific actions will you take to support schools and school districts to refocus their resources and energy away from harsh discipline and toward restorative practices to address conflicts? My first goal is to revisit any current policies supporting Zero Tolerance practices within our school district in an effort to adjust those policies to enforce our system take more restorative approaches towards our students on every campus. In addition, I'd like to research ways to provide EVERY campus with a team of mental health professionals specializing in dealing with child and adolescent issues in an effort to promote healthy mental and emotional environments for both teachers and students.

9. Do you support or oppose increasing the presence of law enforcement officers in schools? As the number of campus shootings has increased, I'm in support of law enforcement officers in schools.

10. Do you oppose or support mandatory continuing implicit bias training and de-escalation training for educators and school resource officers? I whole-heartedly support implicit bias training and de-escalation training for all faculty and staff on campus.

11. If elected, what specific actions will you take to support schools and school districts to provide the trainings necessary to equip teachers to support a diverse student body? As a board member, I am limited to only being able to support policies and budget approvals for necessary resources in implementing a cultivated environment promoting diversity among student bodies on campuses. However, as a parent, educator, and advocate, I would connect with the communities to inquire about the concerns and shortcomings that hinder these type of environments to currently exist. Bringing this information to my team members on the board, we would then have a better understanding, as a unit, to make more effective moves toward accomplishing an environment that cultivates a more diversified student body per campus.

12. Support for high quality early childhood is driven by research studies showing that children who participate in such programs can do vastly better in school and in their careers later in life. Do you oppose or support placing a tax proposition on the ballot that would pay for "universal early childhood education" in Baton Rouge from birth to age four? I fully support a tax that would provide funding for providing quality educational options for children under 4 years of age.

13. If elected, what specific actions will you take to ensure "universal early childhood education tax proposition is placed on the ballot? Community awareness is key in any bill or law being passed. I am compelled to educate communities on the current and very bleak situation parents face in educating children under 4 years of age. In addition, our communities knowing the benefits of early onset education.

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14. Racism is perhaps the most elusive, penetrating, and permeating challenge in our society. Since racism is an institutional problem, it needs to be solved through institutional change. When we see that our institutions have shown that they can operate in a way that serves the needs of all people equitably it makes it possible to see that racism can be eliminated. Racism was built into our system, and anything that was built can be dismantled. We must see to it that our institutions rise to the challenge of solving racism. If elected, would you participate in Dialogue on Race Louisiana's Original Series, an important step in a journey toward enlightenment, understanding and the elimination of racism from our society? **Yes, I would participate in Dialogue on Race Original Series if elected.**

15. Would you oppose or support a measure to require the school board and key school board system leadership to participate in the Dialogue on Race Original Series? **No I would not support forcing anyone to talk about racism. Racism is a prevalent issue within our system. NO ONE should have to be forced to speak on it, especially an educational leader. The lack of willingness to speak on this issue is louder than any voice spoken. When people show you who they are... believe them.**

16. Do you believe it is necessary to examine the history curriculum to ensure the curriculum is reflective of "the people's history" as expressed by organizations such as the Zinn Education Project? **I will have to do more research on this before I answer.**

17. If elected, would you oppose or support utilization of such educational resources? **More research is needed.**

18. What do you think is the role of the community in school system matters? **Our communities are our system's biggest resource in the cultivation of educational environments as they are our most valuable stakeholders. No decision in our schools nor with our children should be made, as it relates to education without the input or vote of our communities in which we serve.**

19. The School Board has a policy that parent and community engagement must be a priority for schools in East Baton Rouge. What are some specific strategies that the board can do to support schools in the development and implementation of family engagement practices? **Board members simply need to show up and be active in the connection between schools, faculty, and the communities in which we serve.**

20. What, if anything, do you believe the school board and school system, should be doing to address the increasing number of low performing schools in certain parts of our city? **The School Board needs to take the necessary steps to ensure every classroom is provided with a highly qualified teacher well trained in the area being taught. In addition, all schools should be functioning in high quality building with updated technology ACTIVELY being used in all classrooms. We need to provide highly certified staff in the area of mental health to address the stressors of students and teachers regularly. The School Board also needs to increase accountability of the policies implemented as well as those appointed for the implementation.**

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21. Do you support more local accountability for the use of ESSA funds in producing better education outcomes in struggling schools? More specifically, do you support the school system annually issuing an ESSA Report to the public that shows how ESSA funds were budgeted and spent, what outcomes were achieved with the use of those funds, and the extent to which achievement outcomes did or did not improve for African American males? *I am in full support of holding ESSA accountable for its progress within our students by producing annual reports.*

22. Data shows there are significant disparities in key indicators of student success between African American males and other subgroups. These indicators include elementary and middle school achievement, high school graduation rates, ACT scores, Advanced Placements, TOPS awards, industry-based credentials, and school suspension and expulsions. What can the school system do to address these inequities? *It is imperative that the school system takes frequent inventory of the needs and concerns of the communities in which each serves. These issues are often negative effects of academic achievement among our inner city schools. Among discovering these circumstances, the school system needs to actively seek to alleviate these needs by providing the necessary resources to ensure teachers can meet each student where they are and inspire growth.*

23. What specifically should our school system be doing to ensure that not only do more African-American males complete high school but that they are connected to postsecondary opportunities? *The mental health of our African American males MUST be addressed.*

24. Eighty-two percent of EBR students qualify for free and reduced lunch due to their economic status. In a report released by Together Baton Rouge, in 2017, East Baton Rouge Parish sacrificed \$69.6M in property taxes due to Industrial Tax Exemption Programs (ITEP). \$28.1M of this revenue could have been allocated to the East Baton Rouge parish school district. Do you support or oppose ITEP? *As it stands, no.*