



The following questions were emailed to candidates on February 10. Responses received by the deadline of February 20 are included in our evaluation. No edits were made to any responses.

Anjali Bharadwa (District 200)

Do you believe your school's current Health Education curriculum should include age-appropriate sex education? What do you see as the strengths and/or areas needing improvement in this curriculum?

It is imperative to understand what sex education includes when discussing if it is appropriate. At a young age, sex education is to protect children from unwanted touches and to know how to respond in that circumstance. As they reach their older elementary years, the education moves to hygiene and puberty. Coming from a culture that historically has not been forthcoming about sex education, I recognize the benefit in preparing children through education rather than it being discussed amongst children without facts. Recently, at one of our local elementary schools, a rumor was circulating regarding inappropriate lessons that were happening at the schools causing parents to be considered. After reviewing District 200's curriculum, verifying with Illinois State Board of Education's mandates, and confirm with Administrators that the rumors were only rumors, I find our current curriculum to be appropriate. You must also consider a student's often unlimited access to the internet and what path that could lead them without guidance.

What is your position on the renewal of the Invest in Kids Scholarship Tax Credit Program? Do you favor state tax credits or vouchers for use by families to send children to private schools? If so, how do you feel this will affect public schools?

I believe in the public school system and that each child across the globe is entitled to a quality, free education. Overall, funding should not be taken away from our public schools for any program to send children to private schools. Funding is provided to our public schools primarily through property taxes augmented with state and federal funds. Specifically, "Invest in Kids Scholarship Tax Credit Program" currently comes from state taxes and is only eligible for students whose families earn under an established threshold. There is also some research to indicate that it could assist in overcrowding in under resourced schools and removes some financial burden while maintaining the funding from property taxes. CUSD200 does not have an overcrowding issue but Illinois is diverse with diverse needs. I would not agree with expanding the program allowing for school choice or making it permanent but would to see more statistics if that program as-is should be allowed to continue.

What, if any, is the role of the Board in the selection of materials for school libraries and curriculum development?

The role of the school board is to set goals and define success. They must ensure that the district has the proper administrators, educators, and resources in place to make decisions that best serve our community while following local laws and guidelines. The Board should not be responsible for setting the specifics of each lesson that is being taught but be cognizant of the quality and efficacy of the curriculum. Educators have the professional background and work with our children on a daily basis, enabling them to make decisions on the best curriculum that can be used to achieve and exceed our district goals and make adjustments where necessary.