

**ERSB Candidate Questionnaire
Network 49 Education Committee**

Thank you for your candidacy! Please complete this questionnaire and return it by Saturday, May 11th to christinejohnson1000@gmail.com.

1. Describe your background and qualifications to be a member of the Chicago Board of Education. What has been your connection with Chicago public schools? What special skills and experiences do you bring to the position?

I am a mom to a soon-to-be CPS kid (who I look forward to sending to our neighborhood school), a former special education teacher, and the leader of a nonprofit that offers career training for young people. I believe there is no more important institution in our society than our public school system, and I say this as a very proud public school kid myself from kindergarten through university.

Growing up, my family went through a long and difficult period of instability, marked by domestic abuse and the subsequent loss of our family home. My public school is what got me through that time. My teachers, my counselors, and my coaches got me through. School was my safe space to be a regular teenager in a sea of uncertainty. I'll be forever grateful, and that is why I've dedicated my career to work in service of others, because I want to give back that same care that was extended to my family when we needed it most.

I got my start as a public school teacher working in a high-needs high school in New York City while earning my graduate degree in Special Education. I was a proud AFT union member. After my time in the classroom, I went on to work in the tech sector, leading community engagement programs. I took those learnings from the corporate world and my educator's training and co-founded an award-winning workforce development nonprofit that serves low-income young adults who are out of work and out of school. We help our young people regain their confidence, access career training, and connect with full-time employment.

It's through these experiences, working with hundreds of young adults, that I have become increasingly concerned about the many shortfalls in our K-12 system that create barriers to real post-secondary success. I am committed to using all of my diverse experience to advocate for CPS students as a school board member.

Network 49 ERSB Questionnaire -- Kate Doyle

2. What is your vision for Chicago public schools? How do you believe an elected school board can achieve that vision? What do you personally hope to achieve as a board member? Is there any driving force behind your desire to be a school board member?

My vision for Chicago Public Schools is that we become a district where, no matter their zip code, every student has access to well-resourced neighborhood schools for pre-K through 12th grade and that their school experience is joyful, connected, academically rigorous, and sets them on a strong pathway to postsecondary success. To achieve this vision, the elected school board will need to have a strong fluency in the new CIDT framework to assess progress toward key indicators and identify areas of work that may no longer be serving in the best interests of the students and school outcomes.

An elected school board can provide a community-informed perspective and community oversight of the operational execution of the district's North Star priorities. The elected school board can develop new community initiatives such as more robust engagement with school-based LSCs and regular student and educator listening sessions to drive better collaboration between local schools and CPS leadership.

As a board member, I hope to be an advocate for elevating the importance of postsecondary success pathways and planning across the K-12 continuum, emphasizing the need for innovation in this area, driving partnerships across local industry, labor, colleges, and the nonprofit sector, and increasing funding toward initiatives that are proven to increase postsecondary success outcomes in the long term.

I want to be known as an active, accessible, and responsive representative within the community. I will accomplish this through regular community roundtables, attendance at LSC meetings, and weekly office hours with translation services available.

3. District 2 is quite large and diverse; it encompasses approximately 10% of the city and includes neighborhoods from Rogers Park to Uptown, Edgewater to Lincoln Square. It is also extremely diverse economically, racially, and ethnically. Do you see issues that are unique to District 2? What issues are common across the district? How will you represent the entire district?

This district is uniquely diverse in the number of languages spoken by students and families. It is essential that we make sure that school resources and meetings are accessible for all constituents and their families, including unfettered access to translated printed materials and interpretation services. This will be balanced with keeping the hours at varied and accessible times so working families can easily and equally participate. Events and access to other resources must also be planned in a way that respects the religious diversity of the district, for instance avoiding conflicts with Jewish and Muslim holidays and days of rest. Across the entire district, we share a commitment to diversity and inclusion. I will listen to all constituents across the district and lead in a culturally sensitive manner, and I will be mindful of disparities that exist between various groups based on discrimination along racial and economic lines.

Network 49 ERSB Questionnaire -- Kate Doyle

4. How do you propose to help schools in your district tap into local people, places, and institutions and strengthen community connections?

As a board member, I promise to constantly be present in the community. I believe it is the responsibility of the board to connect the community with the school district, which means that I will constantly be interacting with community groups and individuals in order to better understand the needs of the district and generate resources and connections for the schools. This is one benefit of having an elected school board divided geographically into districts: the board will be better equipped to engage local resources to provide a richer education where students will benefit from diverse people and perspectives within their local communities.

5. CPS faces a budget deficit of \$391 million next year as Covid funding ends next September. How would you work across stakeholder groups to ensure CPS secures adequate funding? What solutions do you see for obtaining what we need for fully funded schools?

I am committed to being a unifier, and will give everyone a listening ear to understand their concerns and needs for funding and resources. We need to immediately conduct a thorough audit of the CPS budget, and understand not only how much money is coming in, but how efficiently it is being spent. Many public schools have higher expenditures per capita but lower student performance than others with lower spending (e.g. Sullivan vs. Senn). After this audit, the community must come together to identify the most important needs - through processes like participatory budgeting -so that the board can make the most compelling case to stakeholder groups about what funding is needed and why. Tax increases on the wealthy (especially those making at least \$1 million annually) should also be considered to help fund our schools.

6. Many neighborhood schools, particularly those that serve students of color, have suffered long-term underfunding and disinvestment. What policies would you support to fund all CPS schools regardless of neighborhood or zip code? How do you plan to support under-enrolled schools fully and equitably?

