



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.

Jessica McGee (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 believe that individuals with education and experience with child development are highly qualified to determine appropriate curriculum and resources to use with our students. Our school currently teaches human growth and development based on the state mandates for health education and I am in full support of students learning age appropriate sex education. It is essential that students learn about anti-bullying, child abuse prevention and personal safety. This is what sex education is about in elementary school and research shows that it has been proven to prevent child abuse and makes it easier for children to report if someone is trying to harm them. In seventh grade, students learn about Human Reproductivity and Development. Part of this unit includes human sexuality including information about individuals who identify as LGBTQ+. Not only do young people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and backgrounds have the right to quality sexual health information that reflects their own experience, but studies have shown that learning that everyone deserves respect creates a safer environment for all students.

Sex ed is about health and safety and gate keeping information can be harmful to children, especially when there are so many outlets available for them to learn disinformation (internet, friends, etc).

We all want students to make healthy decisions.

We all want students to feel safe at school and have opportunities for learning. That is why I support the district's current model of including age appropriate sex education.

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 oppose the extension or expansion of the Invest in Kids Scholarship Tax Credit Program. Vouchers take public money away from already underfunded public schools and the research shows that the private schools that these vouchers are used for do not even lead to positive academic outcomes for students! In many cases, they result in lower achievement. Additionally, the private schools do not provide the same constitutional rights to students as public schools do. This leads to private schools discriminating against groups of individuals such as those with disabilities and our LGBTQ+ youth. Examples of this discrimination is refusing admission and not providing academic or language services that are needed for success.

Although it is every family's right to send their child to a school they deem appropriate, vouchers and state tax credits should NOT be able to be accessed for this. That money should be going to the public school system as intended.

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

According to the foundational principles of effective governance laid out by Illinois Association of School Boards, the school board is responsible for everything, yet must recognize that everything depends upon a capable and competent staff.

Therefore, as stated previously, I believe that the individuals with education and experience with child development that are employed at our schools, are highly qualified to determine appropriate curriculum and resources to use with our students.

“Books are either mirrors, windows or sliding-glass doors, and that’s important in the act of resistance. You need that mirror to see yourself, to know what you can be and know what you are. And then you need that window to see into someone else’s life so you can understand what’s happening around you in the world that you may not notice at first glance. And you need the sliding-glass door so that you can step into someone else’s life and walk in with some empathy and use that empathy to make yourself heard.”

-- Rudine Sims Bishop (author and educator)