

## 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: Ka'Dijah Brown	Office sought: Director, Berkeley School Board
Occupation: Teacher	Employer: Making Waves Academy
Work Address: 4123 Lakeside Drive Richmond, Ca 94806	Work Phone: (510) 262-1511
Campaign Address: 1311 Channing Way Berkeley, Ca 94702	Campaign Phone: (510) 435-0541
Campaign ID Number:	Political Party: Democrat

### Background

- Which public offices have you held?

Chair- Berkeley Youth Commission (2005-2009)

- Briefly describe your educational background.

I attended BUSD schools from kindergarten through high school. Upon graduation from Berkeley High School in 2009, I earned my B.A. in Psychology from Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, North Carolina in 2013. I am currently completing my multiple subject teaching credential, and my M.A. in Education at Alliant International University.

- Please describe your previous experience with and contributions towards educational issues.

As an undergraduate student at Bennett College, I was afforded many amazing opportunities. One of which was working as a teacher's assistant at the Martin Dixon Intergenerational Center in Greensboro, North Carolina. While at the center, I worked in a preschool class with children ages 4 and 5. During my time at the center I accomplished many goals such as administering the DIAL Assessment (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning) and administering the Clark and Clark Doll Study. I prepared instructional materials and classroom displays. I developed behavioral management plans. I worked directly with and assisted two (2) autistic students accomplish their learning goals through Play Therapy, and I was also given the opportunity to teach academic lessons once a week.

As an undergraduate student, I also had the opportunity to participate in the Teacher of Color Preparatory Institute. The teacher of color preparatory institute, as known as TCPI helps prepare and support undergraduate students of color that want to become teachers and change agents in their communities. This professional pathway helped me to develop my craft, and teaching pedagogy. Under the direction of Keno Sadler, TCPI's director I learned how to create meaningful lesson plans that not only covered state standards, but were culturally responsive and resonated in the minds and hearts of students. This program thoroughly prepared me for a career in education.

As a current 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher I take a holistic approach to teaching that helps my students feel secure, and

successful. I apply the SMART classroom management approach. I made my expectations for positive classroom behavior known for all students. I model appropriate classroom behavior, use restorative justice, and socioemotional learning because of this, my classroom is a community where all students are successful both socially and academically.

- Briefly describe your work background.

As an educator my work background is directly related to the work that I've done around educational issues.

- Are you a union member? To which unions have you belonged?

I am not a union member, as my current school does not have a union. However I do support unions, and will become a member should I join a school district with a union.

- Please describe your work with union members in previous positions.

Although I have not worked with an organized union, as a teacher representative on my school's School Site Council it is my goal and responsibility to advocate for teacher's rights and interests.

- To what fraternal, professional, civic, or social organizations do you belong?

Member, African American Student Achievement Board	2017-Present
Member, General Board of the International AME Church	2016-Present
Member, Eastern Star	2013-Present
International Vice-President- WMS	2018-Present
Young People's and Children's Division, International First Vice President (AME)	2011- 2015
• Toastmasters International, President Bennett College Chapter	2011 - 2013
• Bennett College's Psychology Club, Member	2010 - 2013
• National Advancement for the Association of Colored People Bennett College Member	2010 - 2013
• Bennett College Ambassador	2009 - 2013
• Bennett College Women's Leadership Conference Program Planning Committee Member	2009 - 2013
• Campus Ministry, President	2010 - 2011
• Bennett College Queens Association Member (Community Service Organization)	2010 - 2011
• Student Government Association, Elections Committee, Member	2009 - 2011
• 5th Episcopal District Young People and Children's Division, President (AMEC)	2007 - 2011
• Student Senator, Bennett College	2009 - 2010
• BHS Student Body President Leadership Cabinet/Political Director	2008 - 2009
• City of Berkeley Youth Commissioner /Chairperson	2004 - 2009

- From what other groups are you seeking or have you received endorsements?

The endorsement process is just beginning but I intend to seek endorsements from the Berkeley Council of Classified Employees (BCCE); the Alameda Labor Council; United Democratic Campaign; and local Democratic Clubs, including Wellstone, John George, and the Berkeley Democratic Club as well as the Green Party, Sierra Club, and other progressive groups.

- Will you seek higher office?

Currently, I am solely focused on serving as a School Board Director.

- How much money does your campaign expect to raise?

In doing research, successful school board candidates have raised between \$10K and \$40K, so I plan to raise funds accordingly, realizing that as a non-incumbent running that I will need to raise more than the median of this range.

- Are there any entities from whom you will not accept donations?

As an African American woman who is committed to equity in public education, I refuse to accept donations from racist, homophobic, or anti-public school entities.

