



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.

Yannick Koger (District 89)

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?

I do believe schools' health education curriculum should include age-appropriate sex education. Our K-8 district currently provides human growth and development for 5th and 7th grade students. Additionally, with "Erin's Law," we provide all of our school-age children with health education to prevent sexual abduction and abuse.

The strengths of comprehensive health education are that it provides medically accurate, culturally appropriate, and age-appropriate information to all students. As children age, they may seek information on sex and their bodies from less accurate sources such as friends, social media, or the internet. Another strength of comprehensive health education is that it provides protective information to younger children through awareness of potential harm. This helps keep more kids safe.

One opportunity for improvement is for more inclusion in the health education curriculum. Only a small number of states require unbiased information on sexual orientation and gender identity. I believe students of all backgrounds deserve access to quality information. Also, when students learn about others who may be different from themselves, it can create an environment of understanding and respect amongst all students.

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?

Although my district, CCSD89, is not on the list of priority districts for the Invest in Kids Act, the act does have implications on overall state funding for public education.

I personally do not favor the use of large state tax credits (75% of the donation, up to \$1,000,000 per year) to send children to private schools. I have concerns on the transparency, inclusivity, and accountability of such programs. For example, how are students selected, are IEP students allowed to participate, and how are programs held accountable for results?

Although the funds undoubtedly help a certain number of students, I believe that if low-income students are struggling in their community schools, we need to invest in programs to help them. Addressing funding gaps may be more impactful than a student scholarship program.

If the Invest in Kids Scholarship Tax Credit Program is to remain, I believe there is an opportunity to reduce the size of the tax credit down from the 75% level. A better balance between scholarship funds for a few and additional tax funds for community schools should be examined.

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

I believe books are a fundamental way in which kids make sense of the world around them. Offering a broad set of age-appropriate materials allows children of all kinds to see themselves represented. Additionally, broader literary experiences help students build empathy and understanding for others. Although board members do not directly select library books, we should trust teachers to select books that meet the diverse needs of the students they serve.

As a board, our role is to approve curriculum, textbooks, and educational services for the students based on the recommendation from the administration. The school board should regularly hear updates from teachers and the administration on how the curriculum is, or is not, meeting the needs of students to achieve academic success. The school board should also ensure that the curriculum remains dynamic and responsive to needs of a 21st century education.