

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: Evelyn Ware- Jackson, District 5****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 school board's role has changed by acts of the legislature that have decreased the power of school boards significantly and has added micromanagement laws. Our role is to hire the supt., require certain deliverables and hold him accountable for the district plan for a successful school system.

2. What are the top two challenges facing public education in our city? Lack of participation of middle class and low performing traditional neighborhood schools.

3. What are two needs that you consider priority for the school board to address? Practices to remedy the problem low performing students and the need to begin a supt search in 2019.

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? I'm a bridge builder; I can be effective without being offensive; As an ebr parent I have empathy for the needs of parents; As a community developer I understand and encourage the board to keep the community involved in decisions affecting their neighborhoods; As an advocate for economic development I understand that it's important to have good schools to attract and maintain new businesses with new families to the city.

5. What responsibilities, if any, should school systems assume for addressing societal challenges such as poverty, homelessness, racial disparities and mental health? School systems should assume a shared responsibility for addressing these issues along with other institutions.

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? Our district is 85% minority so the high number of minorities is not surprising but with 2/3 being African American males there is a need to restructure the use of funds in proposition 2 of the tax plan that is dedicated to alternative ed and discipline centers. As board president I recommended we ask MetroMorphosis for assistance as we consider recommendations for changes. The district now has an MOU with MetroMorphosis in place.

7. Do you oppose or support zero tolerance policies that exclude children from the classroom? I have encouraged the supt and attorney to revisit these type policies. I oppose policies and others that help keep kids behind in the classroom and add to the drop out rate.

8. If elected, what specific actions will you take to sport schools and school districts to refocus their resources and energy away from harsh discipline and toward restorative practices to address conflicts? As a current school board member I have asked for this for some time and happy to report that we are applying such practices in a pilot through ESSA.

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9. Do you support or oppose increasing the presence of law enforcement officers in schools? *I oppose an increase in law enforcement officers in schools. We need them on the streets, not on the hallways.*

10. Do you oppose or support mandatory continuing implicit bias training and de-escalation training for educators and school resource officers? *I support it in the schools and for officers on the streets.*

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? *I will encourage the supt and board to dedicate a percentage of the budget for professional development to this area.*

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? *Yes I would support going to the voters for this but there must be more effort placed on accessibility of our current early childhood programs to people who live in the neighborhoods where services are provided to get better buy in from the community. We also need a plan B to explore successful partnerships in other cities.*

13. If elected, what specific actions will you take to ensure "universal early childhood education tax proposition is placed on the ballot? *Garner support from other board members, district leaders, community leaders, business leaders and be willing to make the motion. This is very high on my list of goals for the district.*

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? *I participated before and would participate again. In speaking with other board members about my experience, I found some interested and would be open to doing this and some who had misconceptions of the program and its intention. With this survey, we may be able to get more interest. I'd suggest that the sessions be mixed with other groups and not just board members.*

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? *I would support a measure that would make it very difficult for the board and staff to say no to the benefits of this program. If making it a "requirement" does not infringe in one's rights and does not inflict another mandatory requirement that is not financially supported I would support the requirement and take it as a favor in helping me to get each one to the sessions.*

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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? **Yes**

17. If elected, would you oppose or support utilization of such educational resources? **I support this fully now and have had conversations with some in leadership curriculum roles of my concerns of the effects of having very little “real” history taught to our youth and the need to review what our kids are being taught. I had not heard of the Zinn Ed. Project before this survey but have looked at the site and think we can get some traction on this. It’s vitally important for our youth and even.**

not so young, like our teachers to know and appreciate where we’ve been even if it’s a hard lesson.

18. What do you think is the role of the community in school system matters? **The school system belongs to the community and should be guided by the needs of all parts of the community. The school system has improved in community engagement since 2010 but there’s lots of room for improvement. Ignoring the needs and requests of some in the community and quickly addressing needs and requests of others has caused problems that have grown beyond the school system.**

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? **PTO type organizations should be mandatory in all schools with proper supports for the effort to develop them. Transportation and school distance are issues for many parents to be engaged in their child’s school. It’s been at least 15 years since the district did a comprehensive attendance line adjustment across the district. It would help bring students closer to their homes, resolve some transportation issues, possibly save transportation funding and capacity vs. enrollment issues as well.**

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? **Wean ourselves off of the idea that a good school has to be a magnet school. We have improvements planned for some existing magnets but more resources and partnerships should be directed to traditional neighborhood schools so they can attract neighborhood families like a magnet without being a magnet. Efforts from the ESSA plan pilots should be duplicated in all low performing schools. The hardest part for action is that some should be closed or consolidated but there is always a public outcry for keeping them open.**

21. Do you support more local accountability for the use of ESSA funds in producing better education outcomes in struggling schools? **Yes**

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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? [Increase opportunities and access to early childhood education; increase opportunities to participate in the arts; introduce STEAM based programs early; increase opportunities for middle school kids to visit colleges and universities; educate parents of the financial advantages of taking advanced placements courses; give early tours of C-TEC.](#)

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? [Introduce the opportunities in middle school and give examples of job salaries available to them through postsecondary opportunities compared to k-12 only.](#)

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? [I support ITEP with the changes in place from the governor and on an individually considered manner](#)