**How will you win?**

I plan to run a grassroots campaign focusing on my background as an educator; my knowledge of BUSD as an alumnus; my deep ties to community; and the support of many educational leaders in the community.

- Please attach a complete endorser list.

See attachment.

## **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?

I enthusiastically support the BFT Quality Education Agenda. Although I support all of the sections, the following are what stand out to me the most, and are key in closing the equity gap.

### **Educators must be both respected and given the chance to improve their craft.**

I agree that classroom teachers and staff are our greatest asset. I am a great believer in the power of excellent teaching based upon a deep mastery of curriculum, differential learning, and an understanding of diverse communities and I will support professional development and the use of assessments to facilitate excellent and equitable teaching practices. In addition, to truly address whole child needs, classroom teaching must be teamed with and supported by other professional and paraprofessional staff, such as counselors, psychologists, and special education staff, including instructional aides.

### **Public schools should meet the academic needs of all our students.**

I recently served as a member of the curriculum committee for my school as we adopted new curriculum. This experience helped me to understand the important role that not only teachers, but curriculum plays in a student's academic success. Students deserve quality curriculum that is culturally relevant, promotes higher-order thinking and is aligned with state standards.

As a member of my school's School Site Council, I advocated for my school to hire an ELD coordinator that would support the academic needs of one of our most needy populations.

### **Public education must be fully funded.**

As the President of my school's School Site Council I am a firm believer in using LCAP funds to support academic learning and provide supplement support for subgroups. This is one of the best ways of closing the achievement gap supporting programs like RTI.

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?

Although BUSD serves a high number of EL students, we are currently seeing a change in demographics in Berkeley where low income and working class families are being pushed out due to the extreme cost of living. As a direct result, our EL students and families are decreasing. To this end, there is a huge need for an update to the district's Master Plan for English Language Learners. My first priority would be to have an updated Master Plan that is reflective of the population that we serve, and that uses best current practices for sites with high numbers of EL students.

3. What will you do as a Board Member to further the implementation of Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtI<sup>2</sup>) in BUSD? What resources do you think are needed for this to happen?

I am a huge supporter of Response to Intervention and Instruction. My deep belief is that education levels the playing field for all children, provided that they all have access to a quality education. (RtI<sup>2</sup>) is one of the driving forces behind making education equitable for all students. As a board member it will be one of my priorities to expand BUSD's Response to Intervention and Instruction through professional development and instituting equitable funding of District resources so that schools with higher student populations of at risk and higher needs receive appropriate funding.

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?

According to the California Dashboard, BUSD at the secondary level had only a 1 percent increase in graduation rates for African American students, but had a 4.4 percent increase in suspension rates. As well as a 1 percent increase in suspension rates for our socioeconomically disadvantaged students. This tells us, that there is more work that needs to be done to interrupt the School-to-Prison-Pipeline. The district needs to adopt and support mentorship programs for at-risk students, reactivate Student Court, and offer professional

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development trainings centered around Restorative Justice for faculty and staff through programs such as RJ Ed. The district has done extraordinary work through the lens of Restorative Justice, which serves as a visionary model that should be adopted by all schools. However, the data shows us that there is more work to be done in order to provide a transformative education for all students.

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

In the recent LCAP, BUSD identified thirteen targeted goals that will meet the needs of our students. These goals are assigned at least one progress indicator that measures that effectiveness of the goals and the extent to which the goals are being met. As a member of the School Board I will evaluate the effectiveness of our actions and services outlined in our LCAP. These services include

- Increase use of culturally and linguistically relevant instructional practices
- Actively recruit, support and retain African-American and Latino teachers
- Coach teachers in effective instructional practices for new Common Core English Language Arts and Math Standards and Next Generation Science Standards, including the integration of technology
- Increase targeted interventions with students and families
- Expand the AVID program to support middle and high school students on the path to college 9 I believe that every initiative or program should have embedded measurable outcomes to assess effectiveness that are linked to our overall LCAP and related equity goals and objectives, such as raising attendance, reducing disproportionality, literacy levels, graduation rates; A-G completion, socio-emotional tools and mental health, and
- Secondary Math Support Classes for all middle schools
- Secondary BHS Math Support Class
- Classified Employee Teacher Pathway
- School Teacher Leader Stipends African American Success Project
- Additional Intervention Counselor BHS (3 total)
- Provide AVID EXCEL program for long-term EL support to students in grades 7-8

In conjunction with the LCAP, I would review school's SPSAs ( Single Plan for Student Achievement) .

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

As a teacher of color, I believe that there needs to be recognition that being a teacher of color

in a predominant white, mostly well-educated school district can be a very difficult experience. Teachers of color often times experience cultural isolation, causing them to leave districts where they are underrepresented and sometimes causing them to even leave the profession altogether. To this end, I believe that teachers of color need to be intentionally supported through mentors/coaches, safe spaces, and encouraged involvement in organizations such as California African American Superintendents and Administrators Association (CAASA). The BUSD would also benefit from creating a recruitment program for teachers of color, similar to the Teacher of Color Preparatory Institute, or TEACH Oakland.

