

1

UPDATED – 4.3.18

Local Election Questionnaire 2018

Thank you for responding to this Candidate Questionnaire from the Berkeley Federation of Teachers.

Your responses to the questions here will provide us with important information as we make our endorsement decisions. Please be candid, complete and forthright in your responses, and prompt in returning the completed questionnaire.

Completed questionnaires should be **returned by April 24, 2018 to:**

Cathy Campbell

bft4tchr@lmi.net

Berkeley Federation of Teachers Questionnaire

Name: Dru Howard	Office sought: The Berkeley Unified School District Board of Education
Occupation: Instructional Technician (BUSD) & Organizer (Parent Voices)	Employer: The Berkeley Unified School District & Parent Voices Oakland
Work Address: 2015 Virginia, Berkeley, CA 94709	Work Phone: N/A
Campaign Address: 1370 University Ave #411 Berkeley, CA 94702	Campaign Phone: (510) 502-3858
Campaign ID Number:	Political Party: Democrat

Background

- **Which public offices have you held?** I have served on the following commissions: City of Berkeley Commission on the Status of Women, City of Berkeley Personnel Board, City of Berkeley Health & Human Welfare Commission, City of Berkeley Commission on Aging, Alameda County Measure A Citizen Oversight Committee.
- **Briefly describe your educational background.** B.A. in Communications, Radio, and Television from the Central State University. M. A. in Religious Leadership for Social Change and Masters in Divinity from the Starr King School for the Ministry at UC Berkeley. I am currently working on my Doctorate at Oblate School of Theology.
- **Please describe your previous experience with and contributions towards educational issues.** For the past 16 years, I have worked at BUSD as an Instructional Technician and other related areas. This entails working with children during the before-care and after-care programs, including homework, health, enrichment, and recreation. For the past 15 years, I have worked at Parent Voices as a parent organizer. That entails working on various campaigns around quality affordable childcare.
- **Briefly describe your work background.** See above.
- **Are you a union member? To which unions have you belonged?** Yes, I am currently represented by BCCE (Berkeley Council of Classified Employees union).
- **Please describe your work with union members in previous positions.** I have worked on various campaigns through BCCE, including fighting and organizing for classified salaries and benefits.
- **To what fraternal, professional, civic, or social organizations do you belong?** I am a

member of the NAACP. I am a Minister at McGee Baptist Church. I am part of BOCA (Berkeley Organizing Congregations for Action).

- **From what other groups are you seeking or have you received endorsements?** I am seeking endorsements by community leaders and neighborhood associations.
- **Will you seek higher office?** No.
- **How much money does your campaign expect to raise?** \$25,000.
- **Are there any entities from whom you will not accept donations?** YES! I will not accept corporate, gas or oil, or big companies that do not have interest of children first. All money isn't good money.
- **How will you win?** I will win by organizing parents and students.
- **Please attach a complete endorser list.** Currently, I have been endorsed by Berkeley Vice Mayor Ben Bartlett, Berkeley Councilmember Cheryl Davila, and Pastor Michael Smith.

Teaching, Learning and Equity

1. Please review the BFT Quality Education Agenda. What are a few sections that stand out to you? What sections do you think are particularly key in closing our equity gaps in BUSD? What is one or more section that you see yourself working on deeply in the next four years as a Board member?

The sections that stand out to me most are the following:

- In order to achieve goals like the 2020 Vision, schools must partner with families and community members.
- Public schools should meet the academic needs of all our students.
- Educators must be both respected and given the chance to improve their craft.
- Corporate Education Reform works against our shared vision.

I see the first bullet point I listed above as being particularly key to closing our achievement gaps at BUSD. In the next four years as a Board member, I see myself working to close the achievement gap, and working to improve conditions for educators (particularly educators of color) at BUSD.

2. What do you think are the most important supports for sites with high numbers of EL students? What are your priorities for our ELD and bilingual programs?

It is important to provide training for educators in order to ensure that they know how to work with EL students, including cultural competence. It's also important to have diverse teachers. Providing more support to educators working in the ELD and bilingual programs is a major priority for me.

3. What will you do as a Board Member to further the implementation of Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtI²) in BUSD? What resources do you think are needed for this to happen?

As a board member, I would work to ensure that families and communities are incorporated into the RTI process. Additionally, I understand that data shows that African American students are not responding well to RETI – I would direct resources to focusing on resolving this gap.

4. BUSD has the beginnings of a true Restorative Practices structure, especially at the secondary level. What do you think needs to be done next in order to provide alternatives to exclusionary discipline and interrupt the School-to-Prison-Pipeline in BUSD?

We should work hard to incorporate parents and families into restorative justice programming and build cultures of accountability.

5. The BUSD LCAP is our roadmap for closing our opportunity gaps. How will you evaluate the effectiveness of our actions and services?

Although the BUSD LCAP is a good attempt for closing our opportunity gaps, we need to do a lot more. Sadly, many African American students are falling through the cracks.

6. What would you change in BUSD to increase the recruitment and retention of teachers of color?

Research shows that teachers of color help close achievement gaps for students of color and are highly rated by students of all races. This is a major priority for me. To increase recruitment and retention of teachers of color, I would like to increase salaries and benefits for all teachers as well as provide culturally competent mentorship and guidance for teachers of color.

7. What concrete steps do you think can be taken to more actively involve parents of color and low-income parents in district-level decision-making? What outreach, connections, and partnerships have you made in these communities?

