

# **Kingston City School District Board of Education Candidate Survey 2021**

## **Introduction shared with the candidates:**

Dear Board of Education Candidates, we are a coalition of students, parents, grandparents, guardians, community organizations, and members of the KCSD community. We envision a KCSD that teaches and serves all students equitably, celebrates our racial, ethnic, economic, and cultural diversity, is built on open communication with the community, and supports Kingston's communities of color. As candidates for the Board of Education, we would like to hear from you on issues that are critical to serving our students and building a stronger, more equitable KCSD.

Please respond to the questions below by Wednesday, May 12 at 8pm. We will share the responses broadly with the KCSD community. Thank you for communicating your priorities and interests with our community.

Contact: Charlotte Adamis, [charlotteadamis@gmail.com](mailto:charlotteadamis@gmail.com)

**Responses start on the next page**

**Name: Herbert A. Lamb**

Why are you running for school board?

I am a retired educator and feel that the district is moving in the correct direction with an emphasis on Social / Emotional wellness, restorative practices and narrowing the gap in graduation rates. I want to give back to the students and community that gave me my first teaching position at 21 years old fresh out of college.

What has been your involvement with KCSD schools? For example, have you volunteered or worked in the district? Please give examples of specific activities or initiatives you have undertaken.

1. Teacher January 1983 - December 2000
2. Building Leadership team both AD and MCM
3. KALP Rep. 9 years at MCM - Was the developer/founder of the Opus 40 Experience
4. PTA - VP MCM and AD (as a Teacher not a parent)
5. Administrative Intern for my SDA as Director of Music
6. Facilitator for the OM (Odyssey of the Mind - Only Team from Kingston)I would:
7. Had a select chorus (The MCM Highlights) which was an evening graded class. This allowed for student whom could not schedule an ensemble in the regular day to be a part of the program.
8. Two years on the Board of Education
9. I currently sit on Audit and Finance, Facilities, and the Policy Committees.

What do you believe is the most pressing issue confronting KCSD?

Social and emotional wellness of our students and staff. The pandemic has taken a toll on both. We need to provide the services to stabilize this. Food, shelter, clothing, academic education and mental health are all items we and our community partners need to address. Getting our district up and running in some sense of normality for our students and staff to benefit the Social/emotional wellness.

My second thing would be how we fund or don't fund education.

How do you intend to build a culture and practice of consulting with the community and teachers in KCSD decision-making?

We used to have Coffee and Conversation meetings with different groups and 2-4 members of the board; however, it became difficult to get groups to schedule them. I also like the idea of Board forums where the KTF would have the opportunity, to schedule through the union, a chance to voice their concerns and needs. Open line of communication. The saddest part of this is BOE members were out numbering the community participants in the last three Coffee and conversations I attended.

What do you see as the role of the Board of Education in terms of oversight of the administration? Will you commit to holding the administration accountable to students, teachers, and the community?

I do have to say, no superintendent is perfect; however, I believe that this Superintendent is the best match we have ever had in Kingston. It is his vision which has passed every budget since he arrived, upgraded ALL FACILITIES, increased our graduation rate, brought social and emotional wellness awareness, restorative practices and narrowing the gap. I will not micro-manage the Superintendent but I will continue to question things which I feel contrary to the community and community partners wishes.

What reforms within KCSD do you believe are most important to better serve BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students?

We need to look at scheduling and selection of students for advanced programs, address disproportionate number of referrals for students of color, continue to educate the staff through book studies, in-service training and peer observation. Include books, materials and media which includes and deals with the students' culture.

How would you address disproportionate suspensions and disciplinary actions against BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students?

Teachers need to be given in-service training, sensitivity training, and I believe that the book studies are effective ways to get people to consider looking at themselves. The best example I can give is my first month on the BOE we were doing one on So You Want to Talk about Race. I got to one section and really got choked up about it. I immediately sent a message to a group of my students of color whom I had become very close (with them and their parent) and said I hope I never did this and if I did please accept my sincere apology. A side note, one of those students was the first choral

student to attend All-Eastern Jr. High Choir in the mid-Hudson valley and he just graduated with his law degree.

Will you commit to ending KCSD's contract with the Kingston and Ulster Police Departments and all law enforcement, and reinvesting those funds into mental health and community resources for the children in the district? Please answer yes or no and briefly describe your rationale.

No, I want to hear what the community committee has to say and present.