**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?**

I believe that encouraging and supporting the establishment of Black and Brown family organizations, such as Parents with Children of African Descent (PCAD) and reaching out to community groups, such as Latinos Unidos Berkeley Youth Alternatives (BYA), and the NAACP, is a way of both building social capital and building upon the social capital that already exists in communities of color in an effort to have more parent involvement. The office of Family Engagement and Equity does a tremendous amount of work to promote parent education and involvement, utilizing them to support parent involvement would also be a step in the right direction.

**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 know that BUSD has a preschool program that primarily serves income eligible students through a state subsidy program. As an educator, I know that the groundwork for student success is laid early and would champion universal pre-school as a state (and local) priority. I am also interested in better integrating partnerships in supporting the needs of zero to 3 aged children within the District's 2020 Vision.

**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?**

Many of the recommendations that were made by the consultant were important to me, including but not limited to family school relations, communication, and fiscal accountability.

As a current teacher, and past paraprofessional, I believe a critical component is

institutionalizing the critical role that classroom teachers and staff have in serving students with special education needs by establishing with fidelity through professional development and accountability that classroom teachers and instructional assistants are a team with common and intentional goals, objectives, and knowledge committed to and with the skills to serve most special student needs within the classroom.

The recommendation however, that I would recommend for early implementation is the over-identification of special education students. Approximately 136 of our students were overidentified which directly effects budget and services.

I would also recommend that the district follow the recommendation of the consultant to adopt the SELPA procedural manual.

## 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?

**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.

### Electoral Campaign

During the 2012 election of President Barak Obama, I had the privilege of being an administrative intern in the Greensboro, NC office. In my time as an administrative intern I worked tirelessly to support President Obama's campaign by making an average of forty phone calls to constituents daily on behalf of the campaign, canvassing on behalf of the campaign and organizing campaign rallies. Through my work on the campaign, I assisted in a collective effort to re-elect the first African American President of the United States of America.

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

Currently I have not had any experience working with BFT or another Union, but I look

forward to in the future.

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.

As a teacher of color, the mobilization of BFT to hire and retain teachers of color in November 2017 and January 2018 resonated with me most.

## Right to Organize

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

I have never crossed a picket line and indeed have often expressed support though honking my car horn in acknowledgement of union actions. I do also look forward to joining a union in the future.

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?

I believe the likely Supreme Court decision to be an intentional blow to undermine union (wage earner corporations) impact on elections while Court decisions, such as Citizens United, furthered the ability of employer corporations to impact elections. I would support initiatives, such as providing the District's various unions access to inform and lobby members about the history and effectiveness of union based political activities, as a means to encourage funding and participation in union political activities.

## 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 believe the Board's primary role is to provide clear direction to the District's negotiating team and to hold the District's negotiating team accountable for following Board direction. I also believe that Board members should be willing to meet with labor officials and listen to bargaining unit concerns and issues understanding that individual Board members should not be bargaining outside of the established process.

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

I believe that the Board should work to defuse as much conflict as possible while the post impasse bargaining process proceeds and use their resources and tools to mediate differences and resolve the impasse expeditiously.

### **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?

Unfortunately I know all too well that teaching is a career of passion, and not one that is lucrative. My firm belief however, is that teachers should be compensated for the extraordinary work that they do. The cost of living in the Bay Area specifically in Berkeley has a huge impact on teachers. As a Board Member I would support the increase of teacher salaries, and advocate for retention programs that would support teachers. i.e teacher housing, loan repayment, tuition assistance.

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?

This is an area that I do not have any easy answers. I would be very interested in hearing and supporting BFT's proposals on this subject as I personally all too well understand the increasing encroachment of health costs on teacher income.

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?

As previously mentioned, the rising cost of living in Berkeley has had a huge impact on the demographic of students that we serve. Many students who rely on the services that BUSD schools offer and their families are being pushed out, causing students to attend different schools that do not have the resources that BUSD schools have, directly affecting that

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student's achievement and academic success.

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?

Yes, as a current teacher I understand the hardships that come along with low salaries and will do what is right to support an increase in employee salaries.

## **Principles**

21. Have you ever crossed a picket line?

No!

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](http://www.calaborfed.org)).

Yes my campaign will refuse to use restaurants, hotels, or any other public accommodations on the boycott list.

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

Yes, with honor.

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

I would like to have regular (possibly quarterly) meetings with union leadership and would also have an open door policy regarding breaking issues.

## **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.*

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Signature Date

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