We need to begin with a thorough audit of funding and expenditures in CPS. Then, as a group, the board needs to determine where we can make spending more efficient, and how to balance the funding so that ALL CPS neighborhood schools are fully funded; the funding should be distributed based on school needs, not the amount of tax revenue in the neighborhood in which the school lies. To accomplish this, funding will need to be reallocated, and a collaborative approach to securing funding is critical.

7. Violence is a critical issue for our students. In the last 3 months, Senn High School, for example, has experienced two shooting incidents resulting in the death of one student and the wounding of four others. As a board member what policies will you advocate to achieve safe schools? What is your position on the presence of SROs in schools?

I am deeply concerned about the violence our students experience, and the risks taken just to walk to and from school. We need to further invest in our communities and resources to address the root causes of violence and keep our students safe; this includes violence prevention and interruption programs, social services (especially fully funding and staffing every public school to have at least 1 social worker, more in high schools), and building community liaisons within schools to connect students with programs outside of schools. I oppose having SROs in schools; research shows that they do not prevent violence or make students safer and, if anything, they make students less safe. We need to take a community-centered approach to safety in schools, not a police-centered one.

8. What policies will you support to assure that our schools are healthy, clean, adequate to students' needs, and environmentally sustainable? Describe in detail.

With an average campus age of 84 years, CPS facilities are in need of significant investment to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our students and to build a school system that can remain resilient in the face of a changing climate. I will advocate for immediate investment in the older, neglected school buildings that are impacting the teaching and learning environment - for example, the remediation of extensive water damage noted at Senn High School or the lack of code-compliant exit signage and functioning air conditioning equipment at George Armstrong ES. But these fixes are just the beginning; I will support a Green New Deal that prioritizes efficient heating/cooling systems, renewable power, and empowering schools to act as community relief zones during times of crisis while updating curriculum and workforce-readiness programming that prepares CPS students for meaningful, high-wage, union jobs working to address the climate crisis.

9. With up to 50 languages spoken in District 2, how can CPS effectively support both newcomers and those in existing ESL and bilingual or dual language programs? Do you have a vision for how to provide all students with needed language skills, respect and nurture students' home cultures, and expand all students' linguistic and cultural knowledge?

With the influx of new arrivals and the finding that roughly 20% of Chicago's EL students are not reaching English language proficiency, it's clear that the resources for providing EL and dual language support are not sufficient and are not being distributed equitably. I will advocate for greater investment in TBE and Dual Language programs, as well as for providing proper staffing and teacher training to schools with large and growing populations of English language learners. We can work with teachers, parents, and community members to make sure that new arrivals and existing ESL/bilingual students are not falling behind, and that really begins with ensuring that educators are trained, certified, and prepared to provide the instruction that these students need.

10. What policy changes are needed to ensure that diverse learners receive all the services and resources they need for a full and joyful education?

As a former special education teacher I feel strongly that we must do more to support our diverse learners and ensure they are receiving all of their mandated services. The pandemic further exacerbated underlying issues in our special education services across the district, from incomplete evaluations to more students with disabilities being separated from their general education peers for the majority of the day.

We must ensure the rightful presence of every student with disabilities in high-quality instruction with their grade level whenever possible and appropriate. The LRE provision is one of IDEA's strongest principles, and CPS must renew its efforts to uphold this commitment by limiting pullout services and enhancing inclusion with adequate support whenever possible.

CPS must also do more to enhance the cohesion between special education, general education teachers and counselors, and other school staff. For example, I have heard from numerous parents who attended IEP meetings with no general education teachers present.

CPS must also never hold an IEP meeting with a parent or caregiver present who is not an English speaker without access to translation services for vital IEP documents regardless of whether the parent has made the direct request to a case manager or not. We need to remove the burden from the family and act proactively to involve them. Without translation services, these parents are effectively cut out from the IEP planning process.

I also believe that CPS can do more to support the transition process for students with moderate to severe disabilities receiving special education services as they age out of the district. Many students may find themselves on long waiting lists to gain support after their 22nd birthday.

11. What is your position on the Sustainable Community School model? How do you see this model applied in District 2?

I strongly support the Sustainable Community School model and will advocate for its expansion. Supporting the whole child means supporting their community. By investing in responsive wraparound services that are tailored to local community needs, we can address barriers to student success and promote neighborhood health and well-being. It is a community-led, community-driven approach that centers educational equity. In District 2, I would advocate for expansion to numerous school sites to enhance support for new arrivals, students who are parenting, and schools facing higher rates of chronic absence like Mather, Sullivan, Senn, and Roosevelt.

12. Equal access to a standard curriculum, with enrichment classes, should be available to all CPS students. However, many schools lack libraries with a school librarian, music and art, and well-funded sports teams. Many schools limit choices in foreign languages and advanced math and science classes. How would you address these inequalities and end this two-tiered system of education?

Fully funding public schools will be a top priority. Every school should have fine arts options (including required fine arts in elementary school), well-funded athletics and libraries, and 2 years of foreign language should be required for all high school students. When considering budgetary priorities for CPS, these will be top concerns; even if it means temporarily taking on some debt, these are important priorities to fulfill immediately.

13. To qualify for the ballot, ERSB candidates must submit a minimum of 1000 petition signatures by June 24. Typically, candidates in Chicago need to gather two to three times as many signatures to meet the required number of valid signatures. What is your plan to gather sufficient signatures by the June 24 deadline?

I have already collected 3,000 signatures, including 1,000 from a paid staffer and 2,000 from volunteers and my door-knocking. My robust volunteer base will continue to play a major role in my campaign going forward.