We need to train teachers to be culturally competent and truly listen to parents and families. We need to develop relationships of trust and respect. We need to ensure that teachers hold students and families of color to high expectations. For over a decade, I have worked at Parent Voices as a parent organizer for low-income parents and parents of color who seek quality education. I have worked as an Instructional Technician at BUSD. Both

these roles have involved building strong relationships with exactly these types of parents and families.

8. What do you see as the role of serving families of children ages zero to five in closing our equity gaps? How familiar are you with our preschool program?

I see the time of serving families with children ages zero to five as being absolutely critical to closing the equity gap and kindergarten readiness. I am very familiar with the BUSD preschool program, having worked with many families who went through that system.

9. As you know, BUSD recently commissioned a study of its Special Education program. Which of the recommendations made by the consultant would be items you would recommend for early implementation?

I would recommend the two following items for early adoption:

- Developing a procedural manual outlining policies, procedures, and processes reflecting integration with the Education Code
- Developing methods for establishing trust and strong relationships with families

Leadership and Priorities

10a. Incumbents: What are your accomplishments as a Board member? Explain one goal you have achieved. Citing at least one example, how have you effected change in BUSD?

N/A

10b. Non-Incumbents: Please describe a campaign (electoral OR community-based), initiative or issue where you have been a leader and brought change to pass.

For two years, I have been leading the efforts of Parent Voices to organize for subsidized childcare for homeless children. We brought our efforts to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, and we began partnering with the County in order to put out a ballot initiative, which later became Measure A. We talked to legislators and obtained their endorsements, sent letters and cards, and we are continuing to lead this fight forward in June 2018!

11. Please describe an issue where you have worked collaboratively with BFT or another Union to achieve goals.

I have worked on various campaigns through BCCE, including fighting and organizing for classified salaries and benefits.

12. BFT has organized several large mobilizations of teachers to Board meetings in 2017-

2018 on issues of importance to our members. Please describe one of these that resonated with you.

One of the very important mobilizations of teachers to Board meetings in 2017-2018 concerns salary of teachers. I understand that BFT members were able to obtain a 1% one-time bonus and a 1% ongoing raise beginning in July 2018, despite the fact that we are in a period of cost cutting for California school districts. I am supportive of this. I think it is imperative that we compensate our educators and I believe strongly that they are currently underpaid.

Right to Organize

13. Please describe the actions you have taken to support workers' right to organize.

I am a strong believer in workers' right to organize. With BOCA (Berkeley Organizing Congregations for Action), I supported labor unions at UC Berkeley and their rights to organize.

14. What do you see as the likely impact on workers, Unions and the American economy when the *Janus v. AFSMCE* decision comes from the Supreme Court?

Given the current makeup of the Supreme Court, I suspect that the decision may be harmful to workers. This will have a terrible impact on unions and the American people.

Public Worker Issues

15. As an elected official, the Brown Act allows you to be accessible to workers and their representatives on work-related issues, including the negotiation process. What do you think the role of Board members should be in the negotiations process?

I think Board Members absolutely should play a significant role in the negotiations process. We should work hard to advocate on behalf our educators.

16. What should your role be as an elected official in the event of an impasse in negotiations?

In the event of an impasse, I would take action in order to trigger movement and improve conditions for our educators.

Economic Security and Sustainability

17. What is your plan for supporting the recruitment and retention of excellent teachers

in BUSD as salaries in neighboring districts have become more competitive? How do you think the cost of living, housing and healthcare affect teachers? What is needed to ensure that teachers can make a long-term career in BUSD? How would you help to bring that about as a Board member?

Cost of living, housing, and healthcare absolutely affect the quality of life of teachers. It is imperative that we compensate our educators well – the future of our society is in their hands!

As a Board member, I would fight to increase salaries and benefits for BFT teachers. We must compensate our educators well in order to ensure that they can make a long-term career at BUSD. I would also collaborate with my allies on the Berkeley City council in order to create affordable housing and increase homeownership opportunities for BUSD teachers.

18. With regard to health benefits, what steps does BUSD need to take to have responsible budgets that provide resources to pay for the increasing costs of medical benefits?

We need to monitor our budget vigilantly to ensure that there isn't waste. We should minimize administrative costs, while focusing on classroom instructions.

19. How do you place the role of economic inequality in student achievement and in the future of public education in California? What community initiatives have you been part of that are meant to increase economic equality?

I think economic inequality and racial inequality both play enormous and reinforcing roles in affecting student achievement and equity in public education. As a parent organizer, I have worked to build relationships with low-income parents and fight for equitable and quality education. I am currently working on the Alameda County Measure A initiative, which would help reduce inequality in the early childhood years, as well as increase wages for teachers and childcare providers.

20. Are you willing to consider a possible parcel tax for employee salaries in order to support the recruitment and retention of teachers and classified staff in BUSD?

Absolutely.

Principles

21. Have you ever crossed a picket line?

Never.

22. What steps would you take to support a boycott, when sanctioned by the Central Labor Council, California Labor Federation or AFL-CIO? Will your campaign refuse to use restaurants, hotels or other public accommodations on the boycott list (available at www.calaborfed.org).

I would do everything possible to support a boycott. My campaign would refuse to use businesses or public accommodations on the boycott list.

23. If endorsed, will you carry the union endorsement on your mail and materials?

Absolutely.

24. If elected, how will you consult with Unions on decisions that affect union members in BUSD?

I would stay in close contact with Cathy and other union reps. I would give them a call to discuss any issues that might concern them before making any decisions.

SIGNATURE

I attest that these answers represent my actions and beliefs, are not part of my public record, and may be used by the Berkeley Federation of Teachers to keep union members informed about important issues.

Signature _____ Date _____

If completed electronically, please provide us with a signed copy at your interview. Thank you.