If you were already on the Board of Education in 2020, did you vote in favor of the PILOT for the Kingstonian? If you were not on the Board of Education in 2020, would you have voted in favor of the PILOT for the Kingstonian if you had been on the Board at the time of the vote? Please answer yes or no and briefly describe your rationale.

I voted NO! Pilots take from districts with lower socio-economic status and districts with a large number of students of color. If everyone (especially people who talk about how much they are going to make) would pay their fair share we would all pay less. We should not be giving tax breaks to the top one percent in Ulster County.

If it were up to you to decide how to allocate the \$26.9 million coming to the district, what would you do? Specifically, discuss what staffing, materials, technological, safety, infrastructure, or other needs should be prioritized.

I would:

1. look at what is allowed under the regulations for the money,
2. be careful not to look at items that will not be able to be supported later without pushing the district over the cliff of a super majority vote,
3. look at district data for places of shortfall or need,
4. develop some ideas to be presented at a BOE meeting and let the public comment on the plan with suggestions,
5. take the suggests and work about the feasibility of tweaking or abandoning the plan

Safety / Security is a priority for me. That said, If this would allow us to get rid of the portable classrooms, I would consider that a safety / security / health item. I know you would like to see the SROs removed; however, I could not support that unless we did the enhanced entry model that was proposed at the meeting. Violent crime is up 25% in the city of Kingston and I am worried that that

will spill over into our buildings. In today's world we go through three sets of metal detectors and searches just to get into the Statue of Liberty, Security to get on a plane, an amusement park, a concert, the NY Philharmonic. It is a sad statement on our society. I don't want to go that far in schools; however, we are responsible to keep our staff and students safe. I do not think spending on salaries which we can't support after the grant, technology which we receive aid for or will be useless or outdated in two years is a good way to spend this money. Even if we put a plan out there that you don't agree with during the period of public comment you should voice your ideas and see if there is plan you can sell us on. I am only one voice it takes five to pass anything on the board. I am not afraid of changing my mind if I hear a better idea.

What reforms would you propose to better serve ENL (English as a New Language) students and families?

We need to make them feel welcomed and signage, and everything which is going home should go home in the language of the family. We should consider Saturday or evening classes to assist the parents in communication skills and for us to learn more about their culture. We should include the students' culture in our teaching and learning. we need to engage the parents and get their support (making sure there is a place to study quietly, checking on homework completion. We should be offering supplemental materials in their native language when possible. We should make sure the student and family are receiving all services which they are entitled to with the help of our community partners. Being sure the entire family has food, shelter, clothing and any other essential needs so that the student can be at their best.

**Name: Matthew Branford**

Why are you running for school board?

I want to ensure that all students of our schools receive an equitable education that prepares them for their career goals after graduation and beyond. As a parent, I know that all parents want success for their children. Our graduation rate has increased too slowly, but more importantly, too many KCSD schools need to improve on state and federal measures of student success. Our students of color, students whose families have limited economic means, and students who have learning disabilities need to be ensured that they will receive an equitable education from KCSD. We cannot rest until all students that are educated in Kingston schools are able to achieve their education and career goals. We also want students to return to the Kingston and Ulster areas as adults to raise a family, if they choose.

What has been your involvement with KCSD schools? For example, have you volunteered or worked in the district? Please give examples of specific activities or initiatives you have undertaken.

One of my student teaching placements was at Kingston High School while I earned my Master's degree. My wife is a fourteen year teacher at Kingston High School in Social Studies. My children, Dylan and Delaney, are students at Chambers Elementary.

What do you believe is the most pressing issue confronting KCSD?

The most pressing issues are to maintain a budget that balances the concerns of parents in achieving a high quality of education for all students, ensuring the district is advancing equity for all students, prioritizing the social and emotional development of our children, developing educators' craft and science of learning, exploring new educational technology, and investing in buildings and infrastructure for the future.

How do you intend to build a culture and practice of consulting with the community and teachers in KCSD decision-making?

I believe that many decisions require all stakeholders, that is administration, faculty, staff, parents, students, and community members, to participate in decision making on committees. Therefore, as a board member, where appropriate, I will seek to form committees to get input from a cross-section of the KCSD community.

What do you see as the role of the Board of Education in terms of oversight of the administration? Will you commit to holding the administration accountable to students, teachers, and the community?

