

Forward New Orleans For Public Schools Platform

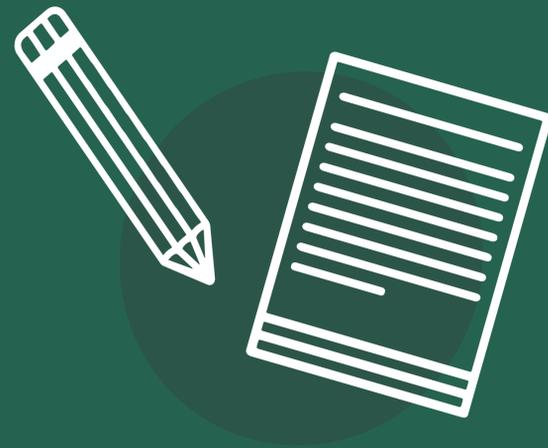
2020 ORLEANS PARISH SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2020. Early voting is Oct. 20-27
(excluding Sunday, Oct. 25) from 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.



Our Platform

A strong school board is the foundation of a successful district – one that makes effective uses of all of its resources and equitably serves the needs and interests of all of its students. A number of indicators demonstrate New Orleans Public Schools (NOLA-PS or School District) has made strong progress towards these goals, but important work remains to be done. The challenges facing NOLA-PS, in serving and supporting students' needs, are significant and growing. While the challenges are great, so are the opportunities; NOLA-PS has assets to build upon for a bright future. And the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB or School Board) plays a key role in ensuring this happens.



The School Board's responsibilities include: (1) hiring a superintendent and holding the superintendent responsible for managing the School District in accordance with all applicable laws and policies; (2) ensuring the School District remains, at all times, financially viable; (3) developing and adopting student centered policies; and (4) engaging the community, at large, as partners and advocating on important K-12 issues. In the fulfillment of its responsibilities, all of the School Board's actions must be aimed at addressing the needs of students and improving their educational experiences and life opportunities.

Since 2012, Forward New Orleans for Public Schools (FNOPS) has sought to enhance the likelihood of success for all public school students by creating issue-based platforms for School Board elections rested on the foundational principles of academic excellence and serving all students fairly and equitably. FNOPS, as in years past, will seek a pledge from each School Board candidate to implement the eight specific action items discussed below. The candidates' responses will be published prior to the election. We will hold our School Board members accountable by monitoring and encouraging their performance and periodically reporting on their progress towards completing these action items during their four-year term.

Platform Scorecard

2020 ORLEANS PARISH SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

We urge you to use this scorecard to inform your vote on the candidates for Orleans Parish School Board, and we ask you to consider supporting candidates who have pledged to support the Forward New Orleans for Public Schools (FNOPS) [platform](#).

FNOPS is a diverse coalition of more than 20 civic, business and neighborhood organizations committed to increasing the number of quality public school options and ensuring equal access to quality education citywide. We developed the platform as a guide to aid School Board members in accomplishing these goals.

The candidates who pledged to support the platform, promise to develop and adopt formal policies on the following eight issues, which FNOPS defines as most important to improving educational opportunities and outcomes for New Orleans public school students:

1. **Racial Equity Evaluation, Planning and Training**
2. **COVID-19 and Emergency Planning**
3. **Engage in System-Wide Strategic Planning and Stakeholder Engagement**
4. **Support the Expansion and Replication of Our Most Successful Schools**
5. **Ensure Equitable Access to an Excellent Education**
6. **Set High Standards and Hold Schools Accountable for Progress**
7. **Act as a Responsible Resource Manager**
8. **Collaborate to Implement Best Practices**

[Read the full platform at fnops.org](https://fnops.org)