The role of the Board of Education is to listen to the community in order to provide the vision to the administration and ensure that the taxpayers money is used effectively, while holding the administration accountable to achieving student success. I will hold the administration to account for educating all of our students equitably.

What reforms within KCSD do you believe are most important to better serve BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students?

I believe that it is important to continue to invest in early childhood education to be sure that students are mastering social-emotional, reading, writing, and math skills in early grades. We can continue to develop and refine curricula to be inclusive of all members of our community. We need to hire more administration and teachers of color, so that our educators reflect the community that they are serving. We need more programs that will keep kids interested in being involved in the school community. By offering more access to college credits in high school, high-interest electives in middle and high school, innovative music programs, quality extra-curricular programs in all schools, and competitive sports programs in the secondary schools, we can keep kids involved in enrichment activities that will benefit them beyond their academics and encourage students to be involved in their school community.

How would you address disproportionate suspensions and disciplinary actions against BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students?

I support the district's programs and training to attempt to address the issue of disproportionate disciplinary practices in the district. Culturally sensitive teaching, restorative practices and the Jefferson Committee's work are positives. However, these reforms are taking a very long time. Our

teachers and administrators need to be flexible and responsive in their disciplinary approach so that they are encouraging learning in students. Simply put, if students do not feel as if the district is equitably and justly serving their needs, they will be less likely to be successful. Alternatively, if students feel connected to the school community and are excited by coursework, they will be empowered by their education. We need to prioritize hiring administrators, teachers, and staff of color. We need to invest in de-escalation training for all administrators, teachers, and staff so that adults know how to defuse a situation before it rises to the level that disciplinary action is required. We need to seek classroom management training for teachers, so that disciplinary referrals are not needed. We need to connect with mental health counselling and social programs in the community so that students who have personal and family emergencies do not fall behind in their education. Introducing choice in student work invigorates student learning, and therefore, we need to train administrators and teachers, and rewrite curriculum to incorporate more student voices in the assignments and methods of assessment. We need to use technology creatively to help our students who are out of in person instruction for extended times fulfill course requirements. We need to expand internet access and provide devices for students who need them. We need to expand programs for tutoring and extra help. We need to reinvest in making sure that at risk students are attending school every day, by re-tasking administration and/or expanding staff that is responsible for student attendance. We need to prepare our students for college and career by expanding access to honors classes and college credit in high school, college and career advising. We need to connect students with BIPOC business, political, and social leaders in the community.

Will you commit to ending KCSD's contract with the Kingston and Ulster Police Departments and all law enforcement, and reinvesting those funds into mental health and community resources for the children in the district? Please answer yes or no and briefly describe your rationale.

All adults that interact with children need to serve the broader educational mandate of KCSD, including School Resource Officers. I want to listen to community input on sworn officers in schools. If the community does not support SROs, the resources should be invested in expanding restorative practices and mental health services in all schools. If the community favors SROs, I believe that we need to re-imagine the role to serve our community and advance our values. I advocate that we ensure that SROs who serve in our schools have training and are leaders in restorative practices, de-escalation strategies and techniques, implicit bias, and mentoring programs to ensure equity in schools. These measures would put KCSD at the forefront of SRO training and practices nationwide.



If you were already on the Board of Education in 2020, did you vote in favor of the PILOT for the Kingstonian? If you were not on the Board of Education in 2020, would you have voted in favor of the PILOT for the Kingstonian if you had been on the Board at the time of the vote? Please answer yes or no and briefly describe your rationale.

I believe that the board's mission is the education of our students and returning a great value for the taxpayers in our community. While the board is not directly involved in economic investment in our community, the board should be responsive and knowledgeable on such matters. I will commit to examining the details of any public and private partnership, if the information is fully presented to the board. It is vital that we remain active in encouraging business investment in our community. Specifically to The Kingstonian project, the administration did not recommend a course of action to the board, and the board was never fully briefed on the project. Where possible, the board should look to city and county leaders for advice on complex investment projects, while listening to community input. It is imperative that should the board need to make a decision, all stakeholders are fully represented.

If it were up to you to decide how to allocate the \$26.9 million coming to the district, what would you do? Specifically, discuss what staffing, materials, technological, safety, infrastructure, or other needs should be prioritized.

In general, grants and government allocations are earmarked for specific types of projects. However, as a board member I would want to invest in technology that will help students learn equitably, teacher training that will ensure that we capture the hearts and minds of our students to engage them in active scholarship, creating small learning communities, partnerships with colleges to increase the availability of college credit that can be earned through coursework, restorative disciplinary practices, mental health counselling, college admissions counselling, visual and performing arts classes, Humanities curricula that serves a diverse student population, and dedicated learning labs for STEAM. In addition, we can also stretch our budget by actively seeking more grants from the state and federal governments and expanding in partnerships with community groups.

What reforms would you propose to better serve ENL (English as a New Language) students and families?

We need to hire more teachers and staff that can teach students who are learning English, give more training to all teachers to know how to instruct students who are learning English, and be sure that a translator who works in the district is available to teachers to facilitate contact home. In addition, it is important to make sure that we have more staff that can serve as liaisons between families and the district to make sure that the students' needs are being met. I want to create partnerships with colleges and universities to help us understand the rapidly changing needs of the families that we serve and anticipate the changes in pedagogy that we will need to make to be sure that our students who are learning English are successful.

**Name: Michele Milgrim**

Why are you running for school board?

I am running for school board because I believe my experience as a mother, teacher and corporate executive can inform positive change in the school district.

What has been your involvement with KCSD schools? For example, have you volunteered or worked in the district? Please give examples of specific activities or initiatives you have undertaken.

I am a mother of 3 girls. My oldest is a Kingston High School Graduate currently in her 2nd year in college, my middle daughter is a High School Senior who is planning to attend NYU Stern School of Business next year and my youngest is a fifth grader at JWB Middle School. I am an active parent in the district. I have served on the Executive Committee for the Kingston Tiger Band Boosters. I am currently the president of the JWB Band Boosters.

What do you believe is the most pressing issue confronting KCSD?

It is becoming increasingly clear to me that the biggest issue confronting KCSD is communication and transparency. The Board of education needs to become a cornerstone for the community facilitating discussion, conversation and most of all, connection. We need to bring together teachers, students, parents, and business partners to have the tough conversations needed to make the decisions that will be in the best interest of the STUDENTS. In order to do this effectively, the Board of Education needs to be trusted by all segments of our community to share information about these decisions quickly and clearly.

How do you intend to build a culture and practice of consulting with the community and teachers in KCSD decision-making?

I would like to see the school board move deeper into the community sharing and participating in community events. Board members need to be present and show representation at school and community activities. Only by investing time in the community and meeting the stakeholders can we

establish a connection and trust that is necessary for conversation. I would like to see a student representative on the board to bring the student's perspective and representation. I would like to reach out to the teacher's union to make sure they have a path directly to the board. I would like to find a way to have a parent representative connected to board activities. And I believe the Board needs to be a better partner in our broader community -- including with our businesses and local governments.

What do you see as the role of the Board of Education in terms of oversight of the administration? Will you commit to holding the administration accountable to students, teachers, and the community?

The Board of Education is the top administrative body in the district. The Superintendent is hired by the Board of Education and is responsible for implementing the policies of the Board. I will commit to holding administration as well as teachers, students, parents and all community members accountable to the highest standards of education our students.

What reforms within KCSD do you believe are most important to better serve BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students?

Our diversity in the district is our greatest strength. But as a woman of Hispanic descent, I am no stranger to inequities within the school system or the business world. As a former Human Resources Representative Bloomberg, LP I have experience working with diversity teams to examine and propose options for tackling these challenges. In addition to consulting with diversity experts, I would like to research and examine the best practices of districts all around the northeast to bring the best programs to the KCSD to advance all students and provide an exemplary education for every student in the district.

How would you address disproportionate suspensions and disciplinary actions against BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students?

There are several programs that would be beneficial to address the disproportionate disciplinary actions against minority students. Programs that include restorative discipline practices, professional development workshops focusing on teacher student relationships, incentives for

positive student behavior and mentoring programs are all initial avenues toward a goal of equitable disciplinary procedures for all students.

Will you commit to ending KCSD's contract with the Kingston and Ulster Police Departments and all law enforcement, and reinvesting those funds into mental health and community resources for the children in the district? Please answer yes or no and briefly describe your rationale.

I believe that a form of the SRO program, with appropriate training and cultural awareness, can add value to the KCSD community if properly monitored and administered. As an active teacher and parent in public schools and a victim of a school hostage and shooting situation as a teen, any potential for violence is extremely concerning. I believe the SRO program can be adjusted to provide the schools not only safety from outside threats, but also the creation of a stronger, more caring and inclusive culture within the school community if carefully crafted with the right individuals able to garner trust and respect in our school communities while the district also embraces restorative justice practices.