| CANDIDATE | Pledge to Support the Platform |
|--|--------------------------------|
| John A. Brown DISTRICT 1 | ✓ |
| Petrice Sentino DISTRICT 1 | ✓ |
| Ethan Ashley DISTRICT 2 | ✓ |
| Asya M. Howlette DISTRICT 2 | ✓ |
| Eric Jones DISTRICT 2 | ✓ |
| Aldine Lockett DISTRICT 2 | DID NOT INTERVIEW |
| Chanel M. Payne DISTRICT 2 | ✓ |
| Philip C. "Phil" Brickman DISTRICT 3 | ✓ |
| Olin Parker DISTRICT 3 | ✓ |
| Leslie Ellison DISTRICT 4 | ✓ |
| Jancarlo "J.C." Romero DISTRICT 4 | ✓ |
| Winston "Boom" Whitten Jr. DISTRICT 4 | DID NOT INTERVIEW |
| Katherine Baudouin DISTRICT 5 | ✓ |
| Grisela Jackson DISTRICT 5 | ✓ |
| Antoinette Williams DISTRICT 5 | ✓ |
| David Alvarez DISTRICT 6 | DID NOT INTERVIEW |
| Erica Martinez DISTRICT 6 | ✓ |
| Carlos L. Zervigon DISTRICT 6 | ✓ |
| Kayonna K. Armstrong DISTRICT 7 | DID NOT INTERVIEW |
| Nolan Marshall Jr. DISTRICT 7 | ✓ |
| Jamar Wilson DISTRICT 7 | ✓ |

Scorecard key:

✓ Signed the pledge to support reforms on this issue.

DID NOT INTERVIEW – Either declined or did not respond to repeated requests to interview with FNOPS.

Forward New Orleans for Public Schools includes: Agenda for Children, Alliance for Diversity and Excellence, Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region, Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans, Ed Navigator, Education Reform Now LA, Greater New Orleans Collaborative of Charter Schools, Greater New Orleans Foundation, Greater New Orleans, Inc., Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Louisiana, Kingsley House, Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools, New Orleans & Co., New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce, New Schools for New Orleans, Public School Advocates, United Way of Southeast Louisiana, Urban League of Louisiana, Vietnamese Initiatives in Economic Training, and Young Leadership Council.



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Our Coalition

Agenda for Children
Alliance for Diversity and Excellence
Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region
Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans
Ed Navigator
Education Reform Now LA
Greater New Orleans Collaborative of Charter Schools
Greater New Orleans Foundation
Greater New Orleans, Inc.
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Louisiana
Kingsley House
Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools
New Orleans & Co.
New Orleans Chamber of Commerce
New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce
New Schools for New Orleans
Public School Advocates
United Way of Southeast Louisiana
Urban League of Louisiana
VIET (Vietnamese Initiatives in Economic Training)
Young Leadership Council



Our Process

For every School Board election since 2012, FNOPS has created a platform designed to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for public school students. Each platform is the product of a broad coalition, representing diverse perspectives and voices, that work together to reach consensus.

Before the election, we will interview each of the candidates and ask them to pledge to support the platform. We will also engage voters around the issues and share with them which candidates have taken the pledge. After the election, the pledges will become mandates for action, effectively setting the agenda for the School Board's term. Throughout, we will monitor their progress and hold them accountable while giving them our support and encouragement.



Issue I:

Racial Equity Evaluation, Planning and Training

In June 2020, OPSB, pursuant to its Resolution No. 11-20 (Resolution), engaged a racial equity consultant to strategically evaluate School District policies, practices and procedures and use those findings to develop a racial equity plan for the School District. The Resolution calls for the racial equity consultant to present its initial findings to OPSB no later than Fall 2020. And the Resolution sets as a goal the completion of the evaluation and presentation of final policy recommendations by or before June 2021.

School Board members must commit to the following:

1. To the extent necessary, ensure all of the work required by the Resolution is completed pursuant to the terms of the Resolution;
2. Ensure full and effective implementation of the equity plan (existing or adopted in the future) resulting from the Resolution;
3. Bi-annually review and evaluate the equity plan to assess if its goals are being achieved and what modifications, if any, are warranted;
4. School Board members will undertake and ensure equity training is offered annually to NOLA-PS central office staff, all authorized schools and networks and School Board contractors; and
5. Maintain a strong Disadvantaged Business Enterprise policy that applies to all OPSB construction and procurement contracts.





Issue 2:

COVID-19 and Emergency Planning

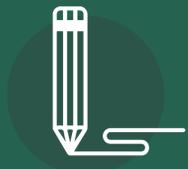
The next School Board will take office in a time of great uncertainty and vulnerability. School operations will, for an undetermined period of time, look very different from pre-pandemic days. In recognition of the new reality shaped by the coronavirus pandemic, planning is essential to ensure students continue to progress towards curriculum goals, no matter what disruptions might occur.