If you were already on the Board of Education in 2020, did you vote in favor of the PILOT for the Kingstonian? If you were not on the Board of Education in 2020, would you have voted in favor of the PILOT for the Kingstonian if you had been on the Board at the time of the vote? Please answer yes or no and briefly describe your rationale.

A board member should be active members of the process. As a nonincumbent, I was not afforded the opportunity to seek advice from the Administration as to this vote, or to question the developers regarding their plans. To my knowledge, the Administration never made a public recommendation on that PILOT while the governments of the City and the County fully supported it. It is the school board's responsibility to focus on the education and opportunities for the students which will be my primary goal as a member of the board of education.

If it were up to you to decide how to allocate the \$26.9 million coming to the district, what would you do? Specifically, discuss what staffing, materials, technological, safety, infrastructure, or other needs should be prioritized.

The district needs to make it a priority to bring infrastructure and technology to the students and faculty of the district so all of our students will be better prepared for college and the workforce and also prioritize mental health to help students who have struggled through a very difficult year. Throughout the pandemic our district and students have faced extraordinary hardships but educators, while struggling with change, have been afforded opportunities to embrace new technology and techniques that some students have excelled with. Any one-time infusion of revenue should emphasize a long term strategy for providing students and teachers with access to these critical technologies while also addressing the many mental health issues our students face.

What reforms would you propose to better serve ENL (English as a New Language) students and families?

ENL student programs are a focus to emphasize English language acquisition. These programs generally utilize a content area teacher and ENL/ELL support. Certified ENL teachers are desperately needed to better serve these students at all levels. In addition., non ENL faculty need additional liaison support with assisting and empowering these families.

**Name: Robin Jacobowitz**

Why are you running for school board?

I have served on the KCSD BOE since 2011. As a school community, we've been through a lot in that time; a restructuring of the school district, major construction initiatives for the high school and the administration building, a year of teaching and learning in the pandemic, to name a few. At the same time, we've also accomplished a lot—an increased graduation rate, a newly renovated high school, the creation of a dual-language preschool program, the sale and repurposing of old school buildings. There is always more to be done, and particularly in light of additional federal finds that will be allocated to the district. I'd like to continue to help lead the way.

What has been your involvement with KCSD schools? For example, have you volunteered or worked in the district? Please give examples of specific activities or initiatives you have undertaken.

I have served on the KCSD BOE for 10 years. I am also currently active with the KHS Tiger Band; I manage the communications for that group and the database of participants.

I was also very active in my children's elementary schools. I served as the parent member on the Building Leadership Team for many years at Anna Devine. In collaboration with other Anna Devine parents, I helped found the garden and outdoor learning space there. I wrote and secured a \$5,000 grant from Lowes, worked with a team of parents and teachers to design and build a beautiful garden and outdoor learning space, and then organized parent volunteers to assist teachers with the use of the garden and to ensure the health and vitality of the garden through the spring, summer, and into the fall (lots of weeding and watering!). When Anna Devine closed, the other garden coordinator and I organized an army of volunteers to move the garden and rebuild it at Robert Graves. Once relocated at Graves, I continued to organize volunteers (spring, summer, fall).

What do you believe is the most pressing issue confronting KCSD?

Graduation rate: the district has made great strides in the past 10 years, and we need to continue on this upward trajectory.

Elevating instruction at the elementary schools: additional support for literacy and math, through hands-on learning, at the elementary level.

Ensuring equity: that the enrichment and opportunities that KCSD has to offer are accessible for all students; equitable access to technology and technology infrastructure.

Communication: a strategic communications plan that details all aspects of, and responsibility for, genuine engagement with the multiple communities within KCSD.

How do you intend to build a culture and practice of consulting with the community and teachers in KCSD decision-making?

The district needs to develop mechanisms for reaching out to, and engaging, its multiple constituencies. There are the traditional methods for this – community forums, coffee and conversation – which have been useful, but can also be limiting. I would suggest that we go one step further and create formal feedback loops with our community, using existing staff. For example, bilingual family workers do an excellent job of outreach to our bilingual and ENL families. We could use these staff (the district needs more of them – more on that below) to also communicate families' needs back to the district. Likewise, many of our social workers dedicate much time to outreach in the community; they could also serve to help communicate needs back to the district. For something like this to work, new roles and relationships will have to be institutionalized; we will have to operate with the expectation of this feedback and then calendar regular meetings between these support staff and administration and between administration and constituents, mediated by these support staff. In the past when we have hosted these types of meetings (usually through coffee and conversation), they've been very productive. Now, they need to be formalized, with appropriate support staff, occur on a regular basis, and with the expectation that the information will inform policy and practice going forward.

Other engagement opportunities could be predetermined; for example, when a principal retires, we could make it a practice to hold a school-based community forum to gather feedback about the school leadership that that community would like for their school. I also think we should consider an annual survey of teachers and staff on critical issues facing the district.

What do you see as the role of the Board of Education in terms of oversight of the administration? Will you commit to holding the administration accountable to students, teachers, and the community?

The BOE holds the superintendent (and itself) accountable to goals that are set every year. The superintendent's goals align with the BOE's goals/priorities. In the time that I have been on the BOE, these have included renovation of the high school; the creation of a full-day, dual language pre-k program; efforts to increase the graduation rate; implementation of restorative practices; a focus on equity, to name a few. All goals become part of the accountability process; in the examples that I mentioned, some of the goals were achieved, others are a work in progress. I will continue to monitor



progress toward goals not yet achieved, as well as any new goals. As other accountability issues arise, outside of the goal-setting process, I commit to holding administration accountable within the scope of my power as a BOE member.

What reforms within KCSD do you believe are most important to better serve BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students?

- Curriculum audit as a first step to building a more representative curriculum.
- Deepen and expand some of the equity and diversity initiatives that are occurring within the district (Today's Students, Tomorrow's Teachers; Brothers at Bard; Techquity; professional development with Dr. Pieterse). I have also been impressed by the faculty book study groups in several of our schools; the district should continue to support these and encourage their expansion. Support staff, including our safety team, lunch monitors, and others, need to be included in these efforts.
- Better integrated restorative practices that work to build trusting, respectful communities in our schools so that when challenges arise, we have a foundation of community from which to work and a process for redress that doesn't immediately revert to discipline. We may need a districtwide coordinator to ensure that this happens.
- Additional bilingual family workers to better serve this growing community (see above).

How would you address disproportionate suspensions and disciplinary actions against BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students?

My answers to the previous question apply here, as discipline is not just a matter of how we react in the moment of a crisis, but how we build community and supports to help moderate our response to discipline and mitigate conditions that lead to the need for discipline in the first place (within the boundaries of a school setting, of course). But, in addition, I would add that we need more timely and public data about race and exclusionary discipline practices so that we keep attention focused on this issue.

Will you commit to ending KCSD's contract with the Kingston and Ulster Police Departments and all law enforcement, and reinvesting those funds into mental health and community resources for the children in the district? Please answer yes or no and briefly describe your rationale.

The KCSD BOE has created a committee to address this question and I will wait for the findings of that committee (and more public engagement on this issue, which the committee has promised) before making a final decision about this. I will say, though, that I am intrigued by the recommendations of the City of Kingston Re-Envision Public Safety Task Force, which recommended changes to the contracts, specific kinds of training, and better and more timely data about SROs. These are all good ideas, in my opinion. I will commit to asking for more resources to be invested in supports for mental and social/emotional health for our students.

If you were already on the Board of Education in 2020, did you vote in favor of the PILOT for the Kingstonian? If you were not on the Board of Education in 2020, would you have voted in favor of the PILOT for the Kingstonian if you had been on the Board at the time of the vote? Please answer yes or no and briefly describe your rationale.

I voted “no” to the PILOT for the Kingstonian. My vote, and my accompanying statement, are a matter of public record. My vote centered around the fact that PILOTs have an adverse impact on school districts. Specifically, the value of the PILOT is not included in the calculation of the tax levy, and so the district loses those funds – a loss which deepens exponentially each year – indefinitely. There is no source for school districts to recoup this funding (the City and County may recoup through sales tax; school districts do not receive sales tax). Further, the burden of the taxes is shifted to the rest of the community. I have written about how PILOTs adversely affect school districts:

<http://www.bencenblog.com/2021/01/14/strife-over-tax-breaks-and-tradeoffs-it-doesnt-have-to-be-like-this/>

If it were up to you to decide how to allocate the \$26.9 million coming to the district, what would you do? Specifically, discuss what staffing, materials, technological, safety, infrastructure, or other needs should be prioritized.