School Board members should commit to the following actions:

- 1.** Ensure all students, regardless of income, race, ability, etc. have equitable access to a high-quality education even during the pandemic;
- 2.** Require the superintendent to continue to support all schools in developing and executing strong multi-year operational plans in accordance with the “NOLA-PS Roadmap to Reopening Schools” as it is currently written or may be modified, assuming schools will close intermittently throughout the coronavirus pandemic. The plans must include how all students will be meaningfully served during closure(s), virtually (*e.g.* addressing the digital divide) or otherwise;
- 3.** Require the School District and every charter school organization to develop a two-year financial plan based on best available estimates of anticipated revenue;
- 4.** Speak on behalf of all schools in New Orleans to articulate the needs of our community and aggressively pursue additional resources and other supports for schools, students and families at the local, state and national levels; and
- 5.** Convene schools to reflect upon lessons learned and share best practices regarding distance learning, communication with families, safety protocols, etc. to better respond to major disruptions.

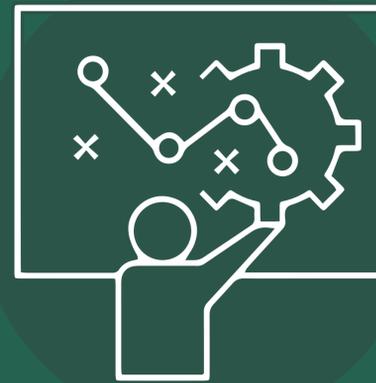




Issue 3:

Engage in System-Wide Strategic Planning and Stakeholder Engagement

The School Board should undertake a focused and comprehensive system-wide strategic planning process that engages educators, families and the community at large to improve student achievement and equitable outcomes. Stakeholders should be provided with meaningful opportunities for input on policy decisions. The strategic planning process should be transparent; stakeholders should accept (and understand) the process and the rationale behind the strategic plan. A multi-year strategic plan should identify priorities and position the School District for long term success. The School Board must ensure accurate and up-to-date information is easily accessible and made available to all those who need it during the planning process.



School Board members must commence a formal strategic planning process within the first year of office. This planning process should:

1. Identify key areas that would allow the school system to address inequities across the School District while also incentivizing schools that are currently addressing those inequities. This should be in alignment with the results of the racial equity evaluation;
2. Identify opportunities and develop plans to align systems and expand partnerships to increase the number of public school students who meet key benchmarks of success, including kindergarten readiness, third-grade reading proficiency, on-time graduation and post-secondary placement and persistence;
3. Assess demographic trends to inform the number of student seats and to avoid an excess or shortage of spaces; and
4. Identify opportunities for the School Board to promote public schools, find additional resources, develop partnerships and coordinate with governmental bodies, educational institutions, the business and nonprofit communities and the general public for the betterment of NOLA-PS, its students and families.



Issue 4:

Support the Expansion and Replication of Our Most Successful Schools

Increasing the number of high-quality seats available for New Orleans' public school children and having high-quality options with geographic diversity is paramount. The School Board must remain committed to continually increasing the opportunities for all students to receive a high-quality education through supporting and expanding high-performing school operators.



School Board members must:

- 1.** Recognize many of our students enter school far behind grade level norms and the definition of a high-quality school must include schools that consistently show strong student academic growth over time;
- 2.** Widely communicate the achievements of schools and students in New Orleans with particular focus on schools that consistently achieve high levels of student growth, schools that earn A and B letter grades and schools that close achievement gaps;
- 3.** Assist successful schools in expanding their current capacity to serve more students, including facility modifications and assignments;
- 4.** Encourage successful schools to replicate, especially in geographic areas lacking high-performing schools identified through the strategic planning process and/or equity evaluation; and
- 5.** Continue to authorize new schools that have a specific focus on addressing needs that have been identified through the strategic planning process and/or equity evaluation, including, but not limited to, English Language Learners, special education and overage student populations.



Issue 5:

Ensure Equitable Access to an Excellent Education

Orleans Parish students have diverse needs; some students, such as those with disabilities or those for whom English is not their first language, require more support and resources than others. Some programming, such as coursework that will advance students' post-secondary readiness and behavioral health, is not available on every campus and costs more to implement. The School District has implemented a differentiated funding formula that recognizes these varied needs, but more remains to be done. The School Board must continue to research new programming across the nation and better align with local partners to ensure our students and schools have the knowledge, access and support to continuously improve outcomes. Furthermore, all students must have fair and open access to diverse and high-quality public school options. This access applies equally to disadvantaged and exceptional needs students. Who gets in a school - and stays in a school - should not be subject to manipulation.