We need to think about this funding holistically, in the context of other state and local support, and aligned with a strategic plan—which we must create—that continues the upward trajectory of KCSD for the next five years and considers what we’ve learned during this year of COVID instruction. Some ideas:

- Summer and after school programming in our school buildings and also in collaboration with our community partners, so that support meets students where they are, both academically and physically.
- Additional support for math and literacy in the early grades to strengthen the academic foundation of our youngest students and elevate their progress as they move through KCSD. This

support comes through personnel and through a curriculum that offers opportunities for exploration and hands-on learning (as opposed to worksheets and testing).

- Enhance current programs that promote students' social and emotional health, and promote equity. Integrate restorative practices and culturally responsive education into our schools and classrooms more fully. This includes the possibility of hiring additional support professionals (social workers, bilingual family workers, etc.) to support our students and their families and maybe a coordinator to facilitate the integration of restorative programming.
- Technology – but whether that's more computers, a focus on connectivity in students' homes, or another dimension of this resource, we need to think clearly about how we want to use technology in instruction, within the context of this past year, before we decide how to dedicate funds to this resource.
- Dedicate resources to improving communication and community engagement through the development of a strategic communications plan that details all aspects of, and responsibility for, engagement with the multiple communities within KCSD. This includes updating the KCSD website and making it more accessible.

What reforms would you propose to better serve ENL (English as a New Language) students and families?

As stated above, I would like to see the district hire more bilingual family workers, more social workers, and institutionalize a process for outreach to, and feedback from, our ENL students and their families. In addition, I support the dual language programs (prek and elementary school pilots) and the grade blending that are designed to support our ENL students and that also promote language and cultural understanding and diversity among our non-ENL students.

**Name: James F. Shaughnessy, Jr. Jim**

Why are you running for school board?

I would like to continue my participation as a trustee for the education of the children in our communities.

What has been your involvement with KCSD schools? For example, have you volunteered or worked in the district? Please give examples of specific activities or initiatives you have undertaken.

I have been a member of the Board of Education since 2006. I participated in various parent volunteer roles when my daughter was a student at GW, Bailey, and KHS.

What do you believe is the most pressing issue confronting KCSD?

Identifying, evaluating and mitigating the impact of 15 months (& counting) Covid-19 pandemic and trauma.

How do you intend to build a culture and practice of consulting with the community and teachers in KCSD decision-making?

I hope by September, 2021, we will be able to resume in-person board meetings with public comment and traditional activities such as parent-teacher groups, coffee & conversation, leadership teams, etc.

What do you see as the role of the Board of Education in terms of oversight of the administration? Will you commit to holding the administration accountable to students, teachers, and the community?

The Superintendent of Schools is accountable to the board of education. By law, all hiring is done on his/her recommendation. The board has no direct supervisory authority over any district employee.

I don't know what you mean "holding the administration accountable to students, teachers, and the community."

What reforms within KCSD do you believe are most important to better serve BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students?

For many years we have emphasized social, emotional, and mental health. For all students. We have professional development on culturally responsive education, trauma informed education, and other initiatives to meet students where they are rather than where we think they should be.

How would you address disproportionate suspensions and disciplinary actions against BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students?

Will you commit to ending KCSD's contract with the Kingston and Ulster Police Departments and all law enforcement, and reinvesting those funds into mental health and community resources for the children in the district? Please answer yes or no and briefly describe your rationale.

No.

If you were already on the Board of Education in 2020, did you vote in favor of the PILOT for the Kingstonian? If you were not on the Board of Education in 2020, would you have voted in favor of the PILOT for the Kingstonian if you had been on the Board at the time of the vote? Please answer yes or no and briefly describe your rationale.

No.

If it were up to you to decide how to allocate the \$26.9 million coming to the district, what would you do? Specifically, discuss what staffing, materials, technological, safety, infrastructure, or other needs should be prioritized.

The administration is waiting for regulations to be issued on the Covid-relief funding. We are going to redo the SSBA process and adhere to the guidelines. We will follow the requirements for community engagement and shared-decision making.

What reforms would you propose to better serve ENL (English as a New Language) students and families?

We are implementing bilingual instruction in the early elementary grades, In the long run this will benefit ELL students. In 2020, the graduation rate for 28 students in the ELL cohort was 43%. We have to give individual mentoring to the 16 students who didn't graduate.