School Board members must take the following actions:

1. Maintain use of the differentiated student funding formula that applies to all NOLA-PS schools, and update the formula to include an analysis of weighted funding usage in each category, as appropriate;
2. Maintain the common enrollment system, continuing to balance neighborhood and sibling preferences with citywide access, along with requiring schools to provide student transportation;
3. Continue mandatory participation in the centralized Student Hearing Office, which includes disciplinary and expulsion standards, hearings and safety screenings;
4. Develop a transparent and accessible methodology for parents to understand differences between schools outside of the state letter grades; and
5. Support and advocate for expanded access to high-quality early childhood education and rigorous coursework that prepares students for success post high school, whether in college, technical training, or a high-wage pathway.





Issue 6:

Set High Standards and Hold Schools Accountable for Progress

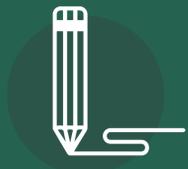
The School Board should continue to respect school autonomy while also setting high standards for schools in policy and consistently holding schools accountable for meeting these academic, operational and financial standards.



School Board members must commit to the following actions:

- 1.** Review and revise policies, as necessary, for school performance in academics, finances, operations and legal compliance;
- 2.** Consistently act upon the superintendent's recommendations, in adherence with the School Board's established policies and performance standards, including the approval, renewal and revocation of charter contracts;
- 3.** Work with the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to create a more equitable accountability system, including, but not limited to, a system that better measures and values student academic growth; and
- 4.** Create policy that requires schools to develop and/or refine leadership and board member succession plans, including identification and recruitment of board members that are representative of the school community, as part of any renewal process.





Issue 7:

Act as a Responsible Resource Manager

The School Board should prioritize its resources so the maximum amount of funding possible is placed in the hands of educators, while sustaining the operations of the School District and ensuring there are funds available in case of emergencies. The School Board must also responsibly oversee the school facility maintenance program so newly built and renovated school facilities are maintained for future generations. Finally, the School Board must continue to be a responsible custodian of its General Fund balance to ensure the School District can respond effectively to catastrophes, like COVID-19 and natural disasters, while having sufficient funds to operate schools.



School Board members must commit to the following:

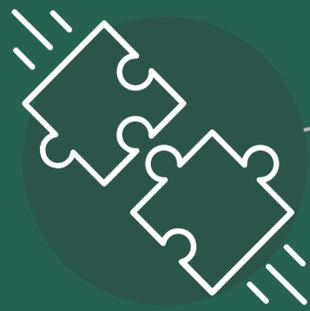
- 1.** Determine the most efficient and effective division of school, central management and other system partner functions in areas, including, but not limited to, transportation, special education and communications. Align NOLA-PS' budget, staffing and partnerships, as necessary, to reflect and implement these determinations;
- 2.** Implement a plan developed no later than Spring 2021 to provide financial supports to enable schools and the School District to weather anticipated reduction in revenues for fiscal year 2022 as a result of the pandemic, while addressing critical student, family and school needs;
- 3.** Adopt the policies and procedures necessary to fully implement La. R.S. 17:100.11, the School Facilities Preservation Program, to oversee and administer funding for school facilities repair and improvements; and
- 4.** Ensure the School District's management of the newly created Systemwide Needs Program is aligned to citywide needs and developed in collaboration with schools, and adopts clear practices to ensure transparency and accountability for the use and administration of funds.



Issue 8:

Collaborate to Implement Best Practices

The School District, schools and partner organizations have made significant progress together to support effective programming for students with special needs, to develop better protocols for bus safety, to create citywide career preparation programming, to agree upon a shared school year calendar for the benefit of families and to distribute over 1 million meals to students during the pandemic. The School Board should build upon this progress by cultivating a culture of system-wide pride and continuous improvement by encouraging further collaboration and sharing of best practices.



School Board members should work with the superintendent to do the following:

- 1.** Convene experts to discuss best practices in areas of need, including, but not limited to, services for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, early literacy development, trauma informed practice, school attendance, early childhood education and school leadership transition;
- 2.** Create structured opportunities for educators – directly or in partnership with intermediary organizations - to share their own best practices and current challenges so they are better able to learn from one another;
- 3.** Include school leaders and partner organizations in decision-making processes; and
- 4.** Explore ways for schools and partner organizations to collaborate to create economies of scale where appropriate (e.g. transportation and special